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## In the Shadow of the Atomic Cloud: Masculinity, Modernity, and the 'Bomb' in the Electoral Politics of Canada and the United States, 1949-1963

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in History

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the impact of hegemonic masculinity, in the early Cold War era, on the electoral politics of Canada and the United States. It situates itself in the years between 1949 and 1963, arguably the height of nuclear fear, at a time when masculine ideals were adjusting to an uncertain postwar reality. Previous scholarship has established that the Cold War brought with it a retreat into domesticity, followed by an emergent “crisis” of masculinity. This monograph contributes to the historiography by demonstrating that the masculine archetypes of the early Cold War are frequently reflected in electoral discourse. It also highlights how postwar fears about masculinity align closely to the evolution of public understanding, and growing anxiety, about nuclear weaponry.

Early chapters, which follow the political tenures of Louis St. Laurent and Dwight Eisenhower, establish that their ability to project themselves as reassuring, paternalistic father-figures was crucial to their electoral success. When combined with the portrayal of opponents as outside the bounds of hegemonic masculinity, it was a strategy that won elections. However, as the 1950s progressed, concerns about nuclear weaponry and fears about eroding manhood entered the public discourse. These new anxieties quickly rendered the paternalistic approach to governance insufficient. In its place, a more forceful brand of leadership emerged. It was focused on countering the malaise of the late 1950s by utilizing the nostalgia of the “self-made man” and promising a return to the individualism of the frontier-era. The candidacies of both John Diefenbaker and John F. Kennedy benefitted greatly from this approach, as both men promised to push towards “new” frontiers.

**Keywords:** Electoral Politics, Hegemonic Masculinity, Atomic Bomb, Canada, United States, Dwight Eisenhower, Louis St. Laurent, John F. Kennedy, John Diefenbaker

## **SUMMARY FOR LAY AUDIENCE**

This monograph explores the way that masculine norms impacted political discourse and electoral campaigns in Canada and the United States during the height of Cold War nuclear fears (1949-1963).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There have been twenty-one season changes since work on this manuscript began, which is a fancy way of saying that from start to finish this process has spanned roughly five years. The world in which I began my doctorate (September 2016) and the world which I am submitting this completed dissertation (December 2021) are vastly different places. Indeed, the decision to reorient this exploration towards an examination of masculinity is in no small part the result of a personal hopelessness felt in the wake of the 2016 U.S. presidential election. In one sense, the coming pages are an attempt to find answers in history and to examine masculinity politics' influence in another highly volatile era.

The bulk of the text contained herein was written during the COVID-19 pandemic, as society self-isolated and sought shelter from a threat that, thankfully, proved less deadly and destructive than the nuclear weaponry that is foundational to this exploration. Nevertheless, the COVID-19 pandemic brought with it very real fears about changes to social structure, self-assertion of one's independence and freedom, as well as concerns about modernity and the role of government in society. I would be negligent if I did not note that all of these issues are also reflected, in some form, throughout this exploration. In times of fear it is perhaps not all that surprising that congruent social responses emerge, just in new patterns and expressions. As such, this dissertation is a product of its time.

The list of those I need to thank must begin with my supervisor, Dr. Aldona Sendzikas, who provided an endless stream of guidance, advice, and periodic Cold War-era movie recommendations. It is thanks to her that my ambitions for this project were reigned in, and it reached a manageable size. Yet, she has never wavered in the view that I had a story to tell and that I should be allowed to tell it. Next comes Dr. Monda Halpern,

who served as my devoted second reader. Her revisions and guidance were invaluable; and many places in this text that were once vague – are now less so, thanks to her. Finally, to my examiners, Dr. Robert MacDougall, Dr. Dan Bousfield, and Dr. Elaine Tyler May, I again extend my thanks and indebtedness for your valuable feedback on this project.

I also need to give special mention to three more individuals. First, Dr. Laurel Shire, our superb Graduate Chair, has provided me with invaluable guidance, has always stood in my corner, and has been a sounding board on countless pandemic walks. She kept me sane. Secondly, Dr. Francine McKenzie, who served as our unflappable Department Chair throughout pretty much the entire five years this project spanned. She was instrumental in my dissertation proposal process, and her door was always open to me. For that I will forever be grateful. Last, but certainly not least, I need to thank Kara Brown, our graduate administrator, who holds the unofficial title of “Department Mom,” and has always been there for anything and everything I have needed – truly.

Next, I need to acknowledge the support of my family – my mom, Sharon Proctor, my sister, Ashley Priest, and my uncle, Robert Proctor. I would also be remiss if I did not also mention my grandmother, Isabel Proctor, who passed just months before I completed this text. Her frequent refrain to me on numerous phone calls was: “Are You Done Yet?” – every graduate student’s favourite question. Well Grandma, *now* it’s done! To my doctoral cohort (Erin Brown, Luana Buckle, Bryan McClure, and Sara Poulin), you are also in this section, because you basically served as my surrogate family at Western University. There are those rare times in life when the universe aligns and everything just “clicks,” and this was one of them among the five of us. Through the countless cups of tea and coffee, through the triumphs and the tears, we did it together.

One aspect about writing a dissertation that explores the political personas and lives of eight different politicians in two countries – you visit a lot of archives. I need to thank the staff and volunteers at Library and Archives Canada, the Mudd Manuscript Library, the Eisenhower Presidential Library, the Richard Nixon Presidential Library, the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library (virtually), and the Diefenbaker Centre at the University of Saskatchewan. Navigating archival materials is an art form, and they make it look effortless. Their patience and guidance was much appreciated. I also need to give special mention to Don and Mary Rickley who volunteer with the Eisenhower Foundation. They were incredibly gracious in supporting me while I was in Abilene, Kansas.

Before this section becomes longer than the actual text itself, there are just a few others that I need to thank. First, I wanted to take a moment to mention the late Greg Donaghy. He was a titan of Canadian history and was kind enough to reach out to a new doctoral student and provide feedback on a very early draft of the first chapter. Next, I need to mention Liz Mantz, who was my guardian angel at the Weldon Library during COVID-19. There is no way this text would have been completed as quickly, had she not helped me remotely access numerous volumes. Finally, Maggie Ross, who is completing her doctorate at Queen's. Beyond being a friend, she helped me access a study on Diefenbaker and Pearson's electoral image in Tom Kent's Papers when pandemic travel was not feasible.

As these past three pages demonstrate, though a doctoral dissertation bears a single name – it is simply not possible to do alone. Behind each one of these projects is a massive support network – both personal and professional. Thus, to the many friends who I have been unable to mention by name specifically, just know – this wouldn't have been possible without you – especially Mackenzie and Sebastian, as well as Alice and Hillary.

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## INTRODUCTION

*“For years the playground in Washington Square has resounded to the high-strung an-anh-anh of machine guns and the long-drawn-out whine of high-velocity shells. Last Saturday morning a great advance was made. We watched a military man of seven or eight climb onto a seesaw, gather a number of his staff officers around him, and explain the changed situation. “Look,” he said, “I’m an atomic bomb. I just go ‘boom.’ Once. Like this.” He raised his arms, puffed out his cheeks, jumped down from the seesaw, and went ‘Boom!’ Then he led his army away, leaving Manhattan in ruins behind him.”*<sup>1</sup>

*~ The New Yorker, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 1945*

It had been twelve days since the bombing of Hiroshima, nine days since a second nuclear strike on Nagasaki, and just three days since the surrender of Imperial Japan when the *New Yorker* ran the story quoted in the epigraph above. It is a curious piece entitled “Adjustment” and it bears no author’s name. The full text also included one further observation: “No matter about grownups, the children are already at home in the atomic world.”<sup>2</sup> The account highlights just how quickly the invention and use of atomic weapons came to permeate the consciousness of everyday life. In a matter of years, this young boy would go from playground games to duck-and-cover drills in his high school. For him, atomic weaponry would transform from a “novelty,” to borrow the phrasing of J. Robert Oppenheimer, to something far more sinister. Indeed, as Oppenheimer cautioned, these weapons would soon lead to “radical and profound changes in the politics of the world.”<sup>3</sup>

It was not long before a nuclear arms race began. In fact, a cartoon that ran alongside the playground story in the *New Yorker* anticipated it. The sketch depicted two military generals looking out at a vast warehouse filled with thousands of atomic bombs,

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<sup>1</sup> Paul Boyer, *By The Bomb’s Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 16; “Adjustment,” *New Yorker*, August 18, 1945, 17.

<sup>2</sup> “Adjustment,” *New Yorker*, August 18, 1945.

<sup>3</sup> Abraham Pais, *J. Robert Oppenheimer: A Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 145; Boyer, 34.



and the one tells the other: "...and then the next thing, some general comes out and says the first atom bomb is obsolete!"<sup>4</sup> The Soviet Union's first successful test of an atomic device took place in August 1949. Seven months later, President Harry Truman authorized work on a hydrogen bomb. The United States conducted its first successful test of the next-generation weapon in November 1952. Compared to the four-year monopoly that the West had on the atomic bomb, it took the Soviet Union just another nine months before they too had a rudimentary hydrogen device. Invited to give an address to the Canadian parliament during his visit in November 1953, the new American president, Dwight Eisenhower, spoke of the "shadow of the atomic cloud" that now hung over the world.<sup>5</sup> In just a few short years, the arms race had become defining feature of daily life. Accepting his Nobel Prize in Literature in 1950, William Faulkner perhaps best encapsulated the tenor of the age. There was, he said, "no longer problems of the spirit... only the question 'When will I be blown up?'"<sup>6</sup>

K.A. Cuordileone argues that the "possession of the atomic bomb, the subsequent loss of an atomic monopoly, and the possibility of imminent nuclear war brought previously unknown fears and uncertainties... in ebbing and flowing degrees of intensity for much of the remaining century."<sup>7</sup> Her work *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (2005) served as an early inspiration for this dissertation. Across four chapters, she examines how masculine norms responded to the era's uncertainties and

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<sup>4</sup> Emphasis in original; Cartoon, "Atom Bomb," *New Yorker*, August 18, 1945.

<sup>5</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Parliament of Canada," November 14, 1953, *The American Presidency Project*, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/232412>

<sup>6</sup> Michael Scheibach, *Atomic Narratives and American Youth* (London: McFarland and Company, 2003), 15; See also, William Faulkner, "Banquet Speech," December 10, 1950, *The Nobel Prize*, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1949/faulkner/speech/>

<sup>7</sup> K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005), xv-vi.

subsequently influenced political thought. Cuordileone concludes that rigid gender norms of the 1950s and concerns about modernity's impact on masculinity closely mirrors similar fears that emerged in the late nineteenth century over the impact of the industrial age on manhood. She speaks of a hard/soft discourse that emerges from a "colossal overreaction" during the early Cold War. It ultimately results in what she refers to as a "cult of masculine toughness." To put it plainly, Cuordileone speaks of masculinity in "crisis" in the era between 1949-1963, as it attempts to navigate a fearsome and rapidly changing atomic era.<sup>8</sup>

For me, her study raised two questions. First and foremost, is this "crisis" of masculinity also reflected in Canadian politics? A growing interconnection between Canada and the United States, especially after World War Two, surely must demonstrate a similar cultural reaction given the amount of American-based content Canadians consumed? Secondly, how were shifting masculine ideals reflected in the political process itself, in *both* Canada and the United States? Were they similar, or did they diverge? While Cuordileone does a good job of examining larger trend lines in politics and government, this dissertation seeks to examine how masculine norms played out between candidates for high office, specifically in electoral contests.

This angle of inquiry naturally raises two concerns. The first, somewhat evidently, involves why an exploration of masculinity in electoral politics is *necessary* for this era. After all, the current climate of historical exploration trends heavily towards marginalized discourses. In contrast, to put it bluntly, political discourse in the early Cold War period is overwhelmingly white and heteronormative. To quote Canadian-American sociologist Erving Goffman, the era is dominated by "only one complete unblushing male." He is:

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<sup>8</sup> Cuordileone, vii-x, xx-xxi, 237-38.

...young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual, Protestant, father, college education, fully employed, of good complexion, weight, and height, and a recent record in sports.... Any male who failed to qualify in any one of these ways is likely to view himself - during moments at least - as unworthy, incomplete, and inferior.<sup>9</sup>

Yet, as Goffman also demonstrates, this masculine archetype during in the early Cold War is as important for what it includes, as what it excludes. How stereotypes and ideals about manhood were exercised, as exclusionary as they were, tell us a lot about how society behaved in this era. Furthermore, evidence of conformity by politicians to rigid gender ideals provides insight into how specific masculine identities acted as a gatekeeper regarding who could obtain high office and who could not.

The second concern about this study's scholarly direction is perhaps thornier. Why choose to apply a bilateral lens? Why not focus on Canadian politics to the exclusion of the United States? Indeed, in the most straightforward sense, there is no Canadian study regarding Cold War masculinity in politics that matches K.A. Cuordileone's examination. The problem is that the study of masculinity in Canada through a historical lens is a rather anemic field. In the postwar period, there are only two monographs: Christopher Dummitt's study of industrial modernity and masculinity in *The Manly Modern* (2008) and Christopher Greig's examination of boyhood in *Ontario Boys* (2014). Lacking comparable Canadian scholarship, both Dummitt and Greig draw from the American masculinity historiography to ground their arguments. In doing so, they have demonstrated that masculine norms from the United States bear a striking resemblance to those in Canada at this time. This is not surprising. Thus, nationalistic concerns aside, it is nearly impossible to examine the Cold War's cultural impact and its ramifications on Canada during the early Cold War without discussing the United States. A necessary reliance on American

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 4.

discourse, as a result, offers a logical opportunity to tackle the subject bilaterally and explore the impact of masculine archetypes in electoral contests on both sides of the forty-ninth parallel.

Useful in this endeavour is an already deep bench of historiography that addresses the relationship between Canada and the United States, from a variety of themes.<sup>10</sup> What becomes clear is that the two nations grow only more interconnected in the postwar era. Indeed, as historian Howard Innis wrote in 1948, Canada may have simply gone from a colony to a nation, only again to find a new colonial master.<sup>11</sup> One only has to look to the Massey Commission's report (1951) to see how American culture heavily influenced Canadian society in this era.<sup>12</sup> This, in no small part, was due to the degree to which the Canadian public consumed American radio, periodicals, and the emerging medium of television. As Ryan Edwardson observes, by the time the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) established its first two channels in 1952 there were roughly 100,000 Canadians along the border who had already been consuming U.S.-based content for up to

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<sup>10</sup> For a general overview of Canada-U.S. relations during the Cold War, please see: Robert Bothwell's *Canada and the United States* (1991), *The Big Chill* (1998), *Alliance and Illusion* (2007), and *Your Country, My Country* (2015), as well as R.D. Cuff and J.L. Granatstein *Ties That Bind* (1977), John Herd Thompson and Stephen J. Randall's *Canada and the United States: Ambivalent Allies* (2008) and Stephen Azzi's *Reconcilable Differences* (2014). Knowlton Nash's *Kennedy & Diefenbaker* (1990), Greg Donaghy's *Tolerant Allies* (2002), Asa McKercher's *Camelot In Canada* (2016), and John Boyko's *Cold Fire* (2016) all provide further examples of more specific topic-based Canada-U.S. historiography in the early Cold War.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Litt, "The Massey Commission, Americanization, and Canadian Cultural Nationalism," *Queen's Quarterly* 98, no. 2 (1991): 376; See also Harold Innis, "Great Britain, the United States, and Canada," in *Essays in Canadian Economic History*, ed. Mary Q. Innis (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017). Essay originally published in 1948 as part of the Cust Foundation Lecture Series at the University of Nottingham.

<sup>12</sup> In 1951, the Massey Commission released a report pushing for sustained investment into Canadian culture. It expressed concern about the penetration of American media through mediums like periodicals and radio. It also condemned the defence industry, Canada's largest line item in the federal budget, which largely adhered to fulfilling American geopolitical interests. The report stressed that while "our military defences must be made secure... our cultural defences equally demand national attention." Otherwise, it asks what Canadians are defending exactly. See: Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse, *Cold War Canada: The Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945-57* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 227-228.

four years. Similarly, American magazines made up 67% of Canadian consumption in 1948 and it rose to 80% by 1954.<sup>13</sup> Finally, if there was any doubt of the market-permeation of American mediums, one only has to look to the archival papers of Canadian politicians at the time. Both periodical clippings and letters from the general public are chock-full of American content.

In charting the early Cold War's trajectory, historian Robert Zieger identifies three distinct phases in relations between the East and West. The first, which he places between 1946 and 1953, represent years of growing tension. He identifies 1949 and the Soviet development of their first atomic bomb as a flashpoint for intensifying concern. Zieger then places the second phase between 1953 (Stalin's death) and 1957 (the launch of Sputnik), when Western and Soviet leadership eyed each other cautiously. Finally, the years between 1957 and 1963 marked the height of the Cold War, culminating in the Cuban Missile Crisis (1962), followed by a reduction in tensions with the signing of the Limited Test Ban Treaty (1963).<sup>14</sup> It is worth noting that the end points of each era generally involve a major Soviet advancement. Kenneth Rose in *One Nation Underground* (2001) views these markers as "signposts" of increasing anxiety — 1949, 1953, 1957. He also makes an important observation that 1953, beyond marking Stalin's death, was also the Soviet development of their first hydrogen bomb.<sup>15</sup> It's not surprising, then, that K.A. Cuordileone identifies the years from 1949 to 1963 as the period worth studying in terms of masculinity. Her work clearly establishes a link between increasing Cold War anxiety and societal fears about the

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<sup>13</sup> Ryan Edwardson, *Canadian Content: Culture and the Quest for Nationhood* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 13, 69-70, 99-100.

<sup>14</sup> Robert H. Zieger, "The Evolving Cold War: The Changing Character of the Enemy Within, 1949-63," *American Communist History* 3, no. 1 (2004): 4-6, 13.

<sup>15</sup> Kenneth D. Rose, *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture* (New York: NYU Press, 2001), 4, 10.

erosion of manhood.

This study's scope similarly narrows in on the years between 1949 and 1963, from the Soviet acquisition of the atomic bomb to the signing of the Limited Test Ban Treaty. Across this fourteen-year period, there are an astounding six Canadian federal elections, and three presidential elections in the United States. The coming chapters highlight how masculine ideals are expressed and shift in response to Cold War fears, as well as how they are represented and impact the electoral process in Canada and the United States. It is important to highlight that while a candidate's masculine image (or lack thereof) cannot be proven as the *decisive* factor in any of these contests, the concept is invoked frequently enough by the voters, the media, and the campaigns in this era that it necessitates examination.

Much of the remainder of this introductory chapter provides an outline of the foundations of masculinity theory and an overview of existing historiographical scholarship completed on manhood's conceptualization in Canada and the United States. The time period covered ranges from the late nineteenth century to the beginning of the Cold War era. To understand the cyclical nature of the fears about manhood in the postwar period, especially as they are linked to technological advancement, it is necessary to first survey the last half century. Following this discussion, a smaller section provides a brief examination of the origins of the Cold War, emergent anti-communist and nuclear fears, and a discussion of some of the relevant Canadian-American historiography in the field. This overview offers the reader with a solid historiographical position to engage with the coming chapters. It aims to demonstrate the cyclical nature of perceived "crises" of masculinity in relation to modernity. Furthermore, it affords a basic understanding of how

Cold War fears influenced and shifted masculine ideals in the early postwar era.

### **Masculinity Theory and Historiography**

Raewyn Connell, the seminal sociological scholar on the study of masculinity argues that the concept is “a configuration of practice *within* a system of gender relations.”<sup>16</sup> There are two components to this theory. First, masculinity cannot exist in a vacuum. It needs a gendered “opposite” against which it can define itself. As a result, Connell observes that, historically, societies that did not assign a character duality (masculinity and femininity) to sex roles often lacked a formalized conception of manhood. Indeed, masculinity itself is a relatively recent creation. While most societies have had some cultural conceptualization of gender, a prescribed set of rigid gender-based behaviours is a fairly modern social construct.<sup>17</sup> Secondly, because masculinity defines itself against femininity, it can be theorized that a gendered plane must exist that situates variations of masculinity (and femininity) within a hierarchy. These competing masculine identities are continuously undergoing a process of “alliance, dominance, and subordination.” To put it plainly, there is no universal set of masculine behaviours or gendered practices that define manhood. However, the dominant form in any given period is what Connell refers to as “hegemonic masculinity.” It is “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.”<sup>18</sup>

In developing the theory of hegemonic masculinity, Connell draws on the work of

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<sup>16</sup> Emphasis in original; R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 84.

<sup>17</sup> Connell, 68.

<sup>18</sup> Connell, 37, 77.

Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949). A mid-century feminist scholar, she argued that masculinity defines itself through the “Othering” of femininity.<sup>19</sup> As de Beauvoir explains:

In actuality the relation of the two sexes is not quite like that of two electrical poles, for man represents both the positive and the neutral, as is indicated by the common use of *man* to designate human beings in general; whereas woman represents only the negative, defined by limiting criteria, without reciprocity.<sup>20</sup>

The positive-negative dichotomy that de Beauvoir establishes is of particular importance because it creates the concept of an acceptable masculinity. Although Connell is critical of “sex role” theory and its attempt to define masculinity and femininity by a rigid set of behaviours, she highlights that deviation from expected societal ideals does carry subversive connotations. The most obvious expression of this is the concept of “gayness,” which is placed at the bottom of the hierarchy of masculine behaviour because of its connotations with femininity and feminine behaviours.<sup>21</sup>

Connell first outlined the concept of hegemonic masculinity in *Gender and Power* (1987), but more closely examined it in a dedicated volume, *Masculinities* (1995). Ten years later, in conjunction with James Messerschmidt, Connell provided a re-examination of the idea considering its growing popularity *and* scholarly detraction. One of the theory’s most fervent critics, Stephen Whitehead, observes scathingly that “in utilizing this concept the theorist is then excused [from] having to engage in any deep analysis of the actual practices of men.” His major concern with Connell’s work is its reductionist nature. The individual becomes lost to the hegemonic, and it implicates all men without considering

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<sup>19</sup> Connell, 18; Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (1949; New York: Vintage Books, 1989), xxii, xxvii.

<sup>20</sup> Emphasis in original; de Beauvoir, xxi.

<sup>21</sup> Connell, 25-26, 78-79.



one's agency or the ability to resist. Furthermore, "even those men who would wish not to associate with hegemonic masculinity are somehow inevitably drawn into living their lives in a constant state of tension with this dominant form of masculine being...." Nor can hegemonic masculinity be overcome, in Whitehead's view, and thus its theoretical existence problematically signals endless patriarchy.<sup>22</sup>

Connell and Messerschmidt acknowledge that there is an ambiguity to the initial theorization. They point to the competing nature of hierarchical masculinity and the fact that it is not a "fixed, transhistorical model." They also add that often "hegemonic masculinities can be constructed that do not correspond closely to the lives of any actual men;" rather, "these models do, in various ways, express widespread ideals, fantasies, and desires."<sup>23</sup> This point is crucial to this exploration. The idealized versions of masculinity that are reflected in early Cold War politics are exactly that — idealized. They bear little resemblance to actuality, let alone those who use it to gain elected office. As will be seen, most politicians themselves frequently fail to live up to their idealized public personas. Furthermore, Connell and Messerschmidt update the theory of hegemonic masculinity to express its variants at different societal levels. Acknowledging that it would be nearly impossible to claim a singular global hegemonic masculinity, they speak to the existence of hegemonic masculinities (plural) around the world on local, regional, and global levels. Fundamental to this exploration is the idea of regional hegemonic masculinity, which is "constructed at the level of the 'culture' or the nation-state."<sup>24</sup>

In two more recent works, *Masculinities in the Making* (2016) and *Hegemonic*

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<sup>22</sup> Stephen M. Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2002), 91.

<sup>23</sup> R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (2005): 838-39.

<sup>24</sup> Connell and Messerschmidt, 849-50.

*Masculinity* (2018), James Messerschmidt has continued to engage with and update the concept of hegemonic masculinity. He stresses that it needs to be understood as “configurations of social practice that produce simultaneously particular social relations *and* social meanings, and they are culturally significant because they shape a sense of what is 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' gendered behavior.”<sup>25</sup> What many scholars miss, he states, is that “the core aspect of hegemonic masculinity [is] the legitimation of unequal gender relations.” To be labelled a hegemonic masculinity, its practice must exist through an unequal and subjugated relationship between men and women, masculinity and femininity, and among masculinities.<sup>26</sup> Building on his work with Connell, as well as critical analysis by Christine Beasley, Messerschmidt argues that this process establishes a new variant - *dominant* masculinity. This form may not always be hegemonic, in the sense that it doesn't subjugate. Still, it is “the most celebrated, common, widespread, or current form of masculinity in a particular setting.” Messerschmidt also stresses that dominant masculinities are fluid and have the ability to become hegemonic or lose their hegemony.<sup>27</sup>

To bring this all together, it is important to understand that the concept of masculinity exists in a hierarchy and there are many expressions of the concept at any given time. Different variations (or even distinct versions) can exist at local, regional, or global levels. If a masculine ideal crosses a geographical boundary, it is inherently possible for it to hold a different hierarchal position in one place over another. Furthermore, an expression of masculinity can only reach “hegemonic” status if it subjugates femininity and *other*

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<sup>25</sup> Emphasis in original; James. W. Messerschmidt, *Hegemonic Masculinity: Formulation, Reformulation, and Amplification* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018), 107.

<sup>26</sup> Messerschmidt, *Hegemonic Masculinity*, ix-xi, 71; James W. Messerschmidt, *Masculinities in the Making: From The Local To The Global* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), 33-34.

<sup>27</sup> Messerschmidt, *Hegemonic Masculinities*, 74-77; Messerschmidt, *Masculinities in the Making*, 33-34; See also Christine Beasley, "Rethinking Hegemonic Masculinity in a Globalizing World," *Men and Masculinities* 11, no. 1 (2008): 86-103.

masculinities. It is through this subjugation that it gains its power and can influence the terms of gendered behaviour. This exploration is primarily concerned with regional expressions of hegemonic masculinity at the nation-state level during the early Cold War period.

From an historical standpoint, Michael Kimmel's *Manhood in America* (1996) is one of the earliest cultural histories of region-level masculinity in the United States. His research charts the expression of competing masculinities from the nineteenth century forward. Crucial to this exploration is the development of the hegemonic dominance of the "self-made man" archetype by the turn of the twentieth century. As Kimmel points out, fears about growing industrialization and urban development were thought to have an over-civilizing effect on men. In the nineteenth century the United States saw large demographic change and a 30% shift downward in men employed as farmers between 1800 and 1880. This statistic runs alongside a 50% drop in men who were self-employed across roughly the same period. As single men, women, and whole families flowed into the developing urban centres, the manufacturing sector found a ready, willing (and cheap) workforce for expanding, piecemeal, assembly-style production.<sup>28</sup> This trend was similarly evident in Canada, with the share of the nation's urban population jumping from 31.8% to 45.2% in the twenty years between 1891 and 1911 alone. Concern quickly grew in both countries, amidst unskilled, low-wage labour, about men's place in society and the newfound lack of individualism in their work. Invoking Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis, Kimmel argues that "the self-made man had tamed the wilderness, and so it could no longer be relied upon to make him wild." Thus, the cities provided little in terms of an outlet for

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<sup>28</sup> Kimmel, 57-62.

traditional masculine expression. Doug Owsram points to a similar concept in Canada, which saw the new nation-state taking much of its rugged identity from the settling of the West and rural development.<sup>29</sup>

This turn-of-the-century “crisis” of the “self-made man” is important because it neatly parallels postwar concerns about manhood that are also based on fears about modernity and technological advancement. In the early twentieth century, President Theodore Roosevelt believed the solution was found in what he referred to as the “strenuous life.” With the frontier closed, society “reinvented the frontier as simply the outdoors.”<sup>30</sup> Dude ranches became a popular attraction in the United States, as did hunting (strength came from the consumption of red meat). Sporting crazes took hold, with men taking newfound interest in boxing, baseball, football, tennis, and golf. Anything to get men outdoors and help keep the body fit was seen as beneficial. The Boy Scouts were also founded in this era to get young boys into the wilderness. There was fear that cities and the largely female influence of mothers and teachers would create a new generation of effeminate sissies.<sup>31</sup> In Canada, it was common for doctors to prescribe “wilderness holidays” for men whom they feared were suffering the effects of “overcivilization.” Meanwhile, a recent monograph by Kevin Woodger stresses that the emergence of both the Boy Scouts and Cadets in Canada was borne of a similar anti-modernist response to that in the United States. Canadians were also concerned about the feminizing effects of

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<sup>29</sup> Kimmel, 61; Doug Owsram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1980), 14-25; Fredrick Jackson Turner’s “frontier thesis,” at its most simplified level, argues that the egalitarian nature of the frontier’s wilderness was foundational to the creation of American democracy. For more information see Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” in *The Frontier in American History* (New York H.H. Holt and Company, 1920).

<sup>30</sup> Kimmel, 92; See also Theodore Roosevelt, “The Strenuous Life,” April 10, 1899, *Voices of Democracy: The U.S. Oratory Project*, <https://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/roosevelt-strenuous-life-1899-speech-text/>

<sup>31</sup> Kimmel, 91-93, 112, 120-24.

urban life on young boys.<sup>32</sup>

It is not surprising, then, that our modern conceptualization of the words “masculine” and “masculinity” enter the Western lexicon in the late nineteenth century. Gail Bederman in *Manliness and Civilization* (1995) observes that the terms are constructs that date to the 1890s. This is not to say that concepts of “manliness” or “manhood” did not exist before the 1890s. Rather, the emergence of “masculinity” represents an attempt to grapple with concerns that the Victorian ideals of manhood — self-reliance, courage, honesty, and resolve — were insufficient in an industrializing age of passive labour. Initially, the ideas of “masculine” and “masculinity” encompassed all traits of maleness but would soon come to embody the ideals laid out by attempts to imbue men with a sense-of-self from an era gone by. These characteristics, which remain with us today, include physical strength, aggression, competitiveness, and sexual prowess.<sup>33</sup> Bederman is quick to stress, however, that there is an issue with the suggestion that masculinity was ever in “crisis.” Masculinity’s continued societal dominance is why the reader has likely noticed that the word “crisis” appears in quotation marks each time it is used. Bederman argues that men’s dominant position in society, regardless of emergent and changing societal fears about degrees of manliness, is never actually at risk. Thus, it cannot be considered in “crisis.”<sup>34</sup> Connell too stands against the idea of a “crisis” of masculinity because of manhood’s dominant position. Instead, she returns us to the notion of competing masculinities and the process of disruption and transformation. A sense of “crisis” can

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<sup>32</sup> Christopher Dummitt, *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 19-20; Kevin Woodger, “‘No Mere Child’s Play’: The Canadian Cadet Movement and the Boy Scouts of Canada in the Twentieth Century” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto 2020), 9-12.

<sup>33</sup> Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 6, 15; See also Cuordileone, 11.

<sup>34</sup> Bederman, 11.

emerge during this process, as “attempts to restore a dominant masculinity” occur.<sup>35</sup> To use the turn-of-the-century as an example, when decadent Victorian masculinity was found wanting against rapid societal change, a new variant emerged that sought to restore the agency of the “self-made man” of the frontier. This transition is often interpreted as a “crisis.”

Before moving on to discuss the early twentieth century, it is worth taking a moment to highlight that the fixation on creating rugged men and boys in this period stemmed from more than concerns about urban industrial life. There is an intense *nativist* element that exists in both Canada and the United States at this time. It was driven by fears about the need to stave off what many, including Theodore Roosevelt, thought was pending “race suicide.” The machinations behind these concerns are not overly relevant to this exploration, but it is worth bearing in mind that fears about effeminacy coexist with fears about increasing numbers of women entering the workforce, immigration, as well as declining birth rates. Nor did the presence of Indigenous peoples or African Americans figure into attempts to create what can only be described as a white, Anglo-Protestant civilization. In both Canada and the United States, the need for rugged, Christian masculinity was inherently tied to a narrow construct of racial supremacy and the desire to build what was seen as an advanced civilization. Efforts to build up manhood existed alongside narrow immigration laws, hierarchical lists of desired immigrants, segregation, and pressure on the *right* kinds of women (those who were white, of European ancestry, and easily assimilable) to reproduce.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Connell, 84

<sup>36</sup> American Scholarship: John F. Kasson, *Houdini, Tarzan, and the Perfect Man: The White Male Body and the Challenge of Modernity in America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2001); Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago:

It is during the beginning of the twentieth century, with its continued focus on the decline of the self-made man, that homosexual subcultures emerge with the growth of Canadian and American cities. Homosexuality's growing visibility is thought to only confirm society's worst fears about the erosion masculinity. This era is useful in highlighting the complexity of the masculine hierarchy to which Connell alludes and how it responds to perceived threats. John D'Emilio and Estelle Freedman, in their history of sexuality in the United States, point out that the growth of a distinct homosexual culture in many cities resulted from a mass influx of single men and women looking for work. Such migration made it far easier for gay men and women to find each other than would have been possible in secluded rural life. It was not that homosexuality became normalized; far from it. Rather, in the early twentieth century it became divorced from the act of sodomy and took on the mantle of *identity* rather than *practice*. As theorist Michel Foucault observes: "The sodomite had been a temporary aberration; the homosexual was now a species."<sup>37</sup> The early twentieth century was also the era of Sigmund Freud, who theorized that "inversion" of sexual preferences resulted from the lack of a strong father figure in a young boy's life. This played heavily into rationalizing existing fears that industrial society and modernity harmed men and boys. The growing visibility of homosocial culture in cities

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University of Chicago Press, 1995); David R. Roediger, *Working Toward Whiteness: How America's Immigrants Became White* (New York: Basic Books, 2005); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of A Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Canadian Scholarship: Carl Berger, *Sense of Power: Studies in The Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013); Amy Shaw, "The Boer War, Masculinity, and Citizenship in Canada, 1899-1902" in *Contesting Bodies and Nation in Canadian History*, eds. Patrizia Gentile and Jane Nicholas (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2013); Graeme Thompson, "Upper Canada's Empire: Liberalism, Race, and Western Expansion in British North America, 1860s – 1914," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 48, no. 1 (2020); Norman Knowles, "'As Christ The Carpenter': Work-Camp Missions and the Construction of Christian Manhood," in *Making Men, Making History: Canadian Masculinities Across Time and Place*, eds. Peter Gossage and Robert Rutherford (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018).

<sup>37</sup> John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Freedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 226-27.

only seemed to verify Freud's theorizations.<sup>38</sup>

In his seminal work, *Gay New York* (1994), George Chauncey explores the emergence of an urban homosocial culture in New York City in the early twentieth century. His monograph is crucial in highlighting how the evolution of the concept of homosexuality was far from sudden or clear-cut in ideation. Rather, he points to a complex subculture that grappled with the idea of identity and sex roles early in the twentieth century. While not openly tolerated, Chauncey argues that there were dedicated spaces to navigate questions of sexuality in this era. It was during the Great Depression that assumptions about heterosexuality and homosexuality became more clearly delineated, and the latter transformed into a moral crisis.<sup>39</sup> Steven Maynard, at times drawing on Chauncey's work, points to similar concerns about urbanization and morality in the growth of a homosocial subculture in Toronto. He identifies increasing alarm among the judiciary and the press regarding homosexuality in the early twentieth century. As this disquiet became more prevalent, there is an intensification in the force with which police sought to target public homosexual acts. Interestingly, comparable to Chauncey, Maynard ties an uptick in homosexual visibility to the increased volume of men coming through Toronto during World War One as a result of the city's position as a military garrison.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Eric Anderson, *Inclusive Masculinity: The Changing Nature of Masculinities*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 28; George Chauncey, *Gay New York: Gender, Urban Culture, and the Makings of the Gay Male World, 1890-1940* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 124-25.

<sup>39</sup> Chauncey, 13-23; Prior to the mid-twentieth century, Chauncey notes that the duality of the heterosexual-homosexual dichotomy had yet to solidify into today's connotations. One's identity was tied to sex role, rather than the gender of one's sexual partners. "Inverts" were typically men, the term coming from Freud's theorization, that occupied what was seen as the stereotypical feminine sex role. The growing visibility of these men is what stoked concerns about effeminacy and the modern male. In contrast to those who viewed themselves as "inverts," men who engaged in a stereotypically masculine sex role with other men would not likely have defined themselves as homosexual. While sodomy still carried stigma, it was possible to hold onto one's sense of masculinity and gender conformity through one's sex position.

<sup>40</sup> Steven Maynard, "Through a Hole in the Lavatory Wall: Homosexual Subcultures, Police Surveillance, and the Dialectics of Discovery, Toronto, 1890-1930," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5, no. 2 (1994): 207-42; Steven Maynard, "'Horrible Temptations': Sex, Men, and Working-Class Male Youth in Urban



In Canada in this era, dominant ideals of masculinity are heavily linked to the idea of Empire. In the United States, they existed through a sort of hemispherical Manifest Destiny.<sup>41</sup> Both the recent Spanish-American (1898) and Second Boer (1899-1902) wars loomed large in their respective nations' public memory, as did nostalgia for the Civil War and War of 1812. In what Mark Moss refers to as the "cult of the hero," accounts of the heroic exploits of generals from these battles were popular in the public consciousness. By the time the globe stumbled into World War One, the conflict offered "the hope of social and personal regeneration through the sorts of experiences no longer available in everyday life." War could replace the frontier as the arbiter of manliness. In Canada, at least, this explained the eagerness of many young men in signing up. It was a chance to prove their manhood and escape the drudgery of modern industrialism.<sup>42</sup> E. Anthony Rotundo in *American Manhood* (1993) notes that war also moves from something horrifying in the post-Civil War era to a crucial foundation to manhood and masculinity in the United States. These "fighting virtues," in the absence of war, could only truly be demonstrated on the athletic field, where contests gradually became as much about mercilessly dominating one's opponents as it was about physical health.<sup>43</sup>

War placed a premium on young men's physical and mental health, and as Cynthia Comacchio observes, ironically World War One only managed to intensify fears about the gradual erosion of the health and fitness of men. Mechanized warfare turned out to be far

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Ontario, 1890-1935," *Canadian Historical Review* 78, no. 2 (1997): 191-235.

<sup>41</sup> Carl Berger, *Sense of Power: Studies in The Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 236-43; E. Anthony Rotundo, *American Manhood: Transformations in Masculinity from the Revolution to the Modern Era* (New York: Basic Books, 1993), 233-39.

<sup>42</sup> Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001), 36-39, 54; See also Mike O'Brien, "Manhood and the Militia Myth: Masculinity, Class, and Militarism in Ontario, 1902-1914," *Labour/Le Travail* 42 (Fall 1998): 115-41.

<sup>43</sup> Rotundo, 233, 240-241.

less glamorous than the romanticized Victorian ideal of war, and many soldiers in Canada and the United States returned from battle physically and/or emotionally damaged. The presence of injured, maimed, and disabled bodies, when held up against the idealized muscular soldier, presented a stark societal challenge in navigating notions of manhood in the interwar period. Men whose disabilities and injuries made it a struggle to return to their former lives and workplaces were prone to withdrawing from society all together. Beyond physical ailments, one of the most common afflictions facing returning veterans was known colloquially as “shell shock.”<sup>44</sup> Symptoms included insomnia, hysteria, hot and cold flashes, exhaustion. Whereas today we recognize the root cause as a trauma response and prescribe treatment for post-traumatic stress, in the interwar period these men were thought by many medical professionals to be suffering from insufficient masculinity. As Kimmel observes, “shell shock [was seen as] a form of resistance to militarized manhood.”<sup>45</sup>

The next twenty years are largely defined by a singular event — the Great Depression. The ideal of the sole male “breadwinner,” which it needs to be stressed *was* an ideal, had been socially codified in the early twentieth century by the trade union movement. In bargaining for increased wages for workers, unions leaned on the need for a man to provide for his family. This trope was also helpful in attempting to force women out of the workforce in favour of family men searching for a wage. Third, it helped to provide a sense of agency and accomplishment, in an era when low-paid, mechanized labour offered little sense of autonomy.<sup>46</sup> Thus, when the economy collapsed and millions

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<sup>44</sup> Cynthia Comacchio, “‘A Postscript for Father’: Defining a New Fatherhood in Interwar Canada,” *Canadian Historical Review* 78, no. 3 (1997): 390; Desmond Morton, *Fight or Pay: Soldiers’ Families in the Great War* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 150-52.

<sup>45</sup> Kimmel, 90-91.

<sup>46</sup> Kimmel, 132-33; Nancy Christie, *Engendering the State: Family, Work, and Welfare in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 205, 209-12, 246-48.

of men became reliant on relief rolls, they perceived themselves as failing a crucial test of manhood: providing for their families. As one American put it to sociologist Mirra Komarovsky in 1940: “Before the Depression, I wore the pants in this family and rightly so. During the Depression, I lost something.”<sup>47</sup> It wasn’t uncommon, said one Canadian welfare administrator, to see men with tears in their eyes when signing relief rolls, “as though they were signing away their manhood and their right to be a husband and sit at the head of the table.”<sup>48</sup>

What is evident at this point, after briefly examining a half century of masculinity history in Canada and the United States, is that societal concerns seem to undergo a “cyclical pattern of anxiety and worry.” The result is “the development of new cultural forms to fill the spaces vacated by older behaviours that seem less suitable or attainable.”<sup>49</sup> The observation is James Gilbert’s, but it builds upon Connell’s theorizations. A masculine ideal persists from the late-nineteenth century that focuses on physical and mental strength, the man’s role as a provider and protector, and an assertiveness that demands autonomy. It might be a hegemonic ideal, but it proves hard to live up to and is seemingly constantly under siege by external forces – from the growth of urban industry, to mechanized warfare, and finally a crashing economy. The constant sense of “crisis” is where criticisms of hegemonic masculinity, like those of Stephen Whitehead, originate from. The hegemonic ideal does not seemingly represent an attainable reality for many men. Nonetheless, the rugged, brawny, autonomous breadwinner remained a fiction that men attempted to work towards, to capture an idyllic version of a pre-Industrial past. When external factors got in

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<sup>47</sup> Kimmel, 133.

<sup>48</sup> Comacchio, 394.

<sup>49</sup> James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 16.

the way – again and again, a sense of “crisis” emerged

The pervading helplessness of the Great Depression, Christina Jarvis observes, is why there was mass enthusiasm from many jobless or underemployed young men when America entered World War Two. The chance to replace one’s eroded masculine image with one of the heroic citizen-soldier ultimately overcame America’s isolationist tendencies. What emerged was a hypermasculine archetype, that sought to answer Nazi German ideals regarding race and the body. The focus was on heroism, brawn, and courage.<sup>50</sup> The emergence of Capitan America as a cartoon character in 1941 embodies the transformation of this masculine ideal perfectly and draws a sharp contrast to the dignified Victorian-era masculine ideals of World War One.

Jarvis’ research points to a marked change in the wartime propaganda as proof of this fact. Feminine symbolism, like Lady Liberty and Lady Columbia of World War One were banished, and the elderly Uncle Sam received a makeover, becoming younger and far more muscular.<sup>51</sup> The result, as Susan Faludi observes, is that the United States “came out of World War Two with a sense of itself as a *masculine* nation,” whose ““boys’ [were] ready to assume the mantle of national authority and international leadership.” Even more important, from a psychological and gendered perspective, was that “a generation of unemployed fathers [who] had been unable to provide for their families, emerged from World War II with the conviction... strong enough to prove a foundation for the domestic peace to come.”<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Christina S. Jarvis, *The Male Body At War: American Masculinity During World War II* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 2004), 11, 38-43.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> Susan Faludi, *Stiffed: The Betrayal of the American Man* (New York: William Morrow and Company, 1999), 16, 19.

Geoffrey Hayes and Kirk Goodlet note that in the Canadian context, historians have often been eager to forego examination of masculinity in the military during World War Two. Instead, they tend to focus on the postwar return to ‘normal.’ The pair takes issue with this approach and observe that Canada’s “armed forces were keen to measure the masculinity of Canadian men well before they reached the battlefield.” In surveying officer culture, Hayes and Goodlet find that members of the Canadian military were constantly negotiating masculine ideals throughout the war, and in the case of officers, there was a transformation from patrician to paternal.<sup>53</sup> At the same time, as Paul Jackson highlights in *One of the Boys* (2004), wartime offered both newfound freedom and extreme regulation when it came to homosexual experimentation. His work shows that there were varying degrees of tolerance, though not permissiveness. Penalties for homosexual conduct increased severely as one moved up the military ranks and military discipline legitimated strict gender ideals. Heterosexual rape corresponded to only 1% of all court martial cases in the Canadian military, while the remaining 99% of sexual misconduct charges were for homosexual activity, overwhelmingly consensual in nature.<sup>54</sup> Such discharges followed a man into his postwar life. Howard Chiang’s study of the “blue discharge” used by the American military points out that homosexuals removed from the military were subsequently denied entitlements of the GI Bill, including housing loans and tuition coverage.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Geoffrey Hayes and Kirk W. Goodlet, “Exploring Masculinity in the Canadian Army Officer Corps, 1939-45,” *Journal of Canadian Studies* 48, no. 2 (2014): 45, 58-59; For more information, see also: Geoffrey Hayes, *Crerar’s Lieutenants: Inventing the Canadian Junior Army Officer, 1939-45* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017).

<sup>54</sup> Paul Jackson, *One of the Boys: Homosexuality in the Military during World War Two*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2010), 16-17, 89.

<sup>55</sup> Howard H. Chiang, “Sexuality and Gender in Cold War America,” in *Cold War and the McCarthy Era: Peoples and Perspectives*, ed. Caroline S. Emmons (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 112-13.

The very title of Elaine Tyler May's seminal study on gender in the postwar era, *Homeward Bound* (1988), speaks to the importance that the role of family and the concept of fatherhood came to play in the aftermath of World War Two. May argues that the rush of many young men and women into marriage and traditional gender roles occurred in an attempt to seek some sense of return to "normalcy." The upheaval of the Great Depression and then war had "created nostalgia for a mythic past in which male breadwinners provided a decent living, and homemakers were freed from outside employment." The home and the establishment of the nuclear family further led to a sense of increased security, in an increasingly insecure world.<sup>56</sup> Doug Owrain, from a Canadian perspective, argues similarly that the "romanticized and idealized vision of family was a natural human reaction to years of disruption."<sup>57</sup> It is important to remember that the geopolitical realities that the world entered in the postwar period were far different from those they left behind. The war had ended through the use of atomic weapons that took hundreds of thousands of lives, many in an instant. Hiroshima and Nagasaki were left in ruins. Meanwhile, the United States and the Soviet Union, after defeating Nazi Germany, moved quickly from allies to enemies. These basic tenets are crucial in understanding the development of what Elaine Tyler May refers to as "domestic containment."

Borrowing from foreign policy expert George Kennan's concept of geopolitical "containment,"<sup>58</sup> May extends it to the private sphere:

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<sup>56</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, Revised Edition (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 1-5, 9, 16-17, 40.

<sup>57</sup> Doug Owrain, *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby Boom Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 12.

<sup>58</sup> The concept of "domestic containment" sees May borrow from foreign policy theorist George Kennan's idea of geopolitical containment of the Soviet Union. The theory dates to an unsigned article in *Foreign Affairs* in July 1947, entitled "The Sources of Soviet Conduct." The author, later revealed to be Kennan, essentially cautions patience in diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. He argues that the Soviet system is inherently unstable, both economically and politically. In Kennan's view, the Kremlin's

In the domestic version of containment, the 'sphere of influence' [is] the home. Within its walls, potentially dangerous social forces of the new age might be tamed, so they could contribute to the secure and fulfilling life to which postwar women and men aspired. Domestic containment was bolstered by a powerful political culture that rewarded its adherents and marginalized its detractors.<sup>59</sup>

The question, then, is from what kind of social forces were these men and women trying to protect themselves? Communism became public enemy number one and rooting out subversives within government, private industry, as well as film and television was a major fixation in the early postwar period. Stable marriages and families were thought to keep men away from vices that communists could exploit. The biggest concern, given its growing visibility, was homosexuality. However, extramarital affairs, alcohol and drug addiction, gambling, and other vices brought with them similar susceptibility to blackmail.<sup>60</sup>

Historically, exactly how communism and homosexuality became linked together in the immediate postwar surge of moral panic remains unclear. Both were seen as perverse, and homosexuals were thought to be especially vulnerable to communist ideology because of inherent moral weakness. K.A. Cuordileone argues that the linkage can be found in the accusations of sociologist R.G. Waldeck, who pushed the notion that there was a global organization of homosexuals subversively aligned with the international communist conspiracy. To those who would dismiss this linkage as the aberration of one rogue

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leadership would move slow in encouraging revolutions in other nations, to avoid the embarrassment of failure. At the same time, where they did encourage revolution, Kennan argued that "United States policy toward the Soviet Union must be that of a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies" (575). Essentially, Kennan advised patient but firm pressure in the face of attempted expansion, which would force the Soviet Union to back away and bide its time. This benefited the United States as, over time, Kennan felt the political-economic structure of the Soviet Union was untenable. For the full article, see "X," "The Sources of Soviet Conduct," *Foreign Affairs* 25, no. 4 (July 1947): 566-582.

<sup>59</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 16.

<sup>60</sup> May, *Homeward Bound*, 97; Gary Kinsman and Patrizia Gentile, *The Canadian War on Queers* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 8; David MacKenzie, *Canada's Red Scare* (Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association, 2001), 11.

sociologist, it is worth noting that U.S. legislators like Senator Kenneth S. Wherry and Congressman Arthur L. Miller circulated a theory that the Soviet's had obtained Hitler's "master list" of global homosexuals.<sup>61</sup>

Canada was no stranger to this intrigue. Its Criminal Code and Immigration Act were updated in 1948 and 1952, respectively, and homosexuality was deemed a subversive force that was the work of "criminal sexual psychopaths."<sup>62</sup> The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) frequently purged the civil service of suspected homosexuals. While these actions were kept quieter than those in the United States, dismissals were heavily based on perceived "character flaws." By the end of the 1940s, the RCMP was running over two thousand security reviews a month. In 1949, there were 213 people identified as problematic in the civil service; however, only 27 were for "political subversion." The remaining 87% of cases were dismissed for "character flaws," which in many cases was code for homosexuality or suspected queerness. By comparison, in Washington, between 1947 and 1950, roughly five gay men were being fired per month.<sup>63</sup>

The reason homosexuality became such a fearsome target in the postwar era, Cuordileone explains, was because homosexuals were much easier to find than *actual* communists.<sup>64</sup> Part of what spurred the idea of the "homosexual menace" at this time was the work of sexologist Alfred Kinsey, who published *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* in 1948. His study was controversial, but also a bestseller. It reported that fifty percent of adult men studied admitted to sexual attraction to another male, while 37% reported having

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<sup>61</sup> Cuordileone, 28-29, 54, 67-68.

<sup>62</sup> Kinsman and Gentile, 72.

<sup>63</sup> Kinsman and Gentile, 72-74, 86, 91; Daniel J. Robinson and David Kimmel, "The Queer Career of Homosexual Security Vetting in Cold War Canada," *The Canadian Historical Review* 75, no. 3 (1994): 327.

<sup>64</sup> Cuordileone, 29.



at least one homosexual experience resulting in orgasm. Kinsey's work destroyed previous notions that gay men were an aberration of psychological development, few and far between. To put these statistics in perspective, if one placed Kinsey's results overtop the number of men who served in the United States military during World War Two, there would be anywhere between 650,000 to 1.6 million veterans (roughly 10%) who were exclusively homosexual.<sup>65</sup>

To return to Chauncey's work, moral panic about homosexuality continued to be rooted in fears of the masculine ideal becoming unmoored.<sup>66</sup> It is important to recognize that many viewed homosexuality as something that could develop without constant vigilance. It was, in a sense, considered contagious. As a 1950 U.S. Senate report, "Employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government," observes: "One homosexual can pollute a government office."<sup>67</sup> This growing concern about the "feminization" of men, so soon after the ultimate wartime test, renewed fears about national weakness, but also a more familiar influence — modernity. Susan Faludi argues that the immediate postwar rush to the "good life" (to establish families, purchase houses, automobiles, and appliances) created a consumer culture based on leisure and convenience. The problem came from the fact that Cold War consumer ideals bore little resemblance to the "brutal hardships of World War II" and that "the more productive aspects of manhood, such as building or cultivating or contributing to a society, couldn't establish a foothold on the shiny flat surface of a commercial culture, a looking glass before which men could only

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<sup>65</sup> Cuordileone, 71, 83; D'Emilio and Freedman, 285-88; Michael Bronski, *A Queer History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2011), 162

<sup>66</sup> Chauncey, 331-333.

<sup>67</sup> Cuordileone, 52.

act out a crude semblance of masculinity.”<sup>68</sup> It is not a surprise, then, that postwar fears quickly begin to resemble those of turn-of-the-century industrial society.

Both *The Lonely Crowd* (1950) by David Riesman and *The Organization Man* (1956) by William Whyte work to make sense of the impact of modernity on men from a sociological perspective. Similar to Kinsey’s study on sexuality, they rocketed atop the bestseller lists in Canada and the United States. Riesman identifies three types of men: *tradition-directed*, *inner-directed*, and *other-directed*. The first form, *tradition-directed*, was the result of an early pre-Renaissance social ideal. In Riesman’s view, such individuals had their conception of self-tied to traditions, values, and the community that had endured for centuries. The *inner-directed male* is a more modern expression and while still constrained by social norms, he is motivated by internalized goals. There is a sense of purpose to the *inner-directed* that motivates the foundations of the “self-made man.” Finally, the newest form, emerging by the early twentieth century, is the *outer-directed* male. Often found in urban centres, their focus is on conformity and popularity by measuring oneself against others.<sup>69</sup> Discussion in the 1950s, in part motivated by Riesman’s theorizations, surrounds the loss of the *inner-directed* male to those seeking conformity in the age of suburban homes, office jobs, and rigid gender ideals and expectations.

In 1956, William Whyte gives the problem a name, the “organization man.” While he makes it clear that his “book is not a plea for nonconformity,” Whyte addresses concerns

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<sup>68</sup> Faludi, 36-37.

<sup>69</sup> David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd*, Abridged Edition (1950; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 8, 11-21, 24-25; See also Robert Rutherford, "Fathers in Multiple Roles: Assessing Modern Canadian Fatherhood as a Masculine Category," in *Canadian Men and Masculinities: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, eds. Christopher J. Greig and Wayne J. Martino (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2012), 82.

that growing social pressures are stifling individualism. While acknowledging that “individualism which denies the obligations of man to others is manifestly impossible,” he is worried that corporate culture has gone too far the other way; that men have sublimated themselves as functionaries to organization’s will for the larger social good.<sup>70</sup> In this sense, he also takes aim at the growth of suburbia, which he describes as “the ultimate expression of the interchangeability so sought by the organization,” seeking to establish a “vast sea of homogeneity.”<sup>71</sup> In Whyte’s work there are shades of the very same concerns that emerged around the turn-of-the-century, as industrial society and urbanization raised fears of a decline of the “self-made man.”

Christopher Dummitt defines the attempt to navigate these competing masculine pressures as a search for the “manly modern.” It was an effort by men in the postwar era to navigate competing interests. The major focus was on “reaffirm[ing] gender divisions after the flux of depression and war,” while also trying to navigate a public sphere that was focused on production and consumption, saw the rise of the corporate desk job, and found an increasing number of women entering the workforce. This last point, especially, conflicted strongly with the postwar attempt to return to the ideal of the nuclear family, that in many senses was untenable. As Dummitt states, it was less a “crisis” of masculinity in the 1950s and early 1960s, and more of a desperate attempt to find a way to “update” the patriarchy.<sup>72</sup>

Such is the state of masculinity by the dawn of the 1950s, when this exploration begins. Early chapters examine how paternalistic ideals in this era were harnessed and

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<sup>70</sup> William F. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (1956; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 10-14.

<sup>71</sup> Whyte, 298, 330.

<sup>72</sup> Dummitt, 2, 20, 156-58.

reflected in the political process in both Canada and the United States. Based on Connell and Messerschmidt's work, the concept of the father-figure meets the criteria to be discussed as a "hegemonic" masculine variant during the early Cold War. As May's discussion of "domestic containment" outlines, the nuclear family and its set gender roles defined the male breadwinner's supremacy, while attempting to relegate women again to the domestic sphere. The nuclear family was also thought to bring security in an age of communist exploitation of vice — most commonly, homosexuality. At the same time, as discussed, concerns about postwar modernity (office jobs, suburban life, rigid gender ideals) begin to increasingly fuel concerns about a renewed "crisis" of masculinity. Paternalism is placed in a straitjacket, which ultimately came to be seen harmful to masculinity. As evidenced by Riesman and Whyte's works, concern grew across the 1950s about conformity and the lack of individualism of the suburban male. These challenges to the hegemonic ideal would then be reflected themselves in the politics of the late 1950s and early 1960s. Similar to the turn-of-the-century, the outdoors, the idea of the frontier, and physical fitness all saw a resurgence, as paternalism attempts to present a more vibrant image. The hegemonic ideal by the 1960s needed to be practiced with, in the words of one of its most ardent proponents, more "vig-ah."

### **Cold War Origins and Nuclear Fears**

The Alsop brothers, writing for the *Saturday Evening Post* in July 1950, observed that there were two "mental images" that embodied the anxiety of the early postwar period. First, the "handsome young man with high cheekbones" and second, the spectre of "a large,

mushroom-shaped cloud.”<sup>73</sup> It cannot be understated the degree to which the advent of nuclear weaponry and the progression of this technology throughout the early Cold War fed into concerns about modernity and masculinity. Atomic and later hydrogen bombs became a looming destructive presence and a literal metaphor for modern postwar life. As has already been established, there are evident parallels between the rapid industrialization of the late nineteenth century and the concerns it generated about manhood, and the similar expressions of disconcert in the postwar era. How were weak, conformist men supposed to protect the Western world if war came again? Especially because a Third World War would almost certainly involve destruction and devastation on a scale never before seen by humankind.<sup>74</sup>

Elaine Tyler May points out in *Fortress America* (2017) that “perhaps at no point was fear more widespread than in the years after World War II.” That concern around things like atomic warfare and communist subversion reached into the functioning of “social norms, election results, public policies, and daily life.”<sup>75</sup> Paul Boyer elaborates, observing that in the immediate aftermath of the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, these fears resulted in all kinds of “atomic panaceas” and policy propositions hoping to regulate the moral implications of atomic weapons. His work, *By The Bombs Early Light* (1985), explores the cultural reaction in the first years of the postwar era. At this time, everything from United Nations control of atomic weaponry to some form of world government were pitched as a solution to the wide-scale destruction of future wars. There

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<sup>73</sup> Cuordileone, 59.

<sup>74</sup> Cuordileone, xv-xvi; Deborah McPhail, “What to do with the ‘Tubby Hubby’? ‘Obesity,’ the Crisis of Masculinity, and the Nuclear Family in Early Cold War Canada,” *Antipode* 41, no. 5 (2009): 1027, 1031.

<sup>75</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Fortress America: How We Embraced Fear and Abandoned Democracy* (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 1.

was also a countercurrent of great hope that nuclear technology would result in scientific advancements in energy, medicine, and transportation.<sup>76</sup> Canada's *Maclean's* magazine suggested soon after the bombing of Japan that while nuclear technology was "a power of inconceivable destruction," it could also be a "source of inexhaustible wealth."<sup>77</sup>

Andrew Burtch's *Give Me Shelter* (2012) highlights early concerns that the Canadian government had about public perceptions of the atomic bomb. General Charles Foulkes, who served as Chief of the General Staff, expressed concern that "alarmist statements [are] being made in the press concerning the effects of atomic bombs" and that "people were being told that there was no defence against these weapons." Burtch points to publications like John Hersey's *Hiroshima* (1946), which was originally serialized in the *New Yorker*, as well as David Bradley's coverage of the 1946 Bikini Atoll tests. These accounts gave a horrifyingly accurate picture of the destruction and death created by the use of these weapons. Another account, "If Atomic War Comes," written by Colonel Wallace Goforth for *Maclean's* in October 1947, outlines a hypothetical atomic attack on Winnipeg. It stressed that an attack on the city centre would lead to 40,000 deaths, 60,000 injuries, and another 200,000 people rendered homeless.<sup>78</sup> While Winnipeg was not a likely target on the frontlines of an atomic war, the scale of the devastation provided a sharp wake-up-call for more populous cities, like Toronto and Montreal.

Similar disquiet starts to appear in the United States given growing understanding of the intricacies of the weaponry. The novel aspect of the weapon, embodied in children's

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<sup>76</sup> Boyer, 33-45, 109-121.

<sup>77</sup> Jennifer Lynn Hunter, "Is It Even Worthwhile Doing the Dishes? Canadians and the Nuclear Threat, 1945-1963 (Ph.D. Dissertation, McGill, 2004), 46; Original source, "For Good or For Evil," *Maclean's*, September 15, 1945.

<sup>78</sup> Andrew Burtch, *Give Me Shelter: The Failure of Canada's Cold War Civil Defence* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2012), 21-23; For original source see Wallace Goforth, "If Atomic War Comes," *Maclean's*, October 15, 1947.

playground games and the utter relief of soldiers who returned home instead of facing a bloody invasion of the Japanese mainland, is quickly eroded by postwar reality.<sup>79</sup> Between 1947 and 1948, increased anxiety was evident in a growing number of Americans who felt that a Third World War would occur within the next decade. In a single year, the number rose from 58% to 66%.<sup>80</sup> Canadians, meanwhile, generally viewed American atomic advancement as making war less likely, while Soviet advancements made war more likely. 45% of Canadians surveyed in December 1949 felt that the Soviet development of the atomic bomb increased the likelihood of war.<sup>81</sup>

Pinpointing the start of the Cold War has always been troublesome for historians. It evolved organically and exponentially out of rising geopolitical conflict at the end of World War Two. Does one date it to the moment that the United States used atomic weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Was it three years later, when the United States and the Soviet Union faced off over Berlin? Can one go as far as to leave it until the beginning of the arms race in 1949? There is one date many Canadian scholars use to specifically pinpoint the start of the Cold War — September 5<sup>th</sup>, 1945. It was just three weeks following the Japanese surrender to the Allied Powers, when in the late afternoon Igor Gouzenko, a Soviet cypher clerk, left his embassy in Ottawa with documents that proved the existence of a Soviet spy ring operating in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Initially, Gouzenko had trouble being taken seriously and was turned away by the night editor of the *Ottawa Journal* and the Department of Justice. It was only following a raid on Gouzenko's empty apartment by Soviet officials that Gouzenko and his family were

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<sup>79</sup> Rose, 14.

<sup>80</sup> Scheibach, 66.

<sup>81</sup> Don Munton, "Public Opinion and the Media in Canada from Cold War to Detente to New Cold War," *International Journal* 39, no. 1 (Winter 1983/1984): 184-85.

ultimately taken under RCMP's protection.<sup>82</sup>

The Canadian prime minister, Mackenzie King, the new American president, Harry Truman, and the new British prime minister, Clement Attlee, worked to keep public knowledge of Gouzenko's defection under wraps for six months. There were obvious concerns about ongoing postwar negotiations with the Soviet Union and the effect that the spy scandal would have on them. It also bought time for intelligence agencies to surveil suspects and gather further information regarding the validity of Gouzenko's claims.<sup>83</sup> In early February 1946, possibly at the behest of an American government growing frustrated with the Soviet Union, journalist Drew Pearson received a tip about Gouzenko's defection. He broke the story on February 4<sup>th</sup>, 1946, making headlines around the world with the news that a Russian agent in Canadian custody had "confessed to the existence of a gigantic Russian espionage network inside the United States and Canada."<sup>84</sup>

What were the Soviets after? The Canadian investigation into the information provided by Gouzenko ultimately uncovered two major pursuits: atomic secrets and military technology, more specifically radar installations. While affirming that the Soviets were unable to obtain the details necessary to construct an atomic bomb from Canadian sources, officials were uncertain how much information had been stolen elsewhere.<sup>85</sup> The Kellock-Taschereau Commission, impanelled in Canada to investigate the leaks, ultimately reported that

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<sup>82</sup> Reg Whitaker and Steve Hewitt, *Canada and the Cold War* (Toronto: Lorimer & Company, 2003), 14-15; Dennis Molinaro, "How the Cold War Began... with British Help: The Gouzenko Affair Revisited," *Labour/Le Travail* 79 (2017): 144.

<sup>83</sup> Whitaker and Hewitt, 16.

<sup>84</sup> Whitaker and Marcuse, 56.

<sup>85</sup> Privy Council of Canada, *Royal Commission to Investigate the Facts Relating to and the Circumstances Surrounding the Communication by the Public Officials and Other Persons in Positions of Trust of Secret and Confidential Information to Agents of Foreign Power* (Ottawa: Privy Council Office, 1946), 617. Accessed: <http://publications.gc.ca/pub?id=9.699909&sl=0>



much vital technical information, which should still be secret to the authorities of Canada, Great Britain and the United States, has been made known to the Russians by reason of the espionage activities reported on herein. The full extent of the information handed over is impossible to say; as we have already pointed out, these operations have been going on for some time. We should emphasize that the bulk of the technical information sought by the espionage leaders related to research developments which would play an important part in the *post-war* defences of Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States.<sup>86</sup>

Then-diplomat Lester Pearson wrote to Prime Minister Mackenzie King in November 1946 that the revelations represented a “fundamental change in the Soviet state system and in the policies and views of its leaders.” In the transition from ally to adversary, he warned, “the U.S.S.R. is ultimately bound to come into open conflict with western democracy.”<sup>87</sup>

Gouzenko’s revelations touched off an anti-communist frenzy in Canada and the United States that only intensified the fear and concern in early Cold War era. As the previous section established, the process for rooting out subversive, communist elements was highly gendered, often targeting effete men rather than unrooting actual communists in government. David MacKenzie reminds us that the Canadian process was not any less intense than the public hearings before House and Senate Committees in the United States. Rather, Canadian investigations simply took place outside the gaze of the public sphere. At times, the secrecy had its benefits. It allowed for those under suspicion to be investigated and oftentimes reassigned or removed without ruining their reputation.<sup>88</sup> However, it also provided the government freedom to operate extralegally when necessary. The most glaring example of a civil rights violation came from the initial detention of the ten Canadians and one British civil servant implicated by Gouzenko. Two more individuals

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<sup>86</sup> Emphasis in original; Ibid, 618-19.

<sup>87</sup> Ian McKay and Jamie Swift, *Warrior Nation: Rebranding Canada in an Age of Anxiety* (Toronto: Between The Lines, 2012), 118.

<sup>88</sup> MacKenzie, 24-25.

were subsequently taken into custody. All thirteen were held under the extension of the War Measures Act and faced extensive questioning without formal charges, access to an attorney, or the right to bail.<sup>89</sup>

A major concern for the United States was that among Gouzenko's revelations was the fact that a spy was serving as an "assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State." Alger Hiss, who was already under suspicion by American intelligence, became the prime suspect.<sup>90</sup> Hiss worked in Roosevelt's State Department and went on to serve as an American delegate at Yalta. He later acted as the Secretary General of the San Francisco Conference that established the UN.<sup>91</sup> It was in August 1948 that Whittaker Chambers, a senior editor at *Time*, went before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) and named Alger Hiss as a Soviet spy. After Hiss' denials to the committee, Chambers produced documents that ultimately allowed a grand jury to seek charges of perjury against Hiss.<sup>92</sup> To quote K.A. Cuordileone, "Hiss became, in the conservative imagination, the embodiment of the weak-willed, effete, and ultimately treacherous eastern establishment liberal, whose 'softness' left him prone to transgressions of a political, moral, and perhaps even sexual nature."<sup>93</sup> On that last point, it is worth mentioning that the legal teams for Chambers and Hiss spent countless time trying to make accusations of homosexuality stick against the opposing client.<sup>94</sup>

Just two weeks after Hiss was convicted of perjury in February 1950, the first-term junior senator from Wisconsin rocketed to national attention during a speech in Wheeling,

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<sup>89</sup> Whitaker and Hewitt, 16-19; Whittaker and Marcuse, 28, 58-59, 65, 71.

<sup>90</sup> Amy Knight, *How The Cold War Began: The Igor Gouzenko Affair and the Hunt for Soviet Spies* (New York: Carroll and Graff Publishers, 2005), xi-xii, 1-3.

<sup>91</sup> Cuordileone, 40-41.

<sup>92</sup> Jill Lepore, *These Truths: A History of the United States* (New York: Norton, 2018), 540, 548-49.

<sup>93</sup> Cuordileone, 44.

<sup>94</sup> Cuordileone, 40-44.

West Virginia. Senator Joseph McCarthy cited Hiss' case as merely the tip of the iceberg. He accused the State Department of being overrun by communist sympathizers and claimed to possess a list of 205 known communists who worked in the U.S. government. He spoke in language that was coded in gendered rhetoric, referring to the United States as "impotent" because of a foreign policy directed by "bright young men... born with silver spoons in their mouths." He cited the need for a "moral uprising" to remove "the whole sorry mess of twisted, warped thinkings... from the national scene."<sup>95</sup> Though Congress had been carrying out anti-communist investigations for several years, McCarthy's allegations fed into the crisis atmosphere surrounding the early Cold War, especially because, in the weeks following McCarthy's allegations, John Peurifoy, the Deputy Undersecretary of State, was compelled to admit to Congress that he knew of no communists in the State Department, but that ninety-one homosexuals had been let go in recent years.<sup>96</sup>

At its core, it is important to highlight that anti-communism can also be described as an anti-intellectual movement. The linking of effete men, homosexuality, and intellectualism by men like McCarthy was not a mistake. As Richard Hofstadter observes in his Pulitzer Prize-winning *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (1963), to certain "suspicious Tories and militant philistines... intellect *is* dangerous." He doesn't entirely disagree with this position and concedes that "left free, there is nothing [intellect] will not

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<sup>95</sup> "Introduction," in *Cold War and the McCarthy Era: Peoples and Perspectives*, ed. Caroline S. Emmons (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2010), xx; Martin Manning, "Federal Loyalty Oath Program," in *Cold War and the McCarthy Era: Peoples and Perspectives*, ed. Caroline S. Emmons (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 8-19, 26; Cuordileone, 46; The original text of McCarthy's speech in Wheeling, WV can be accessed through the University of Houston's *Digital History Project*, [http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp\\_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=3633](http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/disp_textbook.cfm?smtID=3&psid=3633)

<sup>96</sup> Lepore, 550.

reconsider, analyze, throw into question.”<sup>97</sup> His observations have since gained scholarly traction among Cold War historians in both the United States and Canada. As Ian McKay and Jamie Swift argue in *Warrior Nation* (2012), Canadian conservatives sought to use anti-communism to work against the development of national health insurance, undercut union organization, and as a way to regulate social morality. Meanwhile, Jill Lepore’s recent work highlights that in the United States the anti-communist movement was “opposed [to] collectivism and centralized planning and celebrated personal liberty.” The communist menace afforded conservatives a chance to strike at the heart of the social welfare state.<sup>98</sup>

Ultimately, McCarthy’s star burned bright and fast, as he used his perch in the U.S. Senate to investigate and drag suspected communists before his subcommittee. His dogged pursuit of a faceless, shape-shifting enemy eventually saw this entire era bare his name. McCarthyism became a moniker for the Red Scare and would extend into the politics of the United States and Canada. Part of what allowed this anti-communist fervour to reach its peak at the start of the 1950s was the fact that the Soviets had just exploded their first atomic bomb, against all predictions to the contrary. Though articles in Canada’s *Financial Post* and in the *New York Times* reassured the public that a Soviet nuclear weapon was years away, on August 29<sup>th</sup>, 1949, the Cold War entered a new phase. It was marked by a

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<sup>97</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, (1963; New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 41, 45.

<sup>98</sup> McKay and Swift, 120; Jill Lepore, 553-55, 569; For further discussion on the anti-intellectual nature of the Red Scare, and how it was utilized as a way to role back liberalism, please see: S. Ani Mukherji, “Racist Saints and Communist Devils, in *Cold War and McCarthy*, ed. Caroline S. Emmons (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2010), 99-100; Alexander Dunst, *Madness in Cold War America* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 26-27; Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse, *Cold War Canada: The Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945-57* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 267; K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005), Chapter Two.

blinding flash and a tell-tale mushroom cloud over the skies of northeastern Kazakhstan.<sup>99</sup>

## **Methodology and Organization**

The previous two sections have provided a theoretical grounding in both masculinity theory and historiography, as well as a brief overview of Cold War origins in Canada and the United States. What has hopefully become apparent amongst the preceding pages is that perceived “crises” of masculinity emerge in a cyclical nature, often responding to some form of societal upheaval that is perceived to threaten the hegemonic masculine ideal. At the turn-of-the-century, industrialization and the growth of urban centres eroded the independence of men. During the Great Depression, men’s status as breadwinner, and the growing visibility of homosexuality brought fears about an apparent decline of manhood. In the postwar period, concerns about communist subversion, fuelled by Soviet advancements in nuclear weapons, imbued disquiet about masculine weakness, even as hundreds of thousands of men returned from the battlefields of Europe.

This disconcert about masculinity serves as the backdrop to the story the coming chapters tell. Advancements in weapons technology, to return to the work of Robert Zieger, serve as signposts in the progression of the Cold War. In this exploration, they also mark moments of increased anxiety that correspond with shifting masculine archetypes across the 1950s. In the initial postwar era, the hegemonic ideal coalesced around the father and family man; he was a protector against an uncertain world. Political leaders like Louis St. Laurent and Dwight Eisenhower embodied this paternalistic image. By the mid-1950s,

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<sup>99</sup> “Do We Get Value For Our Defence Dollar?,” *Financial Post*, September 3, 1949; Hanson W. Baldwin, “Has Russia The Atomic Bomb? - Probably Not,” *The New York Times*, November 9, 1947; David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939-1956* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 213-219.

however, doubts emerged, and there was concern that modern society — suburbia, the corporate job, modern conveniences were sapping men's individualism and making them soft. It's no coincidence that these fears emerged alongside the Soviet's developing a hydrogen bomb. The solution, pushed by political leaders like John Diefenbaker and John F. Kennedy, was a return to the "frontier" of exploration. They invoked the nineteenth century ideal as a rejuvenation for masculinity. For Diefenbaker, it could be found in the North. For Kennedy, the space race and programs like the Peace Corps offered the opportunity to explore. The 1960s would need new frontiers, and Diefenbaker and Kennedy promised to lead their populations toward them.

This exploration uses, as its foundation, the archival documents of the political leaders who ran for office during the years between 1949-1963. In Canada, across these years four men were serious contenders to become the Canadian prime minister: Louis St. Laurent, George Drew, John Diefenbaker, and Lester B. Pearson. Of the four, only Drew never ascended to the position. In the United States, there were similarly four men who sought the presidency across three federal elections: Dwight Eisenhower, Adlai Stevenson, John F. Kennedy, and Richard Nixon. Only Eisenhower and Kennedy served as president in this dissertation's time period, although Richard Nixon would go on to later win the presidency in 1968. Records consulted include a wide range of material, including campaign memoranda, polling data, and correspondence on national issues. Particularly useful were both the wealth of letters from the public and the extensive attention that most campaigns gave to gathering newspaper coverage of the races. Together, letters from the public and media coverage provide interesting insights into perceptions about politicians and gender norms of the era.

Aspects of this project have also benefitted greatly from political memoirs, allowing these men to speak in their own words when possible. While both George Drew and Louis St. Laurent failed to leave behind personal accounts, in the latter case, we have the memoir of close confidant J.W. Pickersgill. Both John Diefenbaker and Lester B. Pearson, thankfully, produced three volume-sets chronicling their lives; however, Diefenbaker's memoirs read more like a conspiracy-laden diatribe than the ruminations of a former prime minister. His lack of objectivity highlights the need for such documents to be cross-referenced with relevant historiography. In the case of the United States, Harry Truman's two volumes launched a tradition of presidential memoirs that Eisenhower and successive presidents followed. John F. Kennedy's voice was obviously taken from this process, but can be suitably reconstructed through legacy biographies of close advisors Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Theodore Sorenson, and Benjamin Bradlee, as well as through the extensive oral history provided by wife Jacqueline Kennedy. Thankfully, both Adlai Stevenson and Richard Nixon also produced multiple volumes, outlining their experiences and opinions in this era; however, a complete memoir from Stevenson was never produced given his fatal heart attack on a London street in 1965.

Chapter One, entitled "Atomic Fatherhood," covers the years between 1949 and 1953. It examines two Canadian prime ministerial contests between Louis St. Laurent and George Drew, as well as the 1952 American presidential election between Dwight Eisenhower and Adlai Stevenson. Taking place at a very early point in the Cold War, these elections were backdropped by the realities of the atomic bomb, as well as obsessive governmental purges of suspected communists. Utilizing Elaine Tyler May's concept of "domestic containment," this chapter demonstrates that the nuclear family's postwar ideals

were extended upwards by political strategists. Both Louis St. Laurent and Dwight Eisenhower offered a paternalistic reassurance to their respective nations in their campaigns while painting their opponents as outside the currently accepted hegemonic ideal of masculinity. George Drew was depicted by the St. Laurent Liberals as someone extreme, to the point of being sinister. Canadians came to see him in a vein similar to U.S. Senator Joseph McCarthy, not reassuring and protecting but ideological and prosecutorial. By comparison, the Eisenhower campaign worked to depict Stevenson as outside the hegemonic norm by highlighting his intellectual nature and perceived effeminacy. They argued that he was not “man enough” to stand up to the communist subversion.

Chapter Two, entitled “Multiplicity of Fears,” takes a short detour from the realm of electoral politics and centres itself on the years between late 1953 and early 1956. There are no elections in this two-and-a-half-year period, but understanding the geopolitical shift that takes place in the Western world through the development of the hydrogen bomb is crucial to later chapters. The title of this section is taken from a speech President Eisenhower gave to the nation in early April 1954. He sought to reassure the United States, and indeed the free world, that the H-Bomb would not lead to the end of civilization. It is not surprising that as public understanding of the dangers of nuclear war grew, the nuclear family’s reassurance and stability came to be seen as less helpful. Nor is it a coincidence that a new “crisis” of masculinity began to emerge in these years. Suburban paternalism was viewed as weakening men. The uniformity of suburbia, the corporate office job, and modern conveniences were bringing about the rise of the “organization man.”

Chapter Three, entitled “The Supermen Falter,” brings the 1956 presidential election in the United States and the 1957 federal election in Canada into focus. The era



was firmly rooted in concerns about masculinity in “crisis.” The presidential election is a rematch between Eisenhower and Stevenson, and the question of hydrogen-based weaponry features heavily in the fall contest. The Stevenson campaign and the Democrats move to take advantage of Eisenhower’s repeated health crises. The paternalism sought in the early 1950s is now a potential liability and those in power become metaphors for larger concerns about masculine decline. In Eisenhower’s case, he coasts to re-election largely on continued negative perceptions of Adlai Stevenson; however, genuine fears about his age and health kick off a political angle that John F. Kennedy will drive home four years later. Meanwhile, in the 1957 Canadian general election, the new Progressive Conservative leader, John G. Diefenbaker, narrowly wins the election in an upset. His campaign depicted “Uncle Louis” St. Laurent as old, arrogant, and out of touch. The Progressive Conservatives also stoked fears about eroding individualism to paint a picture of the Canadian prime minister as far too compliant (and thus weak) when it came to American influence. In contrast, Diefenbaker worked to depict himself as a self-made man and wrapped himself in a cloak of populist nationalism, promising to emulate his success across Canada.

Chapter Four, entitled “Men of Destiny,” picks up only months after John G. Diefenbaker’s minority government was sworn into office. After passing a flurry of legislation, the Progressive Conservatives were eager to return to the voters to seek a majority mandate to govern. More so than in 1957, Diefenbaker leaned heavily on his frontier heritage and the legacy of Sir John A. Macdonald, promising Canadians a “Northern Vision” of resource development, highway construction, and settlement that would open a “new frontier” for Canadians. In an era concerned about manhood and the

effects of modernity, Diefenbaker utilized this strategy to tap into concerns about individualism and the rise of the “organization man.” In the United States, Senator John F. Kennedy pursued a similar tactic, speaking to the cultural malaise of the Eisenhower years and the need for an activist presidency that could get America moving again. He frequently invoked the words of President Theodore Roosevelt, especially the need for Americans to renew the quest for a “strenuous life.” In leaning on the mythos of the wilderness both Diefenbaker and Kennedy mirrored the solutions of the late-nineteenth to concerns about modernity and its impact on masculinity.

Finally, Chapter Five, entitled “Clash of the Frontiers,” concludes this exploration. While it does not feature an American presidential race, John F. Kennedy’s presence is felt intently in the Canadian federal elections of 1962 and 1963. As individuals, Diefenbaker and Kennedy were not fond of each other. For nearly three years they eyed each other warily from across the Canada-U.S. border, as Diefenbaker’s disdain for the American president began to verge on paranoia. Despite winning an overwhelming majority victory in 1958, Diefenbaker quickly proved that his approach to governance was rather different than the vision of the self-made man that he sketched out on the campaign trail. In private, the prime minister was tentative, overly sensitive to public opinion, and loathe to make a decision if it had political ramifications. Across his four-year majority government, the Canadian people came to see him as less of a frontiersman and more as the embodiment of the “organization man.” It did not help that Canadians were captivated by the youthful, vigorous Kennedy. Unfortunately, the opposition Liberals did not present the most vibrant alternative in bow-tied intellectual Lester B. Pearson. Making him more “accessible” (read: masculine) to the Canadian public became a priority for the party as Kennedy and

Diefenbaker clashed over the question of nuclear warheads on Canadian soil. In 1962, the Liberals reduced Diefenbaker to a minority government before winning their own tentative minority in 1963. Both victories required more than a little help from the Kennedy administration.

## Chapter One

### ATOMIC FATHERHOOD

*“People vote for men they have confidence in, rather than for party programs.”*<sup>1</sup>

*~ Louis St. Laurent  
Prime Minister of Canada, 1948-1957*

#### Introduction

During Canada’s 1953 federal election, the *Ottawa Journal* remarked favourably about Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent’s “fondness for children.” Indeed, they said, the opposition Progressive Conservative Party would be in grave trouble “if somebody gave [the prime minister] copies of ‘Christopher Robin’ and ‘Winnie [the] Pooh’ and turned him loose on the kindergartens.” Quite simply, the *Journal* said, “he would be invincible.”<sup>2</sup> While written in affectionate jest, the article harnesses onto a crucial aspect of St. Laurent’s appeal to the Canadian public — his paternalism. Affectionately known as “Uncle Louis” to Canadians, he came to represent a father-figure (or grandfather-figure if you were very young). Crucial to his election that year (and four years earlier in 1949), was the calm, steady, reassuring presence he presented to Canadians in an era that was anything but calm, steady, *or* reassuring. For just over eight years and two majority governments, St. Laurent oversaw the codification and expansion of the welfare state, which only further fed the image of a benevolent patriarch. Featuring St. Laurent on the cover in September 1949, *Time* declared: “Father’s word is final.”<sup>3</sup>

Towards the end of the 1952 presidential election in the United States, the *Saturday*

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<sup>1</sup> Dale C. Thomson, *Louis St. Laurent: Canadian* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1967), 264.

<sup>2</sup> “Terrible If We Lost This,” *Ottawa Journal*, June 26, 1953, in “GE, June 24-30, 1953,” Box 394, Louis St. Laurent Fonds (MG26-L), Library Archives Canada (LAC), Ottawa, ON.

<sup>3</sup> Cover, *Time*, September 12, 1949.

*Evening Post* ran a cover that featured a painting of General Dwight Eisenhower by Norman Rockwell. The famed artist, known for his depictions of the 1950s nuclear family, managed to capture the man behind the general. Speaking years later about how he did it, Rockwell observed that he told Eisenhower to think of something happy. “Well, I’ve got some pretty nice grandchildren,” Ike said. In those moments, Rockwell remembers: “His eyes sparkled, the corners of his mouth turned up, and his cheeks seemed to glow.”<sup>4</sup> He became “President Grandpa,” as one inauguration day comic strip named him.<sup>5</sup> Like St. Laurent, there was a strategy in presenting Eisenhower as a comforting, paternalistic figure to the American people. The nation was conflict-weary, now two years into a proxy war in the Korean peninsula. His campaign promised a return to prosperity without war and condemned the Truman White House for allowing communism to spread to the point that conflict was necessary. Republicans stressed that Eisenhower would return young men to their mothers and build a peace that allowed everyone to enjoy the American dream. Though Eisenhower’s campaign lacked substance, according to CBS journalist Eric Sevareid, it didn’t need it. Instead, he projected a “father-image... an illusion of Authority, of Competence.”<sup>6</sup>

This chapter explores the presentation of a paternalistic ideal to voters in the early Cold War era, focusing on two elections in Canada and one in the United States between 1949 and 1953. Elaine Tyler May’s *Homeward Bound* (1988) argues that the nuclear family, with its rigid gender ideals, presented the citizenry with a “psychological fortress”

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<sup>4</sup> Cover, *Saturday Evening Post*, October 11, 1952; Norman Rockwell and Thomas Rockwell, “The Day I Painted Ike,” *Saturday Evening Post*, December 1, 1979.

<sup>5</sup> Comic, “President Grandpa!,” *News-Sentinel* (Fort Wayne), January 20, 1953, in “Cartoons, 1952-53 (2),” Box 630, General File, White House Central Files, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library (DDEPL), Abilene, KS.

<sup>6</sup> Adlai E. Stevenson, *The Papers of Adlai Stevenson*, Volume IV, eds. Walter Johnson and Carol Evans (Toronto: Little, Brown, and Co., 1972-79), 133

against Cold War uncertainty. She defines this process as one of “domestic containment” and notes that the stability it offered helped to reassure against a host of external ills, including anti-communism, nuclear weaponry, and homosexuality. In terms of fatherhood specifically, she states that the war quickly “became a new badge of masculinity and meaning for the postwar man.”<sup>7</sup> Michael Kimmel concurs, noting that “in the increasingly suburban postwar world, fathers embodied masculinity.” This rush to postwar domesticity is not overly surprising, and it went hand in hand with an idealized, heteronormative conservatism. One only has to look at television shows from this era, including *I Love Lucy* and *Father Knows Best* to understand the narrow conceptualization of masculinity at the time. Men were expected to serve as breadwinner, head of the family, and benevolent disciplinarian.<sup>8</sup>

If there was ever an expression of manhood that fit Raewyn Connell’s definition of hegemonic masculinity, it is the ideal of the father in the 1950s. It establishes its supremacy through women’s subjugation to a domestic caretaking role, largely aiming to exclude them from the public sphere. Similarly, this provider-protector father image maintains its hegemonic position through the subjugation of contrasting masculinities. To put it plainly, men who were seen as weak, effeminate, or overly intellectual were suspect. The biggest concern was, of course, latent homosexuality, and suspicion only rose if a man was unmarried. As John F. Kennedy later told a friend, one of his main motivations for marrying Jackie in 1953 was that “people would think I was queer if I weren’t married.” He was thirty-six at the time, well beyond the average age at which a man was expected to marry.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, Revised Edition (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 9, 13, 16-17, 139.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 150, 163.

<sup>9</sup> Robert D. Dean, *Imperial Brotherhood: Gender and the Making of Cold War Foreign Policy* (Amherst:

It is also worth noting that the benevolence of the father-figure, as a hegemonic ideal, had a certain alienating effect on the hyper-masculinity of anti-communists like Joseph McCarthy. While fervent witch-hunts may have been politically profitable for a time, they also brought chaos and fear amongst a population looking for stability and security.

In extending May's concept of "domestic containment" upwards, this chapter views the nation as an extension of the family. It argues that voters responded favourably to paternalistic imagery, which offered a sense of security and stability when used by political leaders. Both Louis St. Laurent and Dwight Eisenhower presented this persona and utilized it as a political tactic. Both men commonly had the moniker of "father" ascribed to them by the public, the press, and of course political strategists who wanted to encourage such perceptions. At the same time, it is worth noting that this chapter often uses other terms like "uncle" and "grandfather," in reference to both St. Laurent and Eisenhower, somewhat interchangeably. This is because these labels were also frequently ascribed to these men, as society grappled for the right term to describe the appeal of benign masculinity in their elected leaders. Generally, this study favours the encompassing term "paternalism" in explaining the "father-figure" position these men embodied for their citizens.<sup>10</sup>

However, perhaps even more important from a political standpoint, is that in addition to crafting a paternalistic political presence, the campaigns of both St. Laurent and

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University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 179.

<sup>10</sup> It is worth noting that across the archival research the author conducted into the papers of both Dwight Eisenhower and Louis St. Laurent, as well as an examination of the media-based coverage of their campaigns, the use of "father," "grandfather," and "uncle" really depended on who was writing the piece. In terms of St. Laurent, he was referred to as all three – but the meaning behind their use didn't really change. It frequently alluded to his calm, stable, reassuring presence. The same applied to Eisenhower, although he tended to only be referred to as a "father" or "grandfather" figure. The inference towards his leadership, however, was the same as St. Laurent. There was a benevolent paternalism provided by the image of both men that the public responded to. The confusion over a lack of consensus as to what term to use, be it "father," "grandfather," or "uncle," appears to have been a quirk of the mass media.

Eisenhower worked to portray the opposition candidate as outside the bounds of the hegemonic ideal. In the case of George Drew, the Progressive Conservative leader who ran against St. Laurent, the Liberals worked on painting him as a dangerous, hyper-partisan anti-communist who would lead Canada down the path towards a police state. Meanwhile, the Eisenhower campaign in the United States depicted opponent Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic presidential nominee, as a weak, effeminate intellectual. They further leaned on his divorce to hint that he was possibly homosexual. Stevenson became the epitome of Red Scare fears: the effete, ineffectual diplomat who would be unable to stand up to the communist menace. Eisenhower also found it necessary to distance himself as much as possible from fellow Republican Senator Joseph McCarthy.<sup>11</sup> Similar to George Drew, he was perceived by many as rabid and ideological; far from the calm, fatherly, moderate demeanour that the Eisenhower campaign aimed to project to voters.

### **The Canadian General Election of 1949**

In October 1948, the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada (PC) sought a new man to take them into the oncoming election. The outgoing head of the party, John Bracken, was the third in a line of failed party leaders. It was hoped that fifty-four year-old George Drew, the incumbent premier of Ontario, would turn the party's fortunes around. Drew had the support of the party establishment, as well as the financial sector.<sup>12</sup> In Drew, the PCs hoped to emulate the success that New York governor Thomas Dewey was having in the U.S. presidential contest. Americans were to go to the polls the following month to choose between Dewey and Truman. Both Drew and Dewey were former lawyers with ties to the

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<sup>11</sup> William Hitchcock, *The Age of Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018), 76, 80-83.

<sup>12</sup> Bob Plamondon, *Blue Thunder: The Truth About Conservatives From Macdonald to Harper* (Toronto: Porter Books, 2009), 205-206.



financial establishment, and had headed large, economically diverse regional governments. As Paul Litt points out, the problem is that their similarities also allowed for both to be painted as out of touch, “arrogant city slicker[s].”<sup>13</sup> Drew won the leadership by a substantial margin and two-months later took his seat in the House of Commons as the member of parliament for Carleton. Dewey, meanwhile, went down in a surprise defeat to Harry Truman in November 1948.

As a political leader, Drew is somewhat of an enigma. Compared to the other politicians that this study examines, he has received the least scholarly attention and is long overdue for a biographical study. An October 1948 *Maclean's* profile of the new PC leader, written by Pierre Berton, describes Drew as “being groomed as a sort of North American Churchill.” In Berton’s opinion, Drew’s focus on anti-communism and civil defence had a “Churchillian flavour.”<sup>14</sup> What is so interesting about this description is it does not ultimately describe his time as party leader. The modern scholar finds themselves desperately trying to contrast this hopeful vision of Drew with his actual record. The only conclusion to be drawn is that the profile perhaps signifies political promise lost. It also emphasizes that the Liberal Party was ultimately successful in its attempts to negatively define Drew to the Canadian public.

In November 1948, Canada’s long-standing prime minister, William Lyon Mackenzie King, handed over power to his right-hand man, Louis St. Laurent. The new Liberal leader had been anointed by the party’s leadership convention that past August. A career attorney, St. Laurent joined the federal Cabinet as Minister of Justice in 1942 and

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<sup>13</sup> Paul Litt, “Uncle Lou, Both Old and New: The Marketing of St-Laurent,” in *The Unexpected Louis St. Laurent*, ed. Patrice Dutil (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2020), 97.

<sup>14</sup> Pierre Berton, “George Drew,” *Maclean's*, October 1, 1948.

later became Minister of External Affairs.<sup>15</sup> His profile in *Maclean's* was not nearly as flattering as Drew's. Written by perennial political columnist Blair Fraser, it bluntly observes that "as a campaign speaker, he is not good." Fraser points out that St. Laurent on the campaign trail had a habit of delivering "erudite lecture[s]" with a tendency for running long.<sup>16</sup> There was concern among some party members that the sixty-six year-old St. Laurent would fail to capture the hearts of the Canadian electorate. The Liberal Party had been in power continuously since 1935, and George Drew was a dynamic speaker. Plus, Drew was twelve years younger than the incoming prime minister. Furthermore, he had quickly assisted the Progressive Conservatives in two by-elections, capturing seats in Nova Scotia and Quebec from the governing Liberals. Especially concerning was the loss in Quebec, as it was both Liberal territory and St. Laurent's home province. If the PCs could make inroads in Quebec while holding onto Drew's base as a former premier of Ontario, he would pose a significant challenge to the Liberals.<sup>17</sup>

St. Laurent and Drew, in contrast to their public images, were surprisingly rather similar as private men. Both were reserved and rather shy. While St. Laurent hid it "under a cloak of Victorian dignity," Drew's was often masked by an "aggressive self-confidence." It was the latter approach that ultimately harmed Drew's chances, according to St. Laurent biographer Dale C. Thomson. While it "had brought him rapid success in the provincial area," he had ultimately "become a slave to it" and the "strain of managing an image that did not reflect his true personality was to contribute eventually to his downfall."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> J.W. Pickersgill, *Louis St. Laurent* (Don Mills, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1981), 14-15, 22-25.

<sup>16</sup> Blair Fraser, "Where Does St. Laurent Stand?" *Maclean's*, September 15, 1948.

<sup>17</sup> J.W. Pickersgill, *My Years With Louis St. Laurent* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 71-74.

<sup>18</sup> Thomson, 254

The two men met across the House of Commons from each other for the first time in January 1949. Aide to the prime minister, J.W. Pickersgill, describes that day:

The contrast between the two was striking. Drew's conduct was flamboyant, his language often extravagant and emotional. He had a military bearing and at times a rather arrogant manner. St. Laurent was modest in his bearing and usually moderate in his language, though candid and straight-forward in expressing himself. His attitude was dignified and rather reserved, but without the slightest trace of arrogance.<sup>19</sup>

While Pickersgill's account needs to be taken with a view to his allegiance, he expresses genuine concern at this point that St. Laurent would be beaten in the upcoming election.

So, what changed? For Drew, the turning point likely came when he addressed the Progressive Conservative Student Federation at McGill University in February 1949. Taking a swipe at the entrenched Liberal bureaucracy, he told the gathered delegates that Canadians were in danger of losing their personal and economic freedoms to "bureaucrats who accept the basic philosophy of Karl Marx no matter what political name they adopt."<sup>20</sup> It was not new territory for the PC leader, but one of the first times his anti-communist fervency appeared on the national stage. As Ontario premier, leading a minority government between 1943 and 1945, Drew came up against accusations from the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) that he had used the provincial police to survey its members of the Official Opposition. In what became known as the "Gestapo Affair," these investigations sought to establish links between the CCF and communism. An inquiry into the matter found the surveillance allegations to be true, along with a master list of thousands of Ontarians who were considered to be "leftists." Though the inquiry did not find evidence that Drew ordered the provincial police to conduct such a program, the

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<sup>19</sup> Pickersgill. *Louis St. Laurent*, 25-26.

<sup>20</sup> Thomson, 260; Pickersgill, *My Years With Louis St. Laurent*, 74-75; For coverage of the speech, please see: "Drew Warns of Danger in Autocratic Methods of Liberals in Ottawa," *Globe and Mail*, February 28, 1949.

report stopped short of exonerating Drew. He had been aware of provincial police actions and made no move to stop them.<sup>21</sup> While Pierre Berton spoke of Drew's anti-communist resolve as "Churchillian," it did not take long to become interpreted as McCarthyism. A few years later, the *Vancouver Sun* went so far as to allude that he was the "Canadian 'Joe McCarthy.'"<sup>22</sup>

By comparison, Louis St. Laurent embarked on a Western tour of the country to lay groundwork for the coming election. The trip itself was two weeks long, in the middle of April, and took the new prime minister from Winnipeg to Vancouver. Early on, reporters noticed how at ease he was simply talking with Canadians about everything from the weather to crop prices. At the same time, St. Laurent continued to struggle with speeches. They came off as akin to the "lectures of a professor," according to reporter Ian Sclanders.<sup>23</sup> The true turning point, however, came in Edson, Alberta, where a crowd of children greeted his campaign train. St. Laurent and the children discussed Newfoundland's recent entry into Confederation, and he then jokingly informed the children that if it were up to him, he would grant them the day off school. School board officials obliged, and his train left to screaming throngs of excited schoolchildren. Shortly thereafter, Norman Campbell of the *Toronto Telegram* woke to find the train stopped in Field, British Columbia and the prime minister, yet again, happily talking to a group of schoolchildren. Turning to a colleague, he noted: "I'm afraid Uncle Louis will be a hard one to beat."<sup>24</sup> The nickname stuck.

Returning from his successful trip, St. Laurent immediately set the election for June

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<sup>21</sup> Plamondon, 204-205.

<sup>22</sup> Dillon, O'Leary, "Not in Canada," *Vancouver Sun*, June 27, 1953, in "Press Clippings, Drew, June 17-30, 1953," Box 379, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>23</sup> Ian Sclanders, "How The Prime Minister Became Uncle Louis," *Maclean's*, January 1, 1955.

<sup>24</sup> Norman Campbell as quoted in Allan Levine, *Scrum Wars: The Prime Ministers and the Media* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1993), 192; See also: Ian Sclanders, "How The Prime Minister Became Uncle Louis," *Maclean's*, January 1, 1955; "Prime Minister to Tour West," *Globe and Mail*, March 25, 1949.

27<sup>th</sup>. Some newspapers, like Toronto's *Globe and Mail*, accused the prime minister of political opportunism; he was said to be making a thinly veiled attempt to strike while the polling looked good.<sup>25</sup> It did not hurt that new income tax deductions were being reflected on that year's outgoing tax returns and that a ten dollar a month increase to the Canadian pension plan had recently been put into effect.<sup>26</sup> Early Gallup polling from the writ period bears out this calculation. The Liberals had 48.8% of decided support, to just 29.1% for the PCs. Undecided voters were leaning towards the Liberals by similar margins.<sup>27</sup> The initial Liberal strategy was to depict Drew as against the interests of the emergent middle-class. In the words of the Progressive Conservative Party president, Drew was ultimately portrayed as "an arch-imperialist, a stuffed shirt, an ally of big business and the liquor interests, and the enemy of the working man."<sup>28</sup> The Liberals intended to offer up St. Laurent in paternalistic contrast; a defender of the emergent welfare state and the head of the national family. Liberal hopes hinged on the image of "Uncle Louis" and over a decade's worth of good government. As St. Laurent told an Edmonton crowd: "People vote for men they have confidence in rather than for party programs."<sup>29</sup>

Cory Baldwin's work on the image of St. Laurent argues that King's reorientation of the Liberal Party effectively rendered its platform "ideologically neutral." As a result, campaign strategists sought to sell St. Laurent to Canadians as a face of continued stability and progress.<sup>30</sup> There was also a certain novelty because the new prime minister was not

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<sup>25</sup> Litt, 95; "Reaching and Panic Decision," *Globe and Mail*, April 25, 1949.

<sup>26</sup> "June Election, As Expected," *Edmonton Journal*, April 27, 1949, in "EF - April 19-May 17, 1949," Box 313, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>27</sup> "Present Preferred Political Party," Politics, Poll #186, May 1949, Gallup Canada, Public Opinion Polls, ODESI, <https://search1.odesi.ca/>

<sup>28</sup> Litt, 98.

<sup>29</sup> Thomson, 264.

<sup>30</sup> Cory Baldwin, "The Branding of the Prime Minister: 'Uncle Louis' and Brand Politics" (M.A. Thesis, Trent University, 2017), 3.

like the “frosty bachelors” that preceded him.<sup>31</sup> Both Mackenzie King and R.B. Bennett had never married, and as such, a “family man” had enthusiastic appeal to the Canadian electorate.<sup>32</sup> The early Cold War, Paul Litt observes, marked a return to normalcy that allowed for the “queer undertones of ‘spinster rule’ [to] be forgotten.”<sup>33</sup> St. Laurent represented a return to a father at the helm. The Liberal strategy to highlight St. Laurent’s family ties had been under development even prior to the media granting him the moniker “Uncle Louis.” In early 1949, the Liberals set out to develop a campaign documentary entitled *The St. Laurent Story*. It sought to emphasize St. Laurent’s French-English heritage (born to a Quebecois father and Irish-Canadian mother), as well as the fact that he was a family man and grandfather. There were also strong undertones of service in the documentary, pushing the narrative that he was called on to take the position of prime minister and offer continued stability to Canadians.<sup>34</sup>

The opening of the Liberal campaign occurred in Compton, Quebec, the prime minister’s hometown. Here as well, the Liberals sought to stress the dual message of heritage and family. One of St. Laurent’s first stops was a small schoolhouse in Waterville, where he spoke to the assembled children and their parents. His goal, he said, was to make Canada “healthier and happier.” He did not want “children to go through the things that [their] parents and grandparents [had] gone through” during the Great Depression and World War Two. He pointed to the newly created North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a hopeful harbinger of peace and stability.<sup>35</sup> Early newspaper coverage of the

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<sup>31</sup> Ian Sclanders, “How The Prime Minister Became Uncle Louis,” *Maclean’s*, January 1, 1955.

<sup>32</sup> Pickersgill, *My Years With Louis St. Laurent*, 94.

<sup>33</sup> Litt, 102.

<sup>34</sup> Baldwin, 36-38, 70.

<sup>35</sup> “Victory Music In Air As St. Laurent Opens Campaign in Quebec,” *Toronto Star*, May 11, 1949, in “EF - April 19 - May 17, 1949,” Box 313, MG26-L, LAC.

campaign shows a tour light on electoral promises, but one that reinforced the prime minister's rapport with children. For example, his visit to Yarmouth, Nova Scotia was headlined by the *Montreal Gazette* as: "St. Laurent Encourages Urchins To Write Him All Their Troubles." Another publication observed that in urging the nation's children to write him, St. Laurent established a "personal touch" lost under King. Comparisons to another great French-Canadian prime minister were frequent. One *Le Canada* headline observed: "Sur les traces de Laurier" regarding St. Laurent's ability to mingle with Canadians.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, the *Toronto Star* stated that many veteran political reporters noted that "not since Laurier has a Canadian prime minister aroused the sort of hero worship that these demonstrations evinced."<sup>37</sup> The comparison is apt. As prime minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier had a similar fondness for children. Indeed, one of the young boys Laurier spoke to on the campaign trail was a four-year-old Louis St. Laurent. It was an impactful moment in the boy's life, and as St. Laurent later affirmed: "I haven't forgotten it."<sup>38</sup>

By mid-May, although both parties had long-standing platforms, neither had a political manifesto. It was an unusual circumstance for an election campaign. The Liberals were running on their man, while the PCs focused on wedge issues — growing federal bureaucracy, loss of provincial autonomy, and the looming communist menace. It is the latter issue that dominated discussion from Drew's campaign.<sup>39</sup> In Nova Scotia, Drew

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<sup>36</sup> Arthur Blakely, "St. Laurent Encourages Urchins To Write Him," *Montreal Gazette*, May 13, 1949; "Mr. St. Laurent Doing A 'Sir John A'," *Ottawa Evening Journal*, May 14, 1949; "Sur les traces de Laurier," *Le Canada*, May 14, 1949; all in "EF - April 19 - May 17, 1949," Box 313, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>37</sup> Robert Taylor, "Warmth of Reception Constantly Growing As St. Laurent Tours," *Toronto Star*, May 21, 1949, in "EF - May 18 - 27, 1949," Box 313, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>38</sup> Norman Campbell, "St. Laurent Keys His Campaign To Easy 'Uncle Louis' Role," *Toronto Telegram*, July 4, 1953, in "GE, July 1-4, 1953," Box 394, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>39</sup> "Pledges, Utterances of Foes Under Fire of St. Laurent," *Halifax Mail Star*, May 16, 1949; and "No Election Manifestos!" *Ottawa Morning Journal*, May 16, 1949; both in "EF - April 19 - May 17, 1949," Box 313, MG26-L, LAC.

renewed his attack on civil servants, and for the first time the linkage between gendered language and communism enters the foray. Canada was in danger from the "long-haired boys in the ivory towers who have no responsibility, but who really run the government," Drew said.<sup>40</sup> It is very similar to the imagery that McCarthy would use south of the border. Drew charged that the Liberals, who controlled the government for the last fourteen years, were surrounded by overly educated, effeminate men, who were sympathetic to communism. The incident provides some Canadian context to the introduction's discussion of Richard Hofstadter's *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life* (1963). It highlights the animosity that had built up on the Canadian right towards the intellectuals who spurred the rise of the welfare state. As a result, Drew represented a sharp departure from Bracken's leadership of the party, wherein the interventionist state had gained cross-party acceptance.<sup>41</sup> Drew's motivation, however, comes down to pure straw-man tactics. Anti-communism offered him a chance to demonize the Liberals, the same way the Republicans demonized Truman. This militant anti-bureaucracy, anti-communist stance perhaps explains why Gallup found that Drew only had the support of 63% of his own party. It is telling that of those PC supporters surveyed, nearly 20% chose St. Laurent as the man who would be the "best prime minister."<sup>42</sup>

Drew's attacks on communism and fear-mongering about the civil service gave the Liberals an opening. While Drew was promising that his first act would be to deal with the

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<sup>40</sup> Wessely Hicks, "'Tawdry Vote Manifesto'," *Toronto Telegram*, May 17, 1949, in "Press Clippings, Drew, May 11-22, 1949," Box 376, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>41</sup> Richard Hofstadter, *Anti-Intellectualism in American Life*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 218-21; Doug Oram, *The Government Generation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 268, 288-89, 310.

<sup>42</sup> Robert Neilsen, "Supplant Drew With Diefenbaker, Tory Cry Say Waterloo Is Near," *Toronto Star*, June 14, 1949, in "Press Clippings, Drew, June 3-15, 1949," Box 376, MG26-L, LAC.



"treacherous agents of the Kremlin in our midst" by outlawing communism,<sup>43</sup> St. Laurent told a Halifax crowd:

[We can] shout until we are red in the face, or urge repressive laws, to demand prison terms and concentration camps, to start down a road at the end of which we would lose the freedom we are trying to protect. The other way is to proclaim our faith in our free institutions by making them work; to proclaim our faith in the brotherhood of man by trusting our fellow citizens, and to proclaim our faith in social justice by working day and night to end injustice, exploitation and oppression. We should adopt strong measures against those who are proven traitors and those who actively foment disorder. But we should not turn prosecution into persecution, and we should be careful not to lose our freedom trying to save it.<sup>44</sup>

St. Laurent seized the opportunity to highlight a Canadian government under George Drew as something dark, furtive, and prosecutorial.

In contrast, he offered a calm, reassuring, paternalistic voice to the nation. His campaign radio addresses were styled as "neighbourly visits," and in one address aimed at women, he placed them within his "family circle." He argued that "the needs, the aspirations, the joys and sorrows of my dear ones," were the same as "the needs, the aspirations, the joys and sorrows of practically all Canadian women." Shortly after the election, *Time* ran a profile on the prime minister that named him the "Père de Famille" of Canada. The article depicts him as a resolved, firm cold warrior who watches over his nation as a benevolent patriarch. To belabour the point, a Norman Rockwell-esque photograph of St. Laurent having dinner with his wife, son, and grandchildren, accompanies the article.<sup>45</sup> It mirrors a more famous photograph of St. Laurent reading to his grandchildren, which also ran several months prior. The accompanying article saw *Time*

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<sup>43</sup> Arthur Blakely, "Drew Pledges Tightening Up On Red Spies," *Montreal Gazette*, May 11, 1949, in "Press Clippings, Drew, May 11 - 22, 1949," Box 376, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>44</sup> Hugh Boyd, "St. Laurent Speech Answers Prog Con Leader's Charges," *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 16, 1949, in "EF - April 19 - May 17, 1949," Box 313, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>45</sup> Thomson, 268; Litt, 100; "Père de Famille," *Time*, September 12, 1949.

declare that St. Laurent and the Liberals were a “Family Party.”<sup>46</sup>

During the concluding weeks of the election, with Drew slipping in the polls, the Progressive Conservative campaign descended into chaos and a series of bizarre squabbles. In a strange incident, George Drew picked a fight with Gallup shortly before election day. He accused the agency of bias towards the Liberals. He promised, if elected, to appoint a parliamentary committee to look into what he viewed as an attempt by a private company to subvert the election.<sup>47</sup> There were two polls conducted by the agency in June 1949. Both showed roughly the same margins of support. The earlier poll indicated 48.3% support for the Liberals and 29.3% support for the PCs. Those who were still undecided leaned heavily towards the Liberals. Of those who chose an issue, the focus was on housing, social security, unemployment, and income tax. Only 0.8% of respondents listed rooting out communism as a priority for the incoming government.<sup>48</sup> Thus, many Toronto-area and Prairie PC candidates, who disagreed with Drew’s prosecutorial stance, distanced their campaigns and removed the leader’s imagery from their literature.<sup>49</sup>

A disturbing incident only fuelled further disconcert at a Belleville-area rally for the Progressive Conservatives on June 24<sup>th</sup>. While the accounts differ depending on the newspaper’s political allegiance, all agree that there was a serious clash between supporters and anti-Drew hecklers. Toronto’s *Globe and Mail*, which provides a fairly balanced account, admits that spectators “took the law into their hands,” and the ejection of the

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<sup>46</sup> “Family Party,” *Time*, January 10, 1949.

<sup>47</sup> “Mr. Drew and the Gallup Poll,” *Kingston Whig-Standard*, June 15, 1949, in “Press Clippings, Drew, June 3-15, 1949,” Box 376, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>48</sup> “Present Preferred Political Party,” Voting Behaviour, Polls #188-89, June 1949, Gallup Canada, Public Opinion Polls, ODESI, <https://search1.odesi.ca/>

<sup>49</sup> Robert Neilsen, “Supplant Drew With Diefenbaker, Tory Cry Say Waterloo Is Near,” *Toronto Star*, June 14, 1949, in “Press Clippings, Drew, June 3-15, 1949,” Box 376, MG26-L, LAC.

hecklers, who *were* disrupting the speech, resulted in “plenty of free blows... and a few cut lips and black eyes.” During the altercation, the crowd was said to have cheered while George Drew stood silently at the podium and watched. The Liberal-leaning *Toronto Star* accused Drew of “laughter and evident enjoyment” at the proceedings, while one protestor had his face “cut to ribbons... his shirt plastered with blood.” Meanwhile, the Conservative-leaning *Toronto Telegram* emphasized that Drew was in a “fighting mood” that night and that the young men, some of whom were Liberal supporters, “had no intention of listening nor letting anyone else hear.” The incident, regardless of political point of view, compounded an image problem for Drew. As one of the hecklers, Bill Sligh, told reporters: “I got my taste of Mr. Drew’s democracy. Hitler couldn’t do a better job.”<sup>50</sup> The confrontation only added to concerns that he was reactionary and potentially dangerous.

It is not surprising, then, that an analysis of the media’s language in describing the two leaders demonstrates a sharp contrast. The *Montreal Gazette* portrays St. Laurent’s campaign, focused on children and their parents, as “calm” and “moderate.” George Drew, meanwhile, possesses “vigour,” and is “waging a fighting campaign.”<sup>51</sup> The *Montreal Standard* expressed similar views and observed that while Drew was “thundering up and down the Atlantic seaboard,” the prime minister was “talking to the voters calmly, clearly, and patiently... like a statesman.”<sup>52</sup> The *Ottawa Evening Citizen* describes the Tory

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<sup>50</sup> Dennis Braithwaite, “Dare to Question Drew... Ejected,” *Toronto Star*, June 25, 1949; Wessley Hicks, “Hecklers of Drew Anger Vast Crowd,” *Toronto Telegram*, June 25, 1949; both in “Press Clippings, Drew June 24 - September 30, 1949, Box 377, MG26-L, LAC; See also Ken W. MacTaggart, “Crowd Beats, Ejects Group Heckling Drew,” *Globe and Mail*, June 25, 1949.

<sup>51</sup> Arthur Blakely, “Mild Campaign of St. Laurent Sharp Contrast to Drew’s Vigor,” *Montreal Gazette*, May 14, 1949, in “EF - April 19 - May 17, 1949,” Box 313, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>52</sup> Political Chiefs Campaign Hard,” *Montreal Standard*, May 21, 1949, in “EF - May 18-27, 1949,” Box 313, MG26-L, LAC.

campaign as "sparking fire and brimstone," while St. Laurent was taking a "studied" approach and "appeals to the reason of his audiences." Again, the words "statesman" and "gentlemanly" are used to refer to the prime minister.<sup>53</sup> The *Hamilton Spectator* was slightly more critical. The Liberal campaign was described as "comfortable, solid, and uninspiring." However, the paper cautions, St. Laurent may be boring, but he would "not lead anyone into a saloon or a cataclysm." By comparison, Drew is seen as "venomous, almost hysterical."<sup>54</sup> Finally, Edmonton's *The Spotlight* also invokes the word "statesman" in reference to St. Laurent. The editorial continues: "He is not pompous, does not stand on dignity, and is cordial to those who wish to see him on business." That he is "devoid of political ambition" makes him unique. The article views it as an asset that he left a \$100,000/year law practice to enter Cabinet and later become prime minister.<sup>55</sup>

On June 27<sup>th</sup>, the Canadian electorate went to the polls and handed the Liberals a fourth majority government. It was the first elected term for St. Laurent as prime minister. The party finished with 193 seats (including three Independent-Liberals and one Liberal-Labour), substantially increasing their majority from the 128 seats won in 1945. Meanwhile, Drew's Progressive Conservatives dropped to 41 seats, down from the 67 that Bracken had earned the party in 1945. The smaller Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and Social Credit parties took 13 and 10 seats, respectively. The popular vote was largely what the final polls suggested, despite Drew's accusations of polling bias towards the Liberals. 50.1% of Canadians put their trust in St. Laurent, compared to 29.7% for

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<sup>53</sup> Ross Munro, "Sharp Contrast Between Tactics of PM and Drew," *Ottawa Evening Citizen*, May 19, 1949, in "EF - May 18-27, 1949," Box 313, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>54</sup> "Two Leaders," *Hamilton Spectator*, June 17, 1949, in "EF - June 10-17, 1949," in Box 314, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>55</sup> "An Impressive Leader," *The Spotlight*, May 28, 1949, in "EF - May 28 - June 9, 1949," Box 313, MG26-L, LAC.

Drew. While the victory for the Liberals was not surprising, the degree of the victory was. It was the largest majority of any Canadian government up until that point.<sup>56</sup> A major contributing factor to the Liberal victory was St. Laurent himself and the way he was introduced to Canadians as “Uncle Louis;” the father-figure to the national family, with a fondness for the nation’s children akin to his fondness for his own grandchildren. As PC advisor Dalton Camp observed, they did not anticipate that the Liberals would “take this man, a wealthy corporate lawyer, and convert him into some Gladstonian version of ‘The People’s William.’”<sup>57</sup>

### **The American Presidential Election of 1952**

General Dwight Eisenhower’s path to the Republican nomination began on November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1948, when the United States awoke to the news that President Truman had pulled off an upset win over Governor Dewey. Elected to his first full-term, Truman’s surprising popular vote victory of 49.6% (to 45.1% for Dewey) and 303-189 win in the Electoral College defied all expert predictions. The final Gallup poll of the 1948 election, while showing a narrowing race, gave Dewey a 49.5% lead to Truman’s 44.5%. Similarly, a *Newsweek* poll of the nation’s top political pundits rendered a *unanimous* verdict on a Dewey victory. The *Chicago Daily Tribune* was so confident that its early print headline

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<sup>56</sup> “General Election Results Since 1867,” Appendices, Procedure and Practice, Our Commons, House of Commons, <https://www.ourcommons.ca/marleaumontpetit/>; See also “Canadian Elections,” Dr. Andrew Heard, Political Science Department, Simon Fraser University, <https://www.sfu.ca/~aheard/elections/1867-present.html>

<sup>57</sup> Levine, 192; William Gladstone was a Liberal Party leader who served four terms in office as Prime Minister of the United Kingdom (1868-1874, 1880-1885, 1886, 1892-1894). Gladstone managed to blend laissez-faire style economic policies, including low taxes and balanced budgets, with reform that sought to manage social welfare issues in a rapidly advancing industrial age. A gifted orator, who saw the benefit of stump speeches and was ahead of his time in understanding the usefulness of the press, he gained the nickname: “The People’s William.” The moniker emerged because of his immense popularity with the working class. For more information see: Andrew Adonis, “The People’s William,” *Prospect*, July 4, 2009.

“Dewey Beats Truman,” has now entered the annals of history. Even the Secret Service showed its hand on election night, and the Republican candidate was surrounded by a large guard in New York City’s Roosevelt Hotel. By comparison, Truman had retreated to the Elms Hotel in Excelsior Springs, Missouri, in relative solitude.<sup>58</sup> The reactionary conservative “Old Guard” of the Republican Party was quick to blame Dewey for the loss. They criticized him for running a painfully moderate, “me-too” campaign seeking to emulate the New Deal in a fiscally responsible way.<sup>59</sup>

Dewey, aware that he was unlikely to be given the nomination a third time, began looking for a standard-bearer who could keep the Republican Party’s isolationist right-wing at bay. Speculation had been swirling around General Eisenhower since the conclusion of World War Two. In his first memoir, *Crusade in Europe* (1948), Eisenhower recounts a conversation with President Truman at Potsdam. The president had told him: “General, there is nothing that you may want that I won’t try to help you get. That definitely and specifically includes the presidency in 1948.”<sup>60</sup> Eisenhower’s political leanings at that point were an enigma, and he released a statement early in the 1948 election cycle expressing the desire “to remove myself from the political scene” while stressing “the necessary and wise subordination of the military to civil power.”<sup>61</sup> Truman went on to win the election and quickly decided that he would not seek a second full-term. In April 1950,

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<sup>58</sup> The election, however, was far closer than traditional narratives account for. Truman won Ohio by 7,107 votes, Illinois by 33,612 votes, and California by 17,865 votes. Had less than 30,000 votes shifted across these three states, Thomas Dewey would have been president by an Electoral College margin of 267-225, despite a popular vote loss. See Harold I. Gullan, *The Upset That Wasn’t* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1998), 172-76.

<sup>59</sup> John W. Malsberger, *The General and the Politician* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), x.

<sup>60</sup> Jean Edward Smith, *Eisenhower: In War and Peace* (New York: Random House, 2012), 502; Jeffrey Frank, *Ike and Dick: Portrait of a Strange Political Marriage* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013), 10-11, 20; Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Crusade in Europe* (New York: Doubleday, 1948), 444.

<sup>61</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change, 1953-1956*, (New York: Doubleday, 1963), 7-8.

he confided to his diary that “eight years as President is enough and sometimes too much for any man.” As the next election approached, Truman again turned to Eisenhower, now serving as NATO’s Supreme Allied Commander, and summoned him to a meeting at Blair House in November 1951. The general regretfully explained to the president that his domestic views did not align with the Democratic Party.<sup>62</sup>

Unknown to Truman was that Dewey and Henry Cabot Lodge were working hard, behind the scenes, to secure Eisenhower’s entry into the Republican contest. What ultimately motivated the General’s decision was the knowledge that Senator Robert Taft was the party favourite. Taft’s isolationism troubled Eisenhower, and he told a friend at the time: “Taft is a very stupid man. He has no grasp of the big issues in the world today, and no intellectual ability. As president he would be a disaster, but he will never make it. He will be beaten for sure.”<sup>63</sup> Taft’s conservatism mirrored the Republican presidents of the 1920s; he was against deficit spending, federal government over-reach, strongly favoured states’ rights, and was suspicious of any international commitment or treaty.<sup>64</sup> The operative assumption was that if Taft was allowed a coronation to the GOP nomination, Truman would run again and would “beat Taft to a frazzle.”<sup>65</sup>

Dwight D. Eisenhower’s nomination as the Republican candidate for the presidency in 1952 was anything but assured. Taft’s surging support and his vigorous campaign saw *Time* to show its hand and declare: “Ike, Where Are You?” at the end of February. The assumption was that there would be a strong swing towards Eisenhower in the primary

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<sup>62</sup> John Robert Greene, *I Like Ike: The Presidential Election of 1952* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2017), 1, 56-58; Eisenhower, 8.

<sup>63</sup> Dwight Eisenhower, as quoted in Paul Johnson, *Eisenhower: A Life* (New York: Viking, 2014), 81.

<sup>64</sup> Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 10-18; Greene, 19.

<sup>65</sup> General Lucius D. Clay, as quoted in Smith, 504

through a purely citizen-led campaign. It never materialized. Old-Guard Republicans were skeptical about running another moderate after Dewey's two losses. As the *New Yorker* established, there was concern among the GOP that Eisenhower was "a parvenu, an amateur, and a heretic of sorts." Despite his strong showing in New Hampshire, taking the state with 50.4% of the vote, Taft countered with victories in Illinois, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. If Ike did not return from Europe, *Time* observed, "only a political miracle can get him the nomination."<sup>66</sup>

Eisenhower officially launched his presidential campaign from Abilene, Kansas, on June 4<sup>th</sup>, 1952; he was sixty-one at the time. The open-air stadium, filled with locals, was deluged by a thunderstorm. The televised speech was a disaster. Eisenhower's language was dry, his delivery flat, and his eyeglasses continuously fogged up in the rain. Herbert Brownell, Jr., who would become Ike's Attorney General, noted that it was one of the worst speeches he had ever heard. It was quickly decided that the now-candidate did better when he could speak off the cuff.<sup>67</sup> This is similar to the approach Liberal strategists took with Louis St. Laurent after they saw how relaxed he was in the absence of carefully scripted remarks. This ease with which Eisenhower interacted with voters was crucial to what became a carefully crafted persona. As Field Marshall Bernard Montgomery, a close wartime associate, said of Eisenhower: "He has this power of drawing the hearts of men towards him as a magnet attracts the bits of metal. He has merely to smile at you, and you trust him at once."<sup>68</sup> Furthering Eisenhower's allure was his "celebrity." In biographer David Blake's opinion, it "gave him license to bypass the partisan maneuvering that

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<sup>66</sup> Smith, 512;13; Frank, 30; "Ike, Where Are You," *Time*, February 25, 1952.

<sup>67</sup> Hitchcock, 67-68; Smith, 515-16.

<sup>68</sup> Johnson, *Eisenhower*, 82.



occupied his opponents.” At a time when political frustrations were running high and Truman’s popularity was in the low-30s, there was a strong appeal to Eisenhower’s seemingly apolitical nature.<sup>69</sup>

Further contrast was provided to the electorate in the Democratic Party’s nominee. Following Eisenhower’s refusal to seek the Democratic nomination, President Truman turned to Governor Adlai Stevenson of Illinois. The fifty-two-year-old governor was perceived as an ideal candidate due to his experience at the State Department, the United Nations, and in the Governor’s mansion. Like Eisenhower, Stevenson was a hesitant nominee. He had private concerns about having to defend a twenty-year Democratic record, along with little desire to run against Eisenhower. Stevenson worried that the hero-worship surrounding the general would render him unbeatable. As a result, he initially declined Truman’s offer.<sup>70</sup> Two months later, when Truman publicly announced his decision not to run, aide Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. was with Stevenson who “bur[ied] his head in his hands... obviously appalled at the great abyss opening up before him.”<sup>71</sup> To say Adlai Stevenson did not have presidential aims would be markedly untrue. However, it was the 1956 nomination that he aspired to. Four years would allow him to see his three boys grown, and a second term as governor would provide a more stable path to the nomination. Privately, he entertained thoughts that four years of Republican rule under Eisenhower would also help clear out a heavily entrenched civil service that was loyal to the patronage of Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> David Haven Blake, *Liking Ike: Eisenhower, Advertising, and the Rise of Celebrity Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 57; Malsberger 2-3.

<sup>70</sup> Kenneth S. Davis, *The Politics of Honor: A Biography of Adlai E. Stevenson* (New York: Putnam, 1967), 259-61; Jacob M. Avrey, “A Gold Nugget In Your Backyard,” in *As We Knew Adlai: The Stevenson Story by Twenty-Two Friends*, ed. Edward P. Doyle (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 58.

<sup>71</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *Journals: 1952-2000* (New York: Penguin, 2007), 4.

<sup>72</sup> John Bartlow Martin, *Adlai Stevenson* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1952), 163-65.

Described as a “reluctant candidate” by the *New York Times*, Stevenson’s actions in the months leading up to the Democratic Convention in July 1952 are scattered at best. He was surrounded by an aggressive draft movement that he continuously disavowed, yet his office indicated a clear desire to elevate his profile. For example, his press secretary, William Flannigan, secured him the cover of *Time* at the end of January 1952. Furthermore, Stevenson’s office actively provided family photographs to groups pushing for his selection at the convention.<sup>73</sup> The fact that the convention was held in Chicago was also beneficial to Stevenson. He gave a welcome address to Democratic delegates in his capacity as governor. It is this speech that is generally assumed to have secured him the nomination. Sounding like a nominee, Stevenson took on McCarthyism and its fear-mongering. The American people, he said, “see in [the Democratic Party] a relentless determination to stand fast against the barbarian at the gate... to patiently explore every misty path to peace and security.... What counts now is not just what we are *against*, but what we are *for*. *Who* leads us is less important than *what* leads us.”<sup>74</sup> Stevenson was appealing, in the opinion of journalist and historian David Halberstam, because he “seemed incapable of uttering a sentence that did not seem polished.” He did not sound like a typical politician at a time when voters were wary of politicians.<sup>75</sup>

Eisenhower narrowly won the Republican nomination on the first ballot. Meanwhile, Stevenson was "drafted" into the Democratic nomination on the third ballot. He over-came the frontrunner, Senator Estes Kefauver, when Governor Averell Harriman

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<sup>73</sup> Stevenson, *The Papers of Adlai Stevenson*, Volume IV, 11; Jeff Broadwater, *Adlai Stevenson and American Politics: The Odyssey of a Cold War Liberal* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), 109-110.

<sup>74</sup> Emphasis in original; Stevenson, *The Papers of Adlai Stevenson*, Volume IV, 11-13; Davis, 268.

<sup>75</sup> Greene, 110.

of New York threw his support behind Stevenson at Truman's behest.<sup>76</sup> The general election between these two men turned out to be a contest of image and perception, not unlike the one seen between St. Laurent and Drew. By comparison, however, while Drew was portrayed as a dangerous demagogue, Stevenson was targeted as meek and intellectual. Initial polling heading into the general election showed that Eisenhower began the race with a six-point margin: 47% to 41%, with 12% undecided. Given the results of 1948, when undecideds broke heavily for the Democrats, it was seen as a close race.<sup>77</sup> Essential to Republican success would be the ability to tie Stevenson to twenty-years of Democratic rule, while also attacking his character.

Richard Nixon, the thirty-nine year-old freshman senator from California, was selected as the vice-presidential nominee to do just that. He was also useful to Eisenhower in appealing to the anti-communist, right-wing of the party.<sup>78</sup> Nixon first secured his place in Congress in 1946 by taking down a five-term Roosevelt ally, Congressman Jerry Voorhis. The Nixon campaign successfully painted him as a communist sympathizer. Four years later, Nixon repeated the trick in a Senate election against Democratic congresswoman Helen Douglas, whom he referred to as the "Pink Lady" for her supposed communist ties. As the vice-presidential nominee, Nixon used the tactic for the third time in eight years against Stevenson. The Governor's past associations with the State Department were enough for Nixon to again raise the spectre of communism. "What this country needs," he told audiences, "is a khaki-clad president, not one clothed in State Department Pinks."<sup>79</sup> Because of Nixon, Eisenhower was allowed to rise above the

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<sup>76</sup> Greene, 125; Stevenson, *The Papers of Adlai Stevenson*, Volume IV, 15.

<sup>77</sup> "Starting Position," *Time*, August 18, 1952, 13; Broadwater, 120.

<sup>78</sup> Malsberger, ix-x.

<sup>79</sup> Ernest Brashear, "Who is Richard Nixon," *New Republic*, September 1, 1952, Folder 4, Box 222, Series

political fray and focus on condemning the "mess" in Washington.<sup>80</sup> This detachment was important. While Nixon enforced the image of Stevenson as outside the hegemonic ideal, Eisenhower floated above political intrigue and was allowed the latitude to portray himself as a unifying father-figure.

Under Nixon's charge, the Republican campaign rhetoric took on a McCarthy-esque flair. He assailed Stevenson as "Adlai the Appeaser," who got his "Ph.D. from [Secretary of State] Dean Acheson's cowardly college of Communist containment."<sup>81</sup> Nixon's favourite line of attack along this theme was Stevenson's supposed professional relationship with accused Soviet spy and former State Department employee, Alger Hiss. During his time as Governor of Illinois, Stevenson was compelled by subpoena to testify regarding his associations with Hiss during their shared time at the United Nations. When asked about Hiss' character, Stevenson observed that it was "good" at the time, and that he had no knowledge of Hiss' potential communist sympathies.<sup>82</sup> Despite the subpoena, this was enough for the Republicans to accuse Stevenson of being lenient towards Soviet spies, rendering him unfit for the Oval Office. A favourite trope of McCarthy, while stumping for Eisenhower, was to slip up on Stevenson's name: "Alger, pardon me, I mean Adlai." Another, used by Senator William Jenner, informed audiences: "If Adlai gets into the White House, Alger gets out of the jailhouse."<sup>83</sup>

Stevenson, as a candidate, did not assist matters, and campaign strategist George Ball would later observe: "Stevenson would have been a more effective politician if he

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4.1, Adlai Stevenson Papers (MC-124), Mudd Manuscript Library (MML), Princeton, NJ.

<sup>80</sup> Frank, 39

<sup>81</sup> K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 89

<sup>82</sup> Martin, 141-42.

<sup>83</sup> Stuart Gerry Brown, *Conscience In Politics: Adlai E. Stevenson in the 1950s* (Syracuse University Press, 1961), 47; Greene, 162; Cuordileone, 88.

could have... [run] when only the radio was available.” As a campaigner, the governor was both eloquent and analytical. He was intensely focused on his speeches, to the point that Ball notes that a campaign joke became that Stevenson “would rather write than be president.”<sup>84</sup> He sought to inform and educate audiences and recoiled from the thought of making promises in exchange for votes. He frequently used humour and had a tendency to be self-deprecating. He infamously told the Democratic convention in his acceptance speech that he would have preferred they chose a “stronger, a wiser, a better man than myself.”<sup>85</sup> Stevenson’s humbleness led one supporter to urge him: “Don’t strangle your election with your set of vocal cords.”<sup>86</sup> His humility, however, should not be taken as insecurity, but rather the by-product of an analytical mind. The problem was, he came off as meek, indecisive, or insincere, at best. At worst, it confirmed a lack of masculine vigour in contrast with General Eisenhower. Another supporter, writing to the campaign, felt that Stevenson needed to avoid “[wrapping] himself in a cocoon of intellectualism and gloom.”<sup>87</sup>

Stevenson was professorial and was one of the first politicians to be described as an “egghead.” The term likely originated with journalist Stewart Alsop, who pulled the moniker from Stevenson’s shining forehead as he looked down to read his speeches.<sup>88</sup> It quickly became a pejorative used to deride intellectuals. “Eggheads” were, according to journalist Louis Bromfield:

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<sup>84</sup> George Ball, “With AES in War and Politics,” in *As We Knew Adlai: The Stevenson Story by Twenty-Two Friends*, ed. Edward P. Doyle (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 149.

<sup>85</sup> Schlesinger, 13; Davis, 287; Stevenson, *The Papers of Adlai Stevenson*, Volume IV, 16-17.

<sup>86</sup> Letter from Harold Light, dated September 1952, Folder 6, Box 213, Series 4.1, MC-124.

<sup>87</sup> Greene, 69, 140; Letter from Joseph Casey to Arthur Schlesinger Jr., dated October 2, 1952, Folder 1, Box 216, Series 4.1, MC-124, MML.

<sup>88</sup> Aaron S. Lecklider, “Inventing the Egghead: The Paradoxes of Brainpower in Cold War American Culture,” *Journal of American Studies* 45, no. 2 (2011): 249.

Of spurious intellectual pretensions.... Over-emotional and feminine in reactions to any problem. Supercilious and surfeited with conceit and contempt for the experience of more sound and able men.... So given to examining all sides of a question that he becomes thoroughly addled while always remaining in the same pot. An anemic bleeding heart.<sup>89</sup>

Although Stevenson often made light of the term on the campaign trail — “Eggheads of the world, unite!” — it brought with it genuine concerns about his masculinity. Indeed, by linking the “egghead” with effeminacy and feminine inferiority, it raised questions about Stevenson’s abilities entirely. This is infamously seen in an attack by the Eisenhower-aligned *New York Daily News*. Referred to Stevenson by the female name “Adelaide,” the paper accused him of giving speeches that were full of “teacup words,” while he “trilled” in a “fruity” voice that reminded one of “a genteel spinster who can never forget that she got an A in elocution at Miss Smith’s Finishing School.” He was not to be trusted, nor were the “typical Harvard lace-cuff liberals” and “lace-panty diplomats” supporting him.<sup>90</sup>

Stevenson’s status as a divorced man, having split from his wife in 1949, only enhanced this perception. The marriage had been an unhappy one for several years. As son Adlai Stevenson III describes it: “We *never* demonstrated affection in our family.”<sup>91</sup> The official reason for the split given by the Governor’s office was that Mrs. Stevenson did not enjoy public life. Close friends countered this argument with the view that they simply grew apart. His divorce only increased the effectiveness of implications that he was effeminate and lent to charges that he was homosexual. While polling at the time showed that 81% of Americans would consider a divorced man for president, it nonetheless helped

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<sup>89</sup> Louis Bromfield, “The Triumph of the Egghead,” *The Freeman* 3, no. 5 (December 1952): 158.

<sup>90</sup> Hofstadter, 227.

<sup>91</sup> Emphasis in original; Adlai Stevenson III, as quoted in Rodney M. Sievers, *The Last Puritan? Adlai Stevenson in American Politics* (Port Washington, NY: Associated Faculty Press, 1983), 4; Martin, 143.

the accusations of effete stick.<sup>92</sup> An editorial column, written by Clennie Hollon of Williba, Kentucky, firmly states: "If'n Mr. Stevenson can't find him no woman by November; then I ain't going to vote for him." Hollon had two issues. First, the nation needed a First Lady "to do [the] housework" and "to keep the lawn cut and trimmed." More problematic, however, he alludes to the lack of a wife as a stain on Stevenson's manhood. By comparison, "General Ike might make an awful good president." Why? Because he "grabbed his fishing pole and took off [just] as soon as he got nominated."<sup>93</sup> Several letters to both the Eisenhower and Stevenson campaigns, as well as two internal Democratic campaign studies, indicate it was a concern for voters. "How could a man unable to manage his own family, manage the nation," asked many Americans.<sup>94</sup>

In contrast, the Eisenhower campaign strove to highlight his position as a family man, and as one campaign memorandum observed: "Stevenson does not have the personality or family associations to compete on an equal basis with our candidate." In that same memo, it is noted that it would be worthwhile stressing that Eisenhower's son John was currently serving in Korea.<sup>95</sup> The ongoing stalemate on the Korean peninsula provided Eisenhower with an opportunity to highlight his parental concern for the young men serving in the Korean War. In a letter to Eisenhower's executive assistant, Arthur Vandenberg, Jr., friend J.T. Sellers suggested that continued cultivation of Eisenhower's

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<sup>92</sup> Clipping, John Bartlow Martin, "The Story of Adlai Stevenson," Folder 6, Box 227, Series 4.1, MC-124, MML; "Divorced Candidates," *Time*, June 2, 1952.

<sup>93</sup> Clennie Hollon, "Ramblin' Through Williba," Folder 6, Box 213, Series 4.1, MC-124, MML.

<sup>94</sup> Letter from Frederick Ayer, Jr. to Sinclair Weeks, October 16, 1952," in "Campaign - Suggestions (2)," Box 6, Campaign Series, Ann Whitman Files, DDEPL; Letter from Ethel Brubaker, October 10, 1952, in "A-B," Box 1, Letters Referred to RNC, Bulk Mail File, White House Central Files, DDEPL; Memo from International Research Associates (IRA) on National Issues, October 8, 1956, Folder 7, Box 280, Series 4.1, MC-124, MML; Memo from IRA on National Issues, October 24, 1956, Folder 7, Box 280, Series 4.1, MC-124, MML.

<sup>95</sup> Memorandum from Robert Mathews to Ralph Cake, in "Republican Presidential Campaign and Election, 1952-54 (5)," Box 541, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL.

image as ‘father symbol’ was crucial to granting him “a powerful subconscious asset that Adlai probably can never have.” It also explained, said Sellers, the “hero-worship” that Eisenhower already enjoyed with young children.<sup>96</sup> According to an internal study conducted by the Democratic Party in the aftermath of the campaign, Eisenhower is mentioned as “the perfect father figure, deeply concerned about the welfare of the people, country, and concerned in a personal, direct fashion...” The report observes that “he stands out most strongly as a man who knows intuitively, rather than through intellect, what is good for the nation.” By comparison, Stevenson is described as “a very intelligent man... probably too intelligent,” and the report observes: “He is seen as weak and inactive, not sufficiently energetic or constructively assertive” to be taken seriously in the presidency.<sup>97</sup>

In a bid to highlight Stevenson “the Man,” a campaign pamphlet was authored by close friend Richard Neuberger. He takes on portrayals of Stevenson as a “State Department cookie-pusher in striped pants and a morning coat” by telling the story of their trip to Mt. St. Helens. Climbing to the summit, Stevenson wore “khaki shorts and a pair of grotesque boots,” accompanied by “dirty wool socks.” Together, they ascended the ramparts, and peered down at the path they had come, where “ugly boulders waited with saber-toothed fangs.” “Stevenson may be an intellectual,” Neuberger observed, but “he has none of the physical timidity which frequently characterizes the intellectual.”<sup>98</sup> The campaign also allowed *Colliers* to profile Stevenson’s eldest son, Adlai III. Entitled “Leatherneck Stevenson,” the article outlined that he had recently graduated from Harvard

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<sup>96</sup> Letter from Jim Sellers to Arthur Vandenberg, Jr., October 25, 1952, in “Republican Presidential Campaign and Election, 1952-54 (6),” Box 541, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL.

<sup>97</sup> “Images of Presidential Possibilities,” Social Research Inc., August 1956, Folder 7, Box 280, Series 4.1, MC-124, MML.

<sup>98</sup> Pamphlet, “Stevenson, The Man,” by Richard Neuberger, Folder 2, Box 226, Series 4.1, MC-124, MML.



and was training as an officer in the Marine Corps. It is accompanied by numerous photos of the eldest Stevenson boy in combat fatigues and undergoing military drills.<sup>99</sup> It is hard to imagine such a profile appearing had Stevenson been running against the mercurial Taft instead of General Eisenhower. Although Governor Stevenson had enlisted in the Navy in 1918, he narrowly missed service in World War One.<sup>100</sup>

Eisenhower's status as a military general and commander in World War Two, lent him credibility when he promised to end the stalemate in Korea. As one clipping from early September 1952 demanded, "We want to know when our sons *will* or *can* come back from Korea and the other far-flung places."<sup>101</sup> The campaign responded and pamphlets like "Vote For Ike" focused on concepts of security, peace, and "prosperity without war." Eisenhower's "world-wide prestige and experience make him the man most feared by Russia," the pamphlet claimed.<sup>102</sup> On the campaign trail, he promised Americans that he would bring an end to the slaughter "of your sons and husbands on the blood-soaked fields of Korea."<sup>103</sup> Former Indiana congressman Gerald W. Landis wrote to the campaign emphasizing that this messaging had a broad appeal, *especially* to mothers. He attached a letter being distributed by a Republican county chairman to the families of high school-aged boys in Missouri. It charged: "Three Democrat wars are too many.... Don't forget the State Dept. New Dealers lost the peace.... It's getting late. Later than you think...."<sup>104</sup> His paternalistic concern for young men fighting in Korea may help explain why he ran so far

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<sup>99</sup> Clipping, "Leatherneck Stevenson," *Colliers*, Folder 6, Box 226, Series 4.1, MC-124, MML.

<sup>100</sup> Noel F. Busch, *Adlai Stevenson of Illinois* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Young, 1952), 49.

<sup>101</sup> Emphasis added; "The Slugging Campaign," *Daily Mirror*, September 2, 1952, Folder 6, Box 227, Series 4.1, MC-124, MML.

<sup>102</sup> Pamphlet, "Vote For Ike" in "Republican Presidential Campaign and Election, 1952-54 (3), Box 540, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL.

<sup>103</sup> Cabell Phillips, "Eisenhower: A Campaigner," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, October 19, 1952.

<sup>104</sup> Letter from Gerald W. Landis, October 18, 1952, in "Campaign - Suggestions (1)," Box 6, Campaign Series, Ann Whitman Files, DDEPL.

ahead with women, capturing 58.1% of the female vote, compared with 52.7% of men.<sup>105</sup>

In Eisenhower's view, the Korean War was the result of poor leadership. The Truman administration had failed to "check and turn back Communist ambition before it savagely attacked." While he remained vague on specifics, the promise to end the war was enough for many Americans. His speech in Detroit on October 24<sup>th</sup>, in which he famously declared: "I Shall Go To Korea," is seen by many scholars as the moment that secured his election victory. Furthermore, this speech hinted at what would become his policy of massive retaliation known as the "New Look." He sought to depict nuclear weapons as a deterrent, so America could rely less on local military forces, and essentially prevent war through the threat of nuclear holocaust. "To vacillate, to appease, to placate," Eisenhower observed, "is only to invite war - wastier war - bloodier war." He promised to keep Americans safe and assured them: "I know something of this totalitarian mind."<sup>106</sup> By comparison, Adlai Stevenson stood firmly behind Truman's policy and argued for the necessity of continuing to fight until the war was brought to an armistice. If "militant communism had not been stopped in Korea, we soon would have met them in another place, and another, and at the end, perhaps our own soil." He accused the Eisenhower campaign of becoming beholden to the isolationist, Taft-wing of the party, willing to avoid war at all costs.<sup>107</sup> The irony was that Stevenson ended up sounding like more of a warmonger than the military general. As one supporter tellingly chastised: "Its puzzling to

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<sup>105</sup> "The 1952 Elections: A Statistical Analysis," Republican National Committee, October 1952, in "1952 Election - A Statistical Analysis," Box 7, Homer H. Gruenther Records, DDEPL.

<sup>106</sup> "Text of Address... Detroit, Michigan," October 24, 1952, The Korean War, Online Documents, DDEPL, accessed August 15, 2019, <https://www.eisenhowerlibrary.gov/sites/default/files/research/online-documents/korean-war/i-shall-go-to-korea-1952-10-24.pdf>; Smith, 643-46; See also: "I Shall Go To Korea," *Time*, November 3, 1952.

<sup>107</sup> Davis, 254; Broadwater, 124; Stevenson, *The Papers of Adlai Stevenson*, Volume IV, 119-21; See also "Man of Experience," *Time*, November 3, 1952

me that on the subject of Korea the Governor should have spoken like a General while the General spoke in the voice of a father and civilian. There is no doubt in my mind as to which way is the more effective.”<sup>108</sup>

In presenting themselves to the public, the 1952 presidential campaign was the first in the United States to use television as a medium. Although it was still in its infancy as a technology, there were already over 18 million television sets in the nation. The market penetration was such that 39% of American living rooms had a television.<sup>109</sup> Much of the impression Americans had of the candidates came down to what they saw. Here again, the Stevenson campaign failed. While the Republicans crafted a series of nuanced spots, Stevenson’s mistrust of the medium largely hobbled efforts of Democrats to reach the masses via television. The result was a drastic difference in financial commitment, with the Eisenhower campaign spending between \$1.5 and \$2 million on television advertising, compared to the Stevenson campaign’s paltry \$77,000.<sup>110</sup>

“Eisenhower Answers America” was a series of thirty-one television advertisements which the candidate briefly responded to a question asked by an “average citizen.” Cut together to look like he was speaking to the questioner directly, Eisenhower provides brief, sympathetic responses. As Dennis Johnson observes, the aim of these spots was to emphasize Eisenhower’s status as a family man or father figure. Questioners included: a young white man asking if America was prepared to face another war, a middle-aged housewife complaining about the cost of living, and a young black man concerned

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<sup>108</sup> Letter to Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. from Bernard Guillemin, October 6, 1952, Folder 2, Box 216, Series 4.1, MC-124, MML.

<sup>109</sup> Greene, 91.

<sup>110</sup> Jill Lepore, *These Truths: A History of the United States* (New York: Norton, 2018), 560; Greene, 146-47.

about Democrats telling him he “never had it so good.” These spots sometimes also opened with a brief biography: “The Man From Abilene,” which highlighted Ike’s small-town Midwestern roots and that he “brought [America] to the triumph and peace of V-E Day.”<sup>111</sup> While Eisenhower did not enjoy filming them, Republican strategists understood the benefits of branding. Sitting in a light suit and dark tie, to stand out on black-and-white TV, he speaks both to the questioner and the audience in a calm, reassuring manner. The beauty of these spots, in the view of columnist Drew Pearson, was that Eisenhower “inspires loyalty without prematurely committing himself to any straitjacket answer.”<sup>112</sup>

Adlai Stevenson meanwhile resisted the idea of marketing himself to the public “like cereal.” “This isn’t Ivory Soap versus Palmolive,” he complained, “but [an election] to decide who should occupy the nation’s highest office”<sup>113</sup> It is worth noting here the separation that Stevenson places between domestic marketing, which often was geared towards to wives and mothers, and the masculine sphere of politics.<sup>114</sup> His disdain for

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<sup>111</sup> Dennis W. Johnson, *Democracy For Hire: A History of American Political Consulting* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 66-68; For examples of the advertising spots, see “Election Year: 1952,” *The Living Room Candidate*, Museum of the Moving Image, accessed August 11, 2019, <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/>

<sup>112</sup> Smith, 544; “Drew Pearson” Column, *Los Angeles Daily News*, September 16, 1952, Folder 6, Box 213, Series 4.1, MC-124, MML.

<sup>113</sup> Smith, 544; Johnson, *Eisenhower*, 87.

<sup>114</sup> Despite sustained attacks on his masculinity, Adlai Stevenson maintained an extremely conservative outlook on gender relations and the role of women in public life. As Betty Friedan notes in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Stevenson’s commencement speech at Smith College in 1955 “dismissed the desire of educated women to play their own political part in ‘the crises of the age.’” Rather, as Stevenson saw it, in Friedan’s view, “the only problem is woman’s failure to appreciate that her true part in the political crisis is as wife and mother.” (p. 60-61). To look closer at the speech itself, indeed Stevenson’s focus in his address to these accomplished young women is on their future service to their husbands and children. It was the role of the woman, he said, “to restore valid, meaningful purpose to life in your home,” and to “keep [their husband] truly purposeful, to keep him whole.” Children were the “citizens of tomorrow” and needed their mothers to instill in them the values of a “free society.” Lest his speech be taken as “too depressing a view of your future,” he notes that “far from the vocation of motherhood leading you away from the great issues of our day, it brings you back to their very center and places upon you an infinitely deeper and more intimate responsibility.” For the full speech, please see Adlai Stevenson, *The Papers of Adlai Stevenson*, Volume IV, ed. Walter Johnson, 495-502; See also: Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963; New York: Norton, 2001), 60-61.

advertisements likely explains why campaign spots did not frequently feature the candidate. They have been described as “little more than illustrated radio spots,” relying heavily on crude animation. One of the most awkward depicts a cartoon professor and a jingle on how to say the candidate’s name: “Ad-lay.” It is probably the worst approach the campaign could have taken to dispel their candidate’s image as an effeminate intellectual. The Stevenson spots that did include individuals were a minute long and simply lecture the home viewer on Stevenson. There is no appeal.<sup>115</sup>

Eisenhower’s campaign ads, the first of their kind, were the brainchild of Rosser Reeves of the Ted Bates advertising agency on Madison Avenue. Two years later, in 1954, he was the man behind the M&M’s “melt in your mouth, not in your hands” tagline. The agency advised the campaign to place their spots immediately preceding or following evening television programs. They were only twenty-seconds long and they were much cheaper and more effective than buying expensive ad time for half-hour speeches.<sup>116</sup> Thus, there was potentially some validity in Stevenson’s criticisms of Eisenhower being marketed like a product. As one journalist caustically observed:

Feeling sluggish, feeling sick?  
Take a dose of Ike and Dick.  
Philip Morris, Lucky Strike.  
Alka Seltzer, I Like Ike.<sup>117</sup>

Nonetheless, as Reeves explained, when the voter walks into the booth “and hesitated between two levers... the brand that has made the highest penetration on his brain will win

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<sup>115</sup> “Election Year: 1952,” *The Living Room Candidate*, Museum of the Moving Image, accessed August 11, 2019, <http://www.livingroomcandidate.org/>

<sup>116</sup> Smith, 544; Johnson, *Democracy For Hire*, 68-69; See also “M&Ms,” *MoMA Learning*, accessed June 2021, [https://www.moma.org/learn/moma\\_learning/forrest-mars-mms-late-1930s/](https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/forrest-mars-mms-late-1930s/)

<sup>117</sup> Smith, 544-45.

his choice.”<sup>118</sup>

An October 1953 study by Miami University and Crosley Broadcasting concluded that the decision of voters “lay more in the realm of personalities than in any differences in platform planks.” Television was partially responsible for projecting that image to the voters. The study further concluded that when television was used, not surprisingly, the Republican campaign was more effective with the medium. As already stated, the Eisenhower telecasts were timed to moments when people were watching television. This move began right from the Republican Convention when Eisenhower’s acceptance speech was made in the early evening. By comparison, at the Democratic Convention, Stevenson did not take the stage until well after midnight local time in Chicago.<sup>119</sup> Such strategic timing, in the opinion of Carroll P. Newton of the advertising firm BBD&O, allowed for Eisenhower to reach twice as many Americans.<sup>120</sup>

In hindsight, given the margin of Eisenhower’s victory, his win looked inevitable; however, similar to the primaries, there was strong concern in the final weeks of October about the chances of a Republican victory. By the end of October, polling put Eisenhower at 47.4% support to Stevenson’s 42.3%, with 9.9% still undecided. More general polling on November 2<sup>nd</sup> found the Republicans with 45% support to the Democrats 44%, with 11% undecided.<sup>121</sup> Within the final month, about 12% of voters had made up their minds, and another 13% decided in the final week. As a result, the polls showed the momentum

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<sup>118</sup> Johnson, *Democracy For Hire*, 68-69.

<sup>119</sup> “The Influence of Television on the 1952 Election,” Miami University-Crosley Broadcasting Study, in “Republican Presidential Campaign and Election, 1952-54 (9),” Box 541, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL.

<sup>120</sup> Letter from Carol P. Newton to Herbert Brownell, March 17, 1953, in “Republican Presidential Campaign and Election 1952-54 (8),” Box 541, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL.

<sup>121</sup> “The 1952 Elections: A Statistical Analysis,” Republican National Committee, October 1952, in “1952 Election - A Statistical Analysis,” Box 7, Homer H. Gruenther Records, DDEPL.

with Stevenson, and the race had narrowed quite significantly from a 53-39 lead at the end of September. Most troubling for the Eisenhower campaign was that undecideds broke for Truman by a 4-1 margin on Election Day 1948, defying pollster's predictions and returning Truman to office.<sup>122</sup>

A number of panicked letters from supporters to Eisenhower give an indication as to what might have caused this concern. A letter to C.D. Jackson, one of Eisenhower's speechwriters, saw one voter express unease at Eisenhower's failure to "[state] his stand clearly on the issues." Another wrote that while the GOP dismissed Stevenson as "high-brow," he feared there was an unspoken appeal to many based on his plans and policies.<sup>123</sup> There was also concern that while Eisenhower's "very presence inspires loyalty and integrity," the right-wing party men he was surrounded with would have undue influence over a Republican administration.<sup>124</sup> Among other letters was the perception was that Eisenhower was playing it safe. A.C. Cronkite of Chicago, for example, worried that perhaps Eisenhower's focus on a paternalistic appeal was too soft:

If Ike does not take off his gloves, replace them with brass knuckles, forget his West Point manners, mention names, call a spade a spade and start cutting his opponents to pieces, as they are trying to do with him... this jackass [Truman] and his handpicked candidate [Stevenson] are going to take us for a ride.<sup>125</sup>

A survey of newspaper coverage from mid-to-late October reflects similar concerns to the letters being received. Stevenson's well-thought-out policies, combined with his growing

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<sup>122</sup> "The Influence of Television on the 1952 Election," Miami University-Crosley Broadcasting Study, in "Republican Presidential Campaign and Election, 1952-54 (9), Box 541, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL; Broadwater, 120; See also "The Great Fiasco," *Time*, November 15, 1948.

<sup>123</sup> Urgent Report," from B. Woodard to C.D Jackson, October 18, 1952; and Letter from Leo Burnett to Fred Gurley, October 14, 1952; both in "Campaign Suggestions (2)," Box 6, Campaign Series, Ann Whitman Files, DDEPL.

<sup>124</sup> Letter from Henry M. Seigel, October 16, 1952, in "Delaware, A-Z," Box 3, Geographical Series, Pre-Inaugural Files, White House Central Files, DDEPL.

<sup>125</sup> Letter from A.C. Cronkite to Alan J. Gould, October 7, 1952, Box 6, Campaign Series, Ann Whitman Files, DDEPL.

familiarity with voters, and concerns regarding Eisenhower's associations with his party's right-wing, gave many Americans pause. Furthermore, there seemed to be some genuine concern among remaining undecideds, regarding what kind of "change" the Republicans were promising.<sup>126</sup>

Pollsters, heading into Election Day, saw a close race, which is why when CBS's new UNIVAC computer spit out a result of 438-93 for Eisenhower in the Electoral College on election night, television producers at the station balked. As the night wore on, it became clear the machine was, embarrassingly, correct. In the end, Eisenhower took 442 electoral votes to Stevenson's 89, with a popular vote of 34,075,529 for Eisenhower and 27,375,090 for Stevenson. The Democrats held on to the Deep South, while Eisenhower made large gains across the Midwest, in Southern border states, on the West Coast, and in both Texas and Florida.<sup>127</sup> While undecideds still broke for Stevenson by a margin of 2-1, Eisenhower's base support had gone heavily under-represented in polling.<sup>128</sup>

Speaking to the American people that night, Eisenhower admitted that he was humbled by the overwhelming victory and the faith that the American people had placed in him. He thanked every volunteer who worked to make the campaign a success, especially the children. "And there have been many children... who have helped," he smiled. Moving forward, he asked the American people to now unite "for the better future for America, for our children and grandchildren."<sup>129</sup> Stevenson, meanwhile, told reporters he felt similar to

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<sup>126</sup> James A. Hagerty, "Survey Hints Close Election," *New York Times*, October 27, 1952; "Eisenhower's Edge," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct 23, 1952; "Stevenson Gains on 'Ike' in Midwest," *Christian Science Monitor*, October 18, 1952.

<sup>127</sup> "Election Day and Election Night," *Time*, November 10, 1952, 22-25.

<sup>128</sup> "Election Summary of National Public Opinion," Final Report, November 13, 1952, Eisenhower-Nixon Research Service, in "Republican Presidential Campaign and Election, 1952-54 (6)," Box 541, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL.

<sup>129</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Remarks Accepting Election as the 34th President of the United States," November 5, 1952, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed March 4, 2021,



Abraham Lincoln when he lost one of his early elections. Lincoln had said of that defeat that he felt like a little boy who stubbed his toe; he was “too old to cry, it hurt too much to laugh.” The Democratic campaign had been anticipating victory, despite the polls, and Stevenson went so far as to discuss cabinet appointments with his running mate, Senator John Sparkman, on election eve.<sup>130</sup> Among Stevenson’s personal papers, housed at Princeton University, is a small slip of paper with the number 373 scrawled in the candidate’s handwriting. In the campaign office pool, it was Stevenson’s bet for how many electoral votes he would win.<sup>131</sup>

### **The Canadian General Election of 1953**

With the election of a new Republican administration in the United States, the Progressive Conservatives entered Canada’s 1953 election season emboldened and hoping to emulate President Eisenhower’s success. A major similarity between both right-wing parties was the promise to cut government spending and to cut taxes. As the *Toronto Star* pointed out, however, unlike the Truman government in the United States, the federal Liberals ran a fiscally tight ship of budget surpluses, with a focus on paying down the national debt. Meanwhile, Eisenhower by July 1953, had done little in the way of tax reduction; his cuts in spending had come from over one hundred thousand civil service job cuts.<sup>132</sup> The French-language daily, *Le Canada*, mocked Drew’s attempt to mirror Eisenhower’s slogan and fiscal responsibility platform:

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<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/345941>

<sup>130</sup> Wilson W. Wyatt, “What I Think Is Still What I Thought,” and John Sparkman, “Lets Talk Sense To The American People,” in *As We Knew Adlai: The Stevenson Story*, ed. Edward P. Doyle (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 112-13, and 125.

<sup>131</sup> Letter from Bill Blair to Ben Primer, November 1997, Folder 2, Box 214, Series 4.1, MC-124, MML; Schlesinger, 20.

<sup>132</sup> “Drew and Eisenhower,” *Toronto Star*, July 20, 1953, in “Press Clippings, Drew, July 12-24, 1953,” Box 379, MG26-L, LAC.

Pourquoi faut-il que M. Drew aille choisir le slogan du Parti républicain américain: "Time for a change!" lorsque les contribuables n'ont qu'à lire un journal ou à regarder ce qui se passe au-delà de la frontière pour constater aussitôt qu'il n'y a pas eu à Washington de dégrèvement d'impôts.<sup>133</sup>

Further working against Drew was the fact that Louis St. Laurent was not despised as Harry Truman was, nor could he be depicted as meek like Adlai Stevenson. A desire for a "change" had yet to come to Canada, which hinged largely on the ongoing appeal of St. Laurent. While he had briefly considered retiring in mid-1952, expressing this desire to cabinet minister Brooke Claxton, St. Laurent was aware that much of the party's continued success was from the perception of steady leadership.<sup>134</sup>

The coming Liberal campaign aimed to capitalize on their success across four-years, combined with a renewed focus on St. Laurent and his personality. Historian Allan Levine observes that in the years between 1949 and 1953, the prime minister's image in the press had only further matured and "Uncle Louis" had firmly entrenched himself as a paternalistic figure to the nation. Campaign literature and posters often featured large photographs of the prime minister, now seventy-one-years-old, "in a dignified, well-groomed pose, gazing directly into the eyes of his fellow citizens with an expression of quiet competence." At the same time, "Liberal" branding was largely replaced by the prime minister's image. Canadians were told to "vote St. Laurent," and local Liberal candidates were portrayed as your "local St. Laurent candidate."<sup>135</sup> A cartoon in Toronto's *Globe and Mail* takes the Liberals to task for this approach. It depicts Toronto and its 18 electoral ridings. In each riding, the candidate is shown to be a copy of St. Laurent himself. For

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<sup>133</sup> "M. Drew et l'exemple du general Eisenhower," *Le Canada*, July 17, 1953, in "Press Clippings, Drew, July 12-24, 1953," Box 379, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>134</sup> Thomson, 329.

<sup>135</sup> Thomson, 354; Levine, 189.

example, in York South, the Liberal candidate is “Louis St. Green,” while in North York it is “Louis St. Smith.” Each candidate is alluded to be merely as a stand-in for the personal appeal of Louis St. Laurent.<sup>136</sup>

Over the past four years, the Liberal government had wrapped itself in a cloak of Canadian nationalism and paternalism. It made remarkable strides in advancing Canadian nationhood and the rise of the welfare state. Besides overseeing Newfoundland’s entry into Confederation just before to the 1949 election, St. Laurent also achieved a partial patriation of the Canadian constitution. The changes meant that parliament could make federal amendments to the British North America Act without British approval and that the Canadian Supreme Court became the ultimate legal authority across the land. The Liberal government followed up in 1952 with the appointment of the first Canadian-born Governor-General, Vincent Massey.<sup>137</sup> In terms of the continued development of the welfare state, the twenty-first Canadian parliament brought in a universal old-age pension program for those over seventy, as well as old age assistance for those between sixty-five and seventy, and more government support for individuals with disabilities.<sup>138</sup> As the prime minister saw it, the best way to protect against the influence of communism was “to make democracy work as a system benefiting no particular classes or groups,” and that when you “enable each to get a fair share of the welfare which Providence makes it possible to provide for everyone in the country,” communism was a non-threat.<sup>139</sup>

This was St. Laurent’s response to George Drew’s continued calls in the second

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<sup>136</sup> Cartoon, “Gangs All Here,” *Globe and Mail*, in “Cartoons,” Box 318, Series 3C, George Alexander Drew Fonds (MG32-C3), Library Archives Canada (LAC), Ottawa, ON.

<sup>137</sup> Pickersgill, *My Years With Louis St. Laurent*, 111-117, 159-64.

<sup>138</sup> Pickersgill, *Louis St. Laurent*, 33-34 ; Pickersgill, *My Years With Louis St. Laurent*, 134-38; Patrice Dutil, “St-Laurent in Government: Realism and Idealism in Action,” in *The Unexpected Louis St-Laurent*, ed. Patrice Dutil (Vancouver: UBC Press 2020), 41-42.

<sup>139</sup> Pickersgill, *My Years With Louis St. Laurent*, 148-49.

session of the twenty-first parliament to criminalize communism and its affiliated organizations. The Progressive Conservative Party's position remained that it was not enough to persecute those who committed subversive acts, you needed to make the doctrine behind the acts illegal. Drew's thinking on the matter is clarified in a personal memo that observes: "Unless it is a crime, how can it justifiably be regarded as a form of misconduct to be a Communist?" He makes a valid criticism of the government, who fired those whose loyalty was suspect but had not actually committed a crime. "Communism is either right or it is wrong," he muses. "If it is merely a political doctrine... then there is no justification under our ordinary principles... to limit the full exercise of citizenship."<sup>140</sup> His frustration must at least partially stem from the fact that while St. Laurent oversaw a virulently anti-communist government, it was *his* suggestions to drag the process into the light that were somehow interpreted as demagoguery. This is in no small part thanks to Senator McCarthy's rise in the United States during this period.

Between the 1949 and 1953 elections, the rhetoric of McCarthy begins to creep into Canada's political discourse. At the same time, aspects of anti-intellectualism and masculinity continue in the debate. As one article in the *Financial Times* defined communist supporters: "[They are] spoiled darlings of a fed-up society. Pseudo-intellectuals whose brains have far outgrown the capacity of their souls and their minds."<sup>141</sup> It is a description that mirrors Bromfield's mockery of the "egghead." Liberal messaging contrasted by raising concerns about freedom of thought and expression. As new External Affairs Minister, Lester B. Pearson, told the Montreal Rotary Club in late 1949: "Once we

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<sup>140</sup> Pickersgill, *My Years With Louis St. Laurent*, 148-49; Personal Memo, in "Communism, Clippings, 1950-52," Box 434, Series 2A, MG32-C3, LAC.

<sup>141</sup> "How To Fight Communism," *Financial Times*, April 28, 1950, in "Communism, Clippings, 1950-53," Box 434, Series 2A MG32-C3, LAC.

make it a crime to hold political ideas merely because they are thought to be dangerous, it will then be but a short step to suppressing political ideas because they are not liked.”<sup>142</sup> Drew struggled to find allies to his cause, and by the start of the 1953 campaign, his attacks were running a little thin. As an editorial poem in the *Ottawa Morning Citizen* surmises:

PC McCarthy-Drew,  
Should figure out something new.  
It's a little dry,  
That threadbare old cry,  
Here come the Communists! Boo!<sup>143</sup>

Even the right-wing populist leader of the Social Credit Party, Solon Low, who had called for a “House Un-Canadian Activities Committee,” expressed concerns about attempting to criminalize “states of mind.” Similarly, the RCMP was firmly against such a law, fearing that by driving communists underground, police activities would be curtailed.<sup>144</sup>

A combination of Liberal government successes and concerns about Drew’s leadership led to discussions in early 1953, before the writ was dropped, about replacing the PC leader. It was widely speculated for several months that Ontario premier Leslie Frost would ascend to the position. In March, Premier Frost was forced to state firmly that he had “no intention of transferring my activities to Ottawa” and that he would stand behind George Drew who was “doing an outstanding job.”<sup>145</sup> Polling conducted several months prior to the August election shows that Canadians largely did not feel the same as Frost. Support for St. Laurent and the Liberals sat at 44.4%, with only 26.6% of Canadians in

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<sup>142</sup> “Pearson Blasts Reds in Canada,” *Montreal Gazette*, July 20, 1949, in “Communism, Clippings, 1950-53,” Box 434, Series 2A, MG32-C3, LAC.

<sup>143</sup> Clipping, “The Old Bogey,” by A.T. McF, *Ottawa Morning Citizen*, July 4, 1953, in “Press Clippings, Drew, July 1-11, 1953,” Box 379, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>144</sup> Reg Whitaker and Steve Hewitt, *Canada and the Cold War* (Toronto: Lorimer & Company, 2003), 36-39.

<sup>145</sup> “Not Seeking Top PC Post Says Frost,” *Ottawa Morning Citizen*, March 20, 1953, in “CP Leadership, 158,” Box 323, MG26-L, LAC.

favour of Drew and the Progressive Conservative Party. Even with 10.6% undecided, the numbers had shifted little from four years earlier.<sup>146</sup>

Crucial to Premier Frost's popularity was his ability to match St. Laurent's paternalistic image. As the *Toronto Star* observed, compared to the "city slicker" moniker that had fallen upon Drew, Frost matched the prime minister in "his dignity, pleasant platform manner and his honest way of meeting the public." He was every bit a "village gentleman" who "impresses people as being without airs." This description of Frost mirrors a Liberal campaign pamphlet's description of St. Laurent as "a typical Canadian, a country boy who made good in the big city."<sup>147</sup> Ultimately, Drew led the party into his second election for two reasons. First, the PCs had several strong by-election showings in 1951 and 1952 that cut slightly into the Liberal's massive majority. Second, and more importantly, Drew maintained a strong core of support within the party establishment, especially from Bay Street financiers.<sup>148</sup> The Progressive Conservative Party dismissed the Frost rumours as a Liberal propaganda trick to make the opposition look fractured ahead of the upcoming election. Although no more than an accusation, if true, it was a savvy political move that reignited the debate about Drew's image and divisiveness at the opportune moment.<sup>149</sup>

During the 1953 election, the Progressive Conservative Party released a clear vision for Canada, which contrasted the relatively issueless campaign that both parties ran four

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<sup>146</sup> "Preferred Political Party," Poll #227, May 1953, Gallup Canada, Public Opinion Polls, ODESI, <https://search1.odesi.ca/>

<sup>147</sup> J.E. Belliveau, "Tories So Sure Frost Will Supplant Drew," *Toronto Star*, March 19, 1953, in "CP Leadership, 158," Box 323, MG26-L, LAC; Litt, 99.

<sup>148</sup> Harold Greer, "Saddled With Drew Tories Most Unhappy Over Early Election," *Toronto Star*, March 17, 1953, in "CP Leadership, 158," Box 323, MG26-L, LAC; Thomson, 329.

<sup>149</sup> "Conservatives Angrily Deny Drew Retiring," *Montreal Star*, March 20, 1953; and "Election Tactics," *Saturday Night*, April 11, 1953; both in "Clippings," Box 350, Series 3D, MG32-C3.

years earlier. An internal party memo expressed the desire to focus on Liberal spending, taxation, and government centralization, resulting in a sixteen-point manifesto promised half a billion dollars of tax cuts, a low-cost housing program, a contributory health insurance program, a national resource policy, and Senate reform. It is a progressive plan, especially in regard to the last plank. The PCs proposed changes to the Senate appointment structure, including gender parity.<sup>150</sup> Part of the problem, explained the *Financial Times*, was that the Progressive Conservative platform was nonetheless vague. It is one thing to promise a half-billion in tax cuts, but “[it] gives no details... it is rich in glorious generalities.” The other issue at hand was that the opposition seemed to underestimate the reverence that Canadians had for St. Laurent. Criticizing his government’s excesses, stumbles, and overreach was not enough, “it was like going after Uncle Louis with a shot gun and not a high calibre single bore rifle.” What Drew needed, the *Times* explained, “[was] an elephant gun, a weapon that will knock out the Liberals in one crack.... He hasn’t got it.”<sup>151</sup>

Another issue was that the Progressive Conservative leader was ultimately incapable of getting out of his own way. Drew’s continued need to spend time discussing the threat of communism provided the Liberals with the opportunity to continue sowing distrust in voters’ minds about his potential leadership. Opening the election campaign in mid-June, in his hometown of Guelph, the PC leader declared that he would not allow Canada to become “a privileged sanctuary for people trained in Moscow to carry out their

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<sup>150</sup> “Memo on Party Manifesto,” in “Manifesto, PC Party,” Box 202, MG32-C3, LAC; “Mr. Drew’s Presentation of the Progressive Conservative Program,” *Kingston Whig-Standard*, June 25, 1953, in “Press Clippings, Drew, June 17-30, 1953,” Box 379, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>151</sup> Clipping, “Government and Conservative Organizations in High Gear,” *Financial Times*, June 26, 1953, in “1953 Election - Government,” Box 238, Series 2C, MG32-C3, LAC.

activities here.”<sup>152</sup> Later that month, in a bizarre attempt to prove the need for a ban on communism, Drew alleged that Communists were attempting to infiltrate the Canadian school system to indoctrinate youth. In that same speech, he also alleged that “highly-trained Communists have been sent to Canada to organize plans for sabotage in the event of the outbreak of hostilities.” These individuals were supposedly strategically placed in electoral plants, uranium mining, and atomic production.<sup>153</sup> These charges were unproven. The closest evidence to anything resembling Drew’s theory came from Uranium City, Saskatchewan, where a group dominated by communist sympathizers applied to the Department of Labour (unsuccessfully) to bargain on behalf of Eldorado miners.<sup>154</sup>

The Liberals, meanwhile, relied largely on their record. St. Laurent made a point of stressing that unlike the Progressive Conservatives, he would not make promises that he was not certain he could keep. Dale Thomson describes the 1953 campaign as a “more relaxed version of [St. Laurent’s] 1949 performance.”<sup>155</sup> Early in the campaign, Louis St. Laurent addressed the nation on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. In a nod to his own leadership, he told Canadians that “for the past four years, Canada has been a happy land in a not very happy world.” He stressed that the “age of the jet plane and the atomic bomb” that nations were growing closer together and that “nothing can be more important for Canada, for our families and ourselves than the prevention of another world war.”<sup>156</sup> The unspoken implication here was that George Drew and the Progressive Conservatives were untested, and possibly too

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<sup>152</sup> “Cool Campaign,” *Time*, July 20, 1953.

<sup>153</sup> George Bain, “Trained Red Saboteurs in Electrical Plants Known Fact, Says Drew,” *Globe and Mail*, June 30, 1953; and “Drew Puts Stress on Communist Peril,” *Vancouver Sun*, June 30, 1953; both in “Press Clippings, Drew, June 17-30, 1953,” Box 379, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>154</sup> “‘McCarthyism’ or Common Sense?” *Ottawa Journal*, July 14, 1953, in “Press Clippings, Drew, July 12-24, 1953,” Box 379, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>155</sup> Thomson, 351.

<sup>156</sup> “Address by RH Louis St. Laurent,” June 22, 1953, in “Elections 1953, Drew and Fleming Speeches,” Box 437, Series 2A, MG32-C3, LAC.



reactionary to place at the helm of government in an atomic world. Earlier that same day, St. Laurent had spoken in Chatham, Ontario, offering reassurance and the promise of peace as three years of war in Korea were coming to an end. It was worth listening to what the Russians had to say, said the prime minister, and “the Cold War [is] something that we hope very soon to get over with.”<sup>157</sup>

As naive as it seems in retrospect, this focus on reassurance was critical to the St. Laurent brand. Bookending the discussion, in one of his last campaign addresses to the nation, he again underscored Canadians’ perilous position. “One small rock dislodged on a mountain slope can start an avalanche,” St. Laurent warned. His speech relied heavily on drawing a link between massive tax cuts proposed by Drew and national security. It also subtly stressed concerns about Drew being “reckless.” Likely alluding to coverage of the Progressive Conservative leader’s McCarthy-like views, the prime minister warns: “It was the peoples’ vote that put in the Nazi Party.” In closing, he then takes a tactic out of Eisenhower’s playbook, appealing directly to the mothers of the nation. “If you want a government which is resolved... to spare our children and grandchildren the horrors of another world war,” St. Laurent told them, then their only choice was to vote Liberal.<sup>158</sup>

In its bid to gain power, the Drew campaign tried to undercut the Liberal record and the allusion of competence by pointing out federal mismanagement. Campaign literature pointed to government scandals, including numerous issues at the military base in Petawawa. A government investigation, spurred by reports of theft, led to the discovery of

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<sup>157</sup> Harvey Hickey, “PM Says Canada Ready To Hear Red Proposals,” *Toronto Globe and Mail*, June 23, 1953, in “GE, September 3, 1952 - June 23, 1953,” Box 393, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>158</sup> Draft of Address for Fourth National Broadcast,” in “Fourth National Broadcast, August 7, 1953,” Box 281, MG26-L, LAC; Harvey Hickey, “Vote for PC Candidate Risking Own Security,” *Toronto Globe and Mail*, Aug. 8, 1953.

several breaches of public trust. They included the sale of 550 tons of scrap metal by army personnel for private profit, horses that were placed on the government payroll, and the use of soldiers to complete private projects for superiors - including the construction of a pleasure boat and a child's rocking horse. Progressive Conservatives also pointed to mismanagement in defence procurement, including \$4 million spent on army huts, ultimately not used, along with the purchase of enough raincoats to last the Canadian Women's Army Corps for fifty years. Best of all, was the purchase of a gold-plated piano.<sup>159</sup> This last item got its own campaign booklet, "The Case of the Gold-Plated Piano." Minister of Defence Production, C.D. Howe, did not help matters when he exclaimed: "If [the military] need a gold-plated piano, it's our duty to buy it."<sup>160</sup>

St. Laurent largely dismissed these charges as superficial, and Dale Thomson observes that they largely faltered against the prime minister's paternalism.<sup>161</sup> Indeed, for the 1953 campaign, the "Uncle Louis" moniker was thrown into overdrive. As the *Vancouver Sun* declared, the prime minister was "at his best in this very human 'grandfather role.'"<sup>162</sup> The *Victoria Times* observed that "not since the days of Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Sir John A. MacDonald has Canada seen a campaigner on the hustings like Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent." One reporter, mingling with the crowd, overheard observations like: "Isn't he a fine man," "Look, he really gets a bang out of talking to the kids," and "Gosh, he's distinguished looking."<sup>163</sup> Even more conservative-leaning papers

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<sup>159</sup> Thomson, 328, 333-36; Pamphlet, "What's Behind the Curtain," in "1953 Election - Government," Box 238, Series 2C, MG32-C3, LAC.

<sup>160</sup> Pamphlet, "The Case of the Gold-Plated Piano," in "1953 Election - Government," Box 238, Series 2C, MG32-C3, LAC.

<sup>161</sup> Thomson, 354.

<sup>162</sup> Gerald Waring, "Uncle Louis Still Popular In Ontario," *Vancouver Sun*, June 27, 1953, in "GE, June 24-30," Box 394, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>163</sup> Victor J. Mackie, "'Uncle Louis' on the Hustings," *Victoria Times*, July 3, 1953, in "GE, July 1-4, 1953," Box 394, MG26-L, LAC.

had to concede that his approach was effective, especially in using his rapport with children as a way to connect with parents. “There is something of the breakfast cereal technique in his approach,” the *Toronto Telegram* observed. The same “sort of technique by which radio advertisers seek to increase sales by urging Dennis the Menace to be sure to tell his mother all about the goodness of their product.”<sup>164</sup> Indeed, to read through this coverage of St. Laurent on the campaign trail, it does not take much to become somewhat exasperated at the frequency with which he granted schoolchildren a holiday. Thankfully, as the Western Ontario PC Association president, Elmer Bell, joked – the 1953 campaign came at the end of the school year. Still, he warned, “our kissing Prime Minister is on the warpath again,” and half-heartedly urged parents to “keep your children in.”<sup>165</sup>

A syndicated cartoon by John Collins of the *Montreal Gazette* reaches a similar conclusion as Dale Thomson and takes on the reassurance St. Laurent’s paternalism provided, alongside political insulation. Covering some of the issues that Drew raises during the campaign, Collins depicts St. Laurent resting in a comfortable chair, conversing with a voter at the front door to a home. Behind him, in the living room, the Cabinet are drawn as children running roughshod. It is a perfect example of the domestic sphere standing in for the state. While St. Laurent reassures the voter as “father,” C.D. Howe (Defence Production) and Stuart Garson (Justice) are smashing a toy labelled “rights of Parliament.” Meanwhile, J.W. Pickersgill (Clerk of Privy Council) is using a box labelled “civil service” to get at a jar of “political plums.” Finally, James Gardiner (Agriculture) is crying over lost markets, and an unnamed minister is watching a balloon labelled “High

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<sup>164</sup> “Uncle Louis and Mr. St. Laurent Are Really The Same Person,” *Toronto Telegram*, June 26, 1953, in “GE, June 24-30, 1953,” Box 394, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>165</sup> “Advises Electors To Hide Children Till PM’S Tour Over,” *Ottawa Journal*, June 27, 1953, in “GE, June 24-30, 1953,” Box 394, MG26-L, LAC.

Taxes” rise to the ceiling. Looking pensively around the prime minister’s easy chair, the voter is examining the chaos while St. Laurent reads to him from a book labelled “bedtime stories.”<sup>166</sup>

Canadians went to the polls on August 10<sup>th</sup>, 1953, to choose their next government. While the Liberal majority was not as large as four years prior, St. Laurent was returned to the House of Commons with 170 seats. The Conservatives gained ten seats, bringing their total to a still paltry 51. Meanwhile, both the CCF and Social Credit similarly increased their seat count, with 23 seats and 15 seats, respectively. The Liberals dominated across the country, except in the case of Alberta, where Social Credit had a strong base, and in Saskatchewan, where the CCF ran ahead of the Liberals. The bulk of the Progressive Conservative caucus was returned from Ontario; however, their strength in the province under Drew was not enough to overcome the Liberal dominance in both Ontario and Quebec.<sup>167</sup> Liberal support was fairly evenly spread across age, income, education and occupation. In essence, they drew support from Canadians at large, which Peter Regenstreif observes may have included “many who simply had nowhere else to go.” George Drew attracted Canadians in higher proportions that had university degrees, as well as working professionals, and those in high income brackets. Meanwhile, the CCF held the support of the unions, and Social Credit’s power in the West was derived from its populist appeal.<sup>168</sup>

Following the election, the *Brantford Expositor* observed that the Liberals had achieved their aim in “wickedly misrepresenting [the] legend of Drew as a nasty fellow,

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<sup>166</sup> Cartoon, “The Rest of the Family,” *Post Record* (City Unknown), August 3, 1953, in “Cartoons,” Box 318, Series 3C, MG32-C3, LAC.

<sup>167</sup> “General Election Results Since 1867,” Appendices, Procedure and Practice, Our Commons, House of Commons, <https://www.ourcommons.ca/marleaumontpetit/>; For full electoral results of both by-elections, please see ParlInfo, “Elections and Ridings,” accessed August 6, 2019, [https://lop.parl.ca/sites/ParlInfo/default/en\\_CA/ElectionsRidings](https://lop.parl.ca/sites/ParlInfo/default/en_CA/ElectionsRidings)

<sup>168</sup> Peter Regenstreif, *The Diefenbaker Interlude* (Don Mills, ON: Logmans, 1965), 13, 24.

disliked by his own following and detested by everyone else.”<sup>169</sup> *Le Devoir*, meanwhile, noted that it was St. Laurent’s reassuring presence that hampered Drew’s ability to whip the people of Canada into a frenzy. “In the course of the campaign,” the newspaper stated, “Mr. Drew tried to set fires, but the ability of Mr. Drew to set fires did not equal the ability of Mr. St. Laurent to put them out.”<sup>170</sup> An interesting theme in letters from supporters to the defeated Progressive Conservative leader in the aftermath of the election surrounds the view that Canadians have been lured into a false sense of security by St. Laurent. As one writer puts it, “the voting public... think of nothing further than about the present high money they are making, [or] the cars they can drive.”<sup>171</sup> Another observed that “the people of Canada are... intoxicated with prosperity.”<sup>172</sup> This focus on material comforts and the public’s satisfaction with the status quo is interesting given the coming chapters. As nuclear weaponry became more powerful and better understood, domesticity would seem less and less reassuring.

## Conclusion

Together, Louis St. Laurent and Dwight Eisenhower stand as an embodiment of the early Cold War domestic ideal. The response of the Canadian and American people to the paternalism projected by their respective campaigns provides insight into what was expected from political leaders at the time. The rigid gender ideals and domesticity that Elaine Tyler May speaks of as encompassing families in the early postwar period can be

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<sup>169</sup> “Possesses Great Gifts as Party Leader,” *Brantford Expositor*, August 14, 1953, in “1953 Election - Government,” Box 238, Series 2C, MG32-C3, LAC.

<sup>170</sup> “Le Devoir Summary, August 11,” in “1953 Election - Government,” Box 238, Series 2C, MG32-C3, LAC.

<sup>171</sup> Letter from Evelyn McCullough, dated August 11th, 1953, in “1953 Election - Government,” Box 238, Series 2C, MG32-C3, LAC.

<sup>172</sup> Memorandum with Letter Excerpts, August 12, 1953, in “1953 Election - Government,” Box 238, Series 2C, MG32-C3, LAC.

seen extending upwards towards the idea of a national family. Voters responded favourably to reassuring, father-figures who offered a sense of stability in an era of Cold War uncertainty. Perhaps even more interesting is how these campaigns operated within the bounds of Raewyn Connell's hegemonic masculine ideal, and not only relied on a paternalistic image, but also actively worked to depict political rivals as outside margins of acceptable masculinity.

In the case of Progressive Conservative leader George Drew, the St. Laurent campaign successfully defined him during the 1949 campaign as a hyper-partisan, anti-communist, elitist who would usher in a prosecutorial Red Scare comparable to what was already taking place in the United States. Naturally, this association frustrated Drew. He felt that he was simply asking to bring the government's civil service purges of suspected security risks into the public sphere. During the 1953 campaign, Drew continued to struggle against his depiction by the Liberal political machine as a hyper-partisan. Meanwhile, the figure of "Uncle Louis" loomed over Canadian politics and combined with the country's relative prosperity, prevented the Progressive Conservatives from gaining a foothold on the campaign trail. Louis St. Laurent correctly identified that the Canadian public was less concerned about specific policy proposals and more concerned with reassurance and stability. To return to the quote that opened this exploration, during the 1949 campaign, he told a crowd that voters selected "men they have confidence in" above all else.<sup>173</sup>

If anyone was going to inspire confidence in the United States in 1952, it was General Dwight Eisenhower. He commanded Allied troops in Europe during World War Two before becoming Supreme Commander of NATO. Eisenhower was sought after as a

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<sup>173</sup> Thomson, 264.

presidential candidate by both parties in 1948 and then again in 1952, when he became the Republican nominee. That year, the United States was embroiled in a stalemate in Korea, while Senator Joseph McCarthy spearheaded the effort to purge all enemies, foreign and domestic. Eisenhower's campaign benefitted from presenting him as a sort of nonpartisan patrician, who would bring a sense of accountability and security to Washington after the instability of the Truman years. He would bring mothers their sons home from Korea, check the tide of communism, and avoid future entanglements. His campaign further benefitted from depicting Democratic rival, Governor Adlai Stevenson, in highly gendered terms. Republican vice-presidential nominee, Richard Nixon, spearheaded these attacks. Stevenson was mocked for being an effeminate intellectual who would be soft on communism. His status as a divorced man allowed for further allusions to possible homosexuality.

Two days after the Canadian federal election in August 1953, the Soviet Union successfully tested its first thermonuclear device. It was a rudimentary fusion-type bomb, but it led to the Soviet's first true hydrogen bomb two years later.<sup>174</sup> In the words of one reporter, it was "mankind's most devastating weapon," whose technological advancement represented the change from a "12-gauge shotgun" to a "16-inch cannon."<sup>175</sup> To put its power into perspective, a single hydrogen bomb carries the force of twenty-million tons of TNT. During World War Two, Munich faced one hundred tons of bombs daily from Allied forces. To equal the force of one hydrogen blast, it would take nearly fifty-five years or twenty-thousand days of continuous bombing. The destructive force would leave a crater

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<sup>174</sup> David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939-1956* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 306-308; Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change*, 83.

<sup>175</sup> Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 10-11.

a diameter of 10 miles wide, with another 5-10 miles of obliteration on either side. An atomic bomb's full damage radius, not counting radioactivity, was only a mile and a half.<sup>176</sup>

Nearly seventy years later, there is nothing to rival the power of a hydrogen bomb.

This new weapon had fearful and far-reaching implications from a geopolitical standpoint as the arms race took a new and increasingly destructive turn. The advent of the hydrogen bomb would heighten fears of mass destruction that influenced concerns about masculinity by the late 1950s. It is no coincidence that a new "crisis" of masculinity begins to emerge alongside the realities of a weapon that was able to destroy not only a city's core, but an entire suburban metropolitan area. What good was domestic "containment" and paternalistic reassurance when the home and one's family could be incinerated in a single moment? By the mid-1950s, questions were emerging that looked oddly familiar to those asked by Canadians and Americans at the turn-of-the-century. Trapped in a corporate job to pay for a suburban home, there were renewed fears that men were growing 'soft.' What would happen if war came? These questions play out across the coming chapters. Chapter Two addresses what President Eisenhower termed the "multiplicity of fears" in a 1954 speech and looks at how the populations of Canada and the United States came to rationalize a changing world. Meanwhile, Chapter Three then applies these fears to the realities of electoral politics in the 1956 American presidential election and 1957 Canadian federal election.

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<sup>176</sup> "Mike Shot - Crossroads for Mankind," Address by Francis B. Porzel to The Society of American Military Engineers, Chicago, IL, February 9-10, 1956, in "Atomic Bomb," Box 1214, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL; Burtch, 161-62; John Lear, "Hiroshima, U.S.A.," *Collier's*, August 5, 1950.



## Chapter Two

### MULTIPLICITY OF FEARS

*“All I could see was a lot of bright young men in gray flannel suits rushing around... in a frantic parade to nowhere. They seemed to me to be pursuing neither ideals nor happiness – they were pursuing a routine. For a long while I thought I was on the sidelines watching that parade, and it was quite a shock to glance down and see that I too was wearing a gray flannel suit.”*<sup>1</sup>

~ ‘*The Man In The Gray Flannel Suit*’ (1955) by Sloan Wilson

#### **Introduction**

In November 1953, Dwight Eisenhower made his first trip to Canada as the president of the United States. Given the opportunity to address a joint session of Parliament, he spoke of the need for both nations to work in lockstep on the issue of continental defence. He warned that the Soviet stockpile of atomic weaponry was growing and that recent communications coming out of the Kremlin indicated little hope for a thaw in hostilities. The nature of the threat demanded “ceaseless vigilance.” Lest he be taken as an alarmist, the end of the speech tilts towards a nuclear-free future. A future in which Eisenhower stressed that “beyond the shadow of the atomic cloud... [is a] horizon bright with promise.” It was a horizon that would allow “each man, each family, each nation [to live] at peace in a climate of freedom.”<sup>2</sup> Taken as a whole, his address is rather unremarkable. It expresses the characteristic litany of tired references about the undefended border between Canada and the United States, and pushes American aims regarding trade and defence. However, when he speaks of a cloud that hangs over the world, Eisenhower summons a metaphor that perfectly describes the realities of the early nuclear age. Its

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<sup>1</sup> Sloan Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (New York: Arbor House, 1955), 272.

<sup>2</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Parliament of Canada,” November 14, 1953, *The American Presidency Project*, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/232412>

shadow had a way of extending into many facets of everyday life.

In studying the effect of nuclear culture on society, Jonathan Hogg defines its influence as “wide-reaching.” He states that “understanding the impact of atomic culture is to understand profound psychological, spiritual and social change.”<sup>3</sup> Indeed, psychologist Robert Lifton’s examination of early nuclear culture in *The Broken Connection* (1979) speaks to a modulated response that often occurs anytime humankind is threatened with mass extinction. Initially, he observes, there is a tendency to moderation and restraint. There is an instinct to try and protect oneself and one’s loved ones. However, as time proceeds, there is a rejection of this calm. In terms of the Cold War, he speaks to this process as a sort of “nuclear numbing” when the perceived apocalyptic threat fails to materialize. Interestingly, Lifton also observes a tendency for those faced with extinction to seek solace in nature, which will become relevant in later chapters.<sup>4</sup> Invoking Lifton’s work, Elaine Tyler May points to the powerful hold atomic weapons had on society’s collective subconscious. She utilizes Lifton’s argument that civil defence planners sought to “domesticate” the fear of the bomb as part of the theoretical foundation for her exploration of “domestic containment.”<sup>5</sup>

What is interesting about Lifton’s analysis is that he speaks to a similar trajectory as the one outlined here. The initial drive to moderation fails, leading to questions about the realities of nuclear weapons, followed by an eventual “nuclear numbing.” While this dissertation does not go past 1963, it charts the movement from paternalistic reassurance

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<sup>3</sup> Jonathan Hogg, *British Nuclear Culture: Official and Unofficial Narratives in the Long 20th Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 6.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Jay Lifton, *The Broken Connection: On Death and the Continuity of Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 337, 341-45.

<sup>5</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, Revised Edition (New York: Basic Books, 1988), 26.

to the public's desire for a more forceful brand of masculine leadership. As such, this chapter examines the growing public awareness of the dangers of nuclear weaponry and the realization that the idea of protection from more powerful hydrogen weapons was impossible. As journalist and novelist Norman Mailer reflected a few years later:

For the first time in civilized history, perhaps for the first time in all of history, we have been forced to live with the suppressed knowledge that the smallest facets of our personality or the most minor projects of our ideas, or indeed the absence of ideas and the absence of personality could mean equally well that we might still be doomed to die as a cipher in some vast statistical operation in which our teeth would be counted, and our hair would be saved, but our death itself would be unknown, unhonored, and unremarked, a death which could not follow with dignity as a possible consequence to serious actions we have chosen, but rather a death by *deus ex machina*....

Mailer concludes with the summation that: "Our psyche was subject to the intolerable anxiety that death being causeless, [and] life was causeless as well...."<sup>6</sup>

Consequently, this chapter highlights growing understanding, and, with it, growing fear. It necessarily focuses on the period between late 1953 and early 1956, despite the fact that this era offers no elections in Canada or the United States. An exploration of the societal and political reaction to a weapon a thousand times more powerful than an atomic bomb, however, is crucial to understanding growing disconcert in coming chapters; especially because, as nuclear fears rose, so did concern about suburbia, the corporate office job, and modernity's impact on masculinity. These trends that once offered reassurance, began to feel like a bit of a straitjacket. The phrase "organization man" and its concerns about conformity entered the public lexicon in this period. By the end of the decade, this apprehension had blossomed into full-blown fears of masculine softness, reminiscent of the turn-of-the-century.

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<sup>6</sup> Lifton, 346; For the full essay and Mailer's commentary on atomic culture, please see Norman Mailer, *The White Negro* (San Francisco, CA: City Light Books, 1957), Chapter One.

As a result, the aim of this chapter is to serve as a bridge. Louis St. Laurent and Dwight Eisenhower still feature prominently as they attempt to manage nuclear fears, but they are not central figures again until Chapter Three. Instead, the coming pages are broken into several smaller explorations that fuel the narrative of growing nuclear concern. Ultimately, this chapter aims to link increasing understanding of nuclear weapons with increased fear, which itself links to a renewed “crisis” of masculinity. The first two sections examine early civil defence efforts and attempts by the governments of Canada and the United States to “domesticate” atomic fear. Even then, as will be seen, letters from the public show early disconcert about ongoing hydrogen-based tests. The third section provides a discussion of the 1954 *Operation Castle* tests and growing public panic over the hydrogen bomb’s radioactive danger. In the words of the *Cleveland Press*, these new weapons truly left “no place to run, [and] no place to hide.”<sup>7</sup> It discusses attempts (or lack thereof) by Eisenhower and St. Laurent to reassure the public, before finally turning towards the origins of a renewed “crisis” of masculinity in the final section. The rise of nuclear fears coinciding with concerns about manhood is both familiar and not a coincidence.

### **Domesticating Fear**

In both Canada and the United States, existing scholarship about nuclear culture in the early postwar era establishes that, after the initial shock, there was not overwhelming concern about the atomic bomb. This apathy, in part, can be attributed to America’s nuclear monopoly between 1945-49; however, Paul Boyer notes that even in the years after the

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<sup>7</sup> “No Place to Run, No Place to Hide,” *Cleveland Press*, April 3, 1954, in “Hydrogen Bomb, 1953-55,” Box 1214, General File, White House Central Files, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library (DDEPL), Abilene, KS.

Soviet Union gained the bomb, there remained an indifference towards the idea of nuclear weapons. In fact, the advent of a Soviet atomic bomb only coalesced support around constructing a hydrogen version in the West. Nearly 80 percent of Americans approved of moving forward with development in some form. This, in itself, is the origin of the Cold War arms race. If the Soviet Union could produce an atomic bomb, the West needed bigger and better bombs.<sup>8</sup> Measuring public reaction to atomic weaponry in Canada is harder, given a lack of consistently available polling until the early 1950; however, studies by Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse, as well as Don Munton, identify general Canadian support for the continued development of a nuclear deterrent in this era. Whitaker and Marcuse further emphasize that the Canadian people closely resembled their American counterparts in regard to domestic Cold War opinion.<sup>9</sup>

To understand the sense of resigned detachment at the turn of the decade, following the initial disconcert that was fuelled by works like John Hersey's *Hiroshima* (1946), it helps to examine early civil defence brochures. Andrew Burtch speaks of a scholarly consensus surrounding the fact that emergency planners sought to create a "false consciousness" about nuclear weapons. The aim was to provide a counter-narrative that could challenge depictions of the horrors of atomic weaponry and make them seem inherently survivable. Burtch does caution that in his research, he finds that Canadian civil defence officials were generally more forthright than their American counterparts.<sup>10</sup> Still,

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<sup>8</sup> Paul Boyer, *By The Bomb's Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 334-39, 352; Kenneth D. Rose, *One Nation Underground: The Fallout Shelter in American Culture* (New York: NYU Press, 2001), 22-23.

<sup>9</sup> Reg Whitaker and Gary Marcuse, *Cold War Canada: The Making of a National Insecurity State, 1945-57* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 280, 285; Don Munton, "Public Opinion and the Media in Canada from Cold War to Detente to New Cold War," *International Journal* 39, no. 1 (Winter 1983/1984): 184-85.

<sup>10</sup> Andrew Burtch, *Give Me Shelter: The Failure of Canada's Cold War Civil Defence* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012), 10-12.

to invoke Lifton, some of the earliest civil defence booklets convey a desire to quell the panic and “domesticate” the fear on both sides of the border.

Still, when examining a sample of media coverage, alongside the civil defence literature of the early 1950s, it is easy to see how a measured confusion leading to apathy could arise. The August 1950 cover story in *Collier's*, entitled “Hiroshima, U.S.A.,” for example, imagines a Soviet nuclear strike on New York City, complete with visualized renderings of the damage in paintings by Chesley Bonestell and Birney Lettick. Although it is a fictionalized account, it is based on three months of research by author John Lear into the devastating impact of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.<sup>11</sup> In this fictional New York hellscape, Lear describes the radioactive shadow of a man having a drink at a restaurant, incinerated by the heat; a housewife in the Bronx injured by flying glass; the interruption of radio, telephone, and water services; and the absolute obliteration of a downtown area of twenty square blocks, home to one hundred thousand people – gone in an instant. The article emphasizes the devastation that a single atomic bomb could bring, and how it could cut off even basic services like electricity and water. Terrifying to read, Lear meant it as a wake-up call for a public that he felt did not truly understand the destruction that awaited.<sup>12</sup>

In contrast is the American civil defence pamphlet, *Survival Under Atomic Attack*, published in early 1951. It had a run of twenty-million copies, many of which were sent home with school children in both the United States and Canada. While it is honest about the devastation that those “right under the bomb” would experience, as *Collier's* depicted, it focuses instead on survivability from half a mile away. It compares the radioactive danger

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<sup>11</sup> “The Story of the Story,” *Collier's*, August 5, 1950.

<sup>12</sup> John Lear, “Hiroshima, U.S.A.,” *Collier's*, August 5, 1950, 11-17.

to a moderate sunburn and states that if proper precautions are taken (including covering your face and staying away from windows and doors), there is a good chance of survival.<sup>13</sup> A Canadian civil defence manual, produced in 1950, similarly downplays the atomic bomb's risk. It compares the radiation from the explosion to that of a standard x-ray and focuses on the fact that immediate danger would be contained to a small area. The suburbs would be safe. The booklet also highlights that 70-85% of those who lived around Hiroshima and Nagasaki survived the initial blast, casually avoiding the aftermath. A rather bland little guide, it compares preparation for a nuclear blast to those for natural disasters and stresses the need for new building codes and further population dispersal into suburbs.<sup>14</sup>

From the Canadian perspective, there was a hesitancy by the St. Laurent government to commit to funding for civil defence education and projects out of fear that it would create undue panic. Similarly, the prime minister was cognizant that projects like radar installations and the construction of community shelters were overwhelmingly expensive. Focused less on military spending, the St. Laurent government's agenda was largely domestic and emphasized investment in Canadians and improving social services. This led to a fairly tense meeting in March 1950 between the Civil Defence administrator, Major-General F.F. Worthington, and assembled Cabinet ministers. Frustrated by the government's cautiousness, Worthington warned stunned ministers that it would be far easier to implement civil defence programs now than to try and clean up hundreds of

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<sup>13</sup> Michael Scheibach, *Atomic Narratives and American Youth* (London: McFarland and Co., 2003), 83-85; Tarah Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), 42; To read the original booklet, please see Michael Scheibach, *"In Case Atom Bombs Fall" - An Anthology of Governmental Explanations, Instructions and Warnings from the 1940s to the 1960s* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2009), 33.

<sup>14</sup> "Organization For Civil Defence," Manual No. 1, H.Q. CDC 475-M-2 (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, October 1950), 18-20.

thousands of bodies that would be the result of a failure to act.<sup>15</sup> Andrew Burtch notes that it was ultimately the sudden onset of the Korean War, which took the St. Laurent government by surprise, that prompted increased civil defence investment. Prior to the advent of the hydrogen bomb, these efforts looked similar to natural disaster relief. In the event of an attack, focus was to be placed on fire suppression and search-and-rescue.<sup>16</sup>

Canadian civil defence officials used two cartoon figures, aptly named ‘Bea Alerte’ and ‘Justin Case,’ to attract public attention to these efforts.<sup>17</sup> ‘Bea’ was white, and frequently depicted in a hat, a smart blazer and skirt, with white gloves. Meanwhile, ‘Justin’ looked like an average white middle-management executive, clad in jacket and sweater worn over a dress shirt and tie. His moustache was neatly groomed, and he was often seen smoking a pipe. If the gender and race ideals were not stark enough regarding responsible adulthood, the pair were often depicted rescuing two young adults from their unsafe behaviour. The young woman was typically depicted as buck-toothed, somewhat confused, and more scantily clad than ‘Bea.’ Meanwhile, the young man was often in a rumpled suit, the epitome of the overworked, exhausted corporate male. He is shown in various states of disarray, confusion, or insecurity. A classic poster, which asks “Will It Happen Here?” shows Bea and Justin running to the rescue of the unprepared young couple after an explosive disaster. The image stresses: “Disaster May Never Occur. But... *Bea Alerte Justin Case.*”<sup>18</sup>

Meanwhile, in the United States, the Truman administration was understandably

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<sup>15</sup> Burtch, 34-36.

<sup>16</sup> Burtch, 37-41.

<sup>17</sup> Burtch, 74-75; Brookfield, 23

<sup>18</sup> Emphasis in original; For more examples of these posters, see “Civil Defence,” in “Communications Artifacts,” Digital Collection, Canadian War Museum, <https://www.warmuseum.ca>; Poster referenced found here: <https://www.warmuseum.ca/collections/artifact/1369165>



cognizant that American cities would be the primary targets of an eventual Soviet atomic bomb. A June 1947 report to the president and Joint Chiefs of Staff, following the *Operation Crossroads* nuclear tests, perhaps put it most bluntly:

We can form no adequate mental picture of the multiple disasters which would befall a modern city, blasted by one or more atomic bombs. And enveloped by radioactive mist. Of the survivors in contaminated areas, some would be doomed to die of radiation sickness in hours, some in days, others in years.... No survivor could be certain he was not among the doomed and so, added to every terror of the moment, thousands would be stricken with fear of death and the uncertainty of the time of its arrival.<sup>19</sup>

It is worth taking a moment to contrast this language with the depiction of atomic attack in early civil defence literature. These educational pamphlets are much less forthcoming than government reports and even some media accounts. Andrew Grossman observes that the Federal Civil Defence Administration (FCDA), created in late 1950, sought to “reconstruct the post-attack world in light of what people had already seen and read about.”<sup>20</sup> Pamphlets like *Survival Under Atomic Attack* sought to domesticate and downplay existing fears while placing the onus on personal and familial responsibility.

Michael Scheibach’s anthology *“In Case Atom Bombs Fall”* (2009) provides several examples of domestic gender tropes in early American civil defence literature. For example, a November 1953 guide on “Home Protection Exercises” depicts the specific roles of the family members in very domestic terms. Mother and grandmother are cleaning, father and son (and Fido) are building a shelter, and sister has the booklet open and is reading instructions to everyone. Similarly, “Just In Case the Atom Bombs Fall” (1951)

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<sup>19</sup> Andrew D. Grossman, “The Truman Administration and the Public Policy of Civilian Defense: Making the Best of a Nightmare,” in *A Companion To Harry S. Truman*, ed. Daniel Margolies (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 250; The full “Final Report of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Evaluation Board For Operation Crossroads,” June 30, 1947, can be found here: <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/document/21908-document-33-joint-secretariat-joint-chiefs>.

<sup>20</sup> Grossman, 252-56.

shows mother, in her apron, ensuring the stove gas connection is off and closing the blinds. Meanwhile, “What You Can Do Now” (n.d.) depicts a father reading the civil defence manual to his wife and young child.<sup>21</sup> The most famous example, however, comes from a mid-1950s advert known as “Grandma’s Pantry.” It is cited by Elaine Tyler May for appealing “to time-honoured values and [it] rested on conservatism and nostalgia.” It was effective, she argues, because it evoked “memories of a simpler past.” In other words, it spoke to traditional gender norms in a rapidly modernizing world. Grandma, the pamphlet highlighted, was always ready for an emergency, be it unexpected company, a fierce snowstorm, or even war. Her pantry was stocked and at the ready. It urged American families to emulate their grandmothers and to prepare with at least a seven-day supply of canned and non-perishable foods, as well as water and canned juices. Suggested items included evaporated or condensed milk, canned meat products and soups, flour and yeast, canned vegetables, as well as coffee and tea. Additional supplies like candles, toilet paper, and a first aid kit were also recommended.<sup>22</sup>

“Grandpa,” meanwhile, was utilized to explain radioactivity to his grandson, and through him the masses. A series of letters, entitled “Grandpa Explains Radioactivity” (1956), was put out by the New York State Civil Defence Commission. It is unclear if the correspondence is real, or if it is fabricated for educational purposes. However, what is evident is that the paternalistic grandfather trope is being utilized to both teach and reassure about the process of fission vs. fusion, radioactive half-life, and how to protect oneself against radioactivity. Although the booklet appears a little later than some of the others,

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<sup>21</sup> Scheibach, “*In Case Atom Bombs Fall*,” 86, 100-104, 158-61.

<sup>22</sup> May, 100-103; For full text of “Grandma’s Pantry,” please see Scheibach, “*In Case Atom Bombs Fall*,” 61-64.

there remains an instinct to downplay radioactivity and domesticate the fear, even in the face of bigger and more powerful hydrogen weaponry. Again, the radioactive waves from a nuclear explosion are compared to a sunburn, and a basement shelter is comparable to a very thick umbrella. The same way an umbrella stops a sunburn, a basement shelter can block gamma rays, the grandfather tells his grandson. The booklet is reassuring, but also highlights that the radiation from nuclear weapons, especially newer hydrogen bombs, can pose significant harm over widespread areas.<sup>23</sup>

### **The Thermonuclear Era**

The United States successfully tested its first hydrogen bomb on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1952, just days before Americans cast their vote for either Adlai Stevenson or Dwight Eisenhower. The *Operation Ivy* tests were secret, but early rumblings in the media spoke of a “very big earthquake” in the Pacific. A week after the test, the *Los Angeles Times* alluded that the “United States may be keeping secret an explosion of the world’s first full-scale hydrogen bomb.”<sup>24</sup> Over the coming days, a single “eyewitness account” gained traction in public as government channels remained silent. According to this eyewitness, the new weapon made the atomic bomb look like a “runt.” His description, which makes the blood run cold, described an island a half-a-mile wide and three-miles long completely “vaporized.” The eyewitness continues:

We didn’t know the explosion had taken place but within five-seconds we felt the heat waves on our face. It was hot... and we were 30.4 miles away from dead centre. Thirteen-seconds after shot time I looked up. I could hardly believe my eyes. A

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<sup>23</sup> “Grandpa Explains Radioactivity,” New York Telephone Company, October 1956, reprinted from the New York State Civil Defense Newsletter, April 21, 1956, accessed June 2021, [https://www.historyonthenet.com/authentichistory/1946-1960/4-cwhomefront/3-civildefense/1-educating/grandpa/Grandpa\\_Explains\\_Radioactivity\\_1956.html](https://www.historyonthenet.com/authentichistory/1946-1960/4-cwhomefront/3-civildefense/1-educating/grandpa/Grandpa_Explains_Radioactivity_1956.html)

<sup>24</sup> “Mighty Earthquake Rocks Pacific,” *Hartford Courant*, November 5, 1952; “H-Bomb Test Explosion In Pacific Hinted,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 7, 1952.

flame about two miles wide was shooting miles into the air. This lasted for about seven to 10 seconds. Then we saw thousands of tons of earth being drawn straight into the sky.... By now the mushroom cloud had taken place and shape. It was about a mile wide at the bottom and at least 20 miles wide at the top.<sup>25</sup>

Across the next two weeks, the emergence of similar accounts and stories, mainly leaked from letters by service members to their families, caused such a stir that the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) was forced to address the matter. While they confirmed new weapons testing and admitted that there had been satisfactory results, the hydrogen bomb was not specifically mentioned. This was to be their final (and only) word on the matter.<sup>26</sup>

By the time Eisenhower took office in January 1953, American possession of the hydrogen bomb was an open secret, but he moved quickly to muddy the waters of public understanding.<sup>27</sup> Chairing a National Security Council (NSC) meeting shortly after being sworn in, the new president spoke of the need to “suppress” further information on weapons advances. In his opinion, it was “unwise to make any distinction between fission [atomic] and fusion [hydrogen] weapons.” The president told the chairman of the AEC to “keep [the public] confused.”<sup>28</sup> Part of his intent may have stemmed from concern that if Americans understood the weapon’s true impact, it would make the reality that much worse when the Soviet Union obtained a functioning equivalent. As Eisenhower stated in his memoirs, he knew that “the Soviets would not be far behind” when told of the successful U.S. test.<sup>29</sup> He was correct. While there was a four-year span between successful tests of the atomic bomb,

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<sup>25</sup> “First H-Bomb Blast Described In Letter,” *Washington Post*, November 9, 1952; “Island Vanishes in H-Bomb Test,” *Globe and Mail*, November 11, 1952; See also “H-Bomb Test Story Meets AEC Silence,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 9, 1952, and “Services Silent on Report of Hydrogen Bomb Test,” *New York Times*, November 9.

<sup>26</sup> “Satisfactory ‘Research’ At Eniwetok Is Revealed,” *Washington Post*, November 17, 1952.

<sup>27</sup> Austin Stevens “Atomic Security Is Under Check,” *New York Times*, November 18, 1952.

<sup>28</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate for Change, 1953-1956* (New York: Doubleday, 1963), 83; Beverly Keever, *News Zero* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 2004), 143.

<sup>29</sup> Eisenhower, 83.

there were only nine months between successful hydrogen bomb tests.<sup>30</sup>

In August 1953, the Soviet Union tested their first rudimentary hydrogen device. While a more sophisticated version was not attained until 1955, the achievement's speed took Washington by surprise. As Gordon Arneson, who served as a special assistant to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles remembered, Washington was caught "flatfooted." The sudden shock parallels the unexpected success of the Soviet Union in August 1949 with the atomic bomb.<sup>31</sup> When the news broke to the world on August 20<sup>th</sup>, the initial reaction of the press remained modulated, likely because of Eisenhower's attempts to downplay understanding. The *Washington Post* sought to dampen readers' concerns, arguing that "defense against the H-bomb is not only possible but practicable."<sup>32</sup> The *Los Angeles Times* highlighted that in reality, the achievement of the hydrogen bomb should be tempered by the knowledge that atomic bombs are still more portable and able to more carefully take out a desired target. The H-Bomb did not necessarily make the Russians more powerful when one considered America's existing atomic bomb stockpiles, the *Times* stressed.<sup>33</sup> Government sources, meanwhile, pushed the fact that achieving a weapon and producing a deliverable one were vastly different things. This new weapon posed little danger, as of yet.<sup>34</sup>

From a Canadian perspective, there is an interesting lack of focus by most major regional papers in the days after the American announcement of the Soviet H-Bomb. Their

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<sup>30</sup> David Holloway, *Stalin and the Bomb: The Soviet Union and Atomic Energy, 1939-1956* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 306-308.

<sup>31</sup> Richard Rhodes, *Dark Sun: The Making of the Hydrogen Bomb* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 524.

<sup>32</sup> "Soviet H-Bomb Exploded on Aug. 12," *Boston Globe*, August 20, 1953; "H-Bombs and Cities," *Washington Post*, August 20, 1953.

<sup>33</sup> "The Russians and the H-Bomb," *Los Angeles Times*, August 21, 1953.

<sup>34</sup> W.H. Lawrence, "U.S. Lacks Evidence Soviet Can Deliver A Hydrogen Bomb," *New York Times*, August 21, 1953.

front pages are largely consumed instead with the implications of the recent Iranian coup d'état that saw the overthrow of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh.<sup>35</sup> The lack of attention, in part, may come from the fact that the St. Laurent government was in the process of reforming itself in the aftermath of the August 1953 election. The absence of a formalized government certainly would have muted official reaction. Still, even the Toronto papers, with some of the widest circulation in Canada, had little editorial comment in the days after the Soviet achievement. The *Toronto Daily Star* seemed to view Russian claims as a cry for attention. On August 25<sup>th</sup>, 1953, they ran a cartoon that depicted a Russian bear in Soviet military garb, with the H-Bomb, holding the globe in his paws while demanding: "Look at me! Look at me!"<sup>36</sup> It was Toronto's *Globe and Mail* that had the most extensive coverage, but only because it ran syndicated pieces from the *New York Times* and the *London Observer*. The general tone of this coverage trends towards taking the Soviets seriously. One editorial warns that to assume they could not yet deliver an H-bomb, just as a week ago it was assumed they could not produce one, was a "form of self-delusion."<sup>37</sup>

Still, there was some concern. As Drew Pearson observed in the *Washington Post*, the focus of civil defence planners would now need to shift towards full-scale evacuation of cities and the surrounding area. How to accomplish widespread removal of a populous in a timely manner was a major concern. The concept of a basement shelter, which had usefulness in withstanding an atomic blast, would be little help against "the scorching,

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<sup>35</sup> The author surveyed a collection of newspapers from across Canada for their headlines and editorial pages between August 20-30, 1953, for discussion regarding the Soviet H-Bomb. The papers included the *Vancouver Sun*, the *Calgary Herald*, the *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, the *Toronto Daily Star*, the *Toronto Telegram*, the *Globe and Mail*, the *Ottawa Citizen*, and the *Montreal Gazette*.

<sup>36</sup> Cartoon, "Look at Me," *Toronto Daily Star*, August 25, 1953.

<sup>37</sup> "Russia's H-Bomb," *Globe and Mail*, August 24, 1953.

searing devastation of the hydrogen explosion [that] can reduce a city the size of New York to charcoal in one blow.”<sup>38</sup> The director of the U.S. Civil Defence Administration, Val Peterson, advocated for a pivot from civil defence to evacuation in the days after the confirmation of the successful Soviet test of a hydrogen bomb. There would be the need for adequate warning time, ideally several hours, to provide for a chance to begin dispersing people from city centres.<sup>39</sup>

Grappling with the implications of the hydrogen bomb, however, was not new. Early expressions of concern date all the way back to Truman’s announcement that the United States would pursue the next-generation weapon. At that point, some in the public already understood that hydrogen-based weapons could be at least a thousand times more powerful than their atomic cousins.<sup>40</sup> Early objections were often moral/religious or rooted in concern for civilization. Organizations like the Federal Council of Churches and the Central Conference of America Rabbis dithered on the issue, releasing half-hearted condemnations that tried to parse the line between the Cold War “consensus” and moral objections to weapons of mass destruction.<sup>41</sup> However, the Conference of Rabbis, did go so far as to refer to the H-Bomb as a “diabolic armament.” Twelve former Manhattan Project physicists also released a plea against the hydrogen bomb’s construction, warning

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<sup>38</sup> Drew Pearson, “H-Bomb Defense Speeded,” *Washington Post*, August 28, 1953.

<sup>39</sup> “Civil Defence Stressed; U.S. Administrator Advocates A Dispersal Policy,” *New York Times*, August 21, 1953.

<sup>40</sup> Boyer, 337-338; Blair Fraser, “Is The H-Bomb The Answer?” *Maclean's*, March 1, 1950.

<sup>41</sup> Boyer, 344-45; The concept of a Cold War “consensus” can best be described as a governance policy that was inherently anti-communist, and supportive of both increased defence expenditure and nuclear development as a means through which to check Soviet aggression. This “consensus” was also underscored by gender norms that were patriarchal and relied on the notion of “separate spheres.” The public domain, in which political discourse reigned, was seen as overtly masculine, while the private domain (i.e. the home) was viewed as the purview of the wife and mother. For more information please see: K.A. Curodileone, “‘Politics in an Age of Anxiety’: Cold War Political Culture and the Crisis in American Masculinity, 1949-1960,” *Journal of American History* 87, no. 2 (2000); and the Introduction to Elaine Tyler May’s *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era* (New York: Basic Books, 2017).

that such weapons would lead to “extermination of whole populations.” *LIFE* magazine, in a February 1950 issue, featured the ruminations of a fourteen-year-old boy who observed that: “The hydrogen bomb reeks with death. Death, death to thousands. A burning, searing death, a death that is horrible, lasting death. The most horrible death man has invented....”<sup>42</sup> Blair Fraser, meanwhile, writing for *Maclean’s*, bluntly asked: “Is the H-Bomb the Answer?” Fraser pointed to the evident Western advantage in atomic arms, bleakly asking if “bigger, better” bombs were even needed.<sup>43</sup>

Letters and telegrams to St. Laurent’s office as early as 1950 object to the development of the hydrogen bomb. Most took exception with the creation of larger and deadlier atomic weaponry. However, it is important to note that a significant portion of this correspondence came from left-leaning peace councils. Beyond urging the Canadian government to pressure the United States to stop the tests, letters also urged that Canadian uranium not be exported to the U.S. for use in such experiments. A typical telegram, like one from the Vancouver Peace Assembly, stated that they “deeply deplore President Truman’s [sic] consent to manufacture the hydrogen bomb.” It reminded St. Laurent that it was not, as Defence Minister Brooke Claxton stated, only an “American matter.” These assemblies urged the Canadian government to use its influence at the United Nations to seek the prohibition of nuclear weapons.<sup>44</sup> Others, like Mrs. J. Davis of Toronto, wrote to express their horror at the idea of such weapons. She points out that scientists were already saying that a hydrogen bomb was capable of destroying entire cities.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Boyer, 344-45, 350.

<sup>43</sup> Blair Fraser, "Is The H-Bomb The Answer?" *Maclean's*, March 1, 1950.

<sup>44</sup> Telegram from James Melvin, President of the Vancouver Peace Assembly, February 3, 1950; This telegram, and others are found in “National Research, Hydrogen Bomb, 1950” Box 125, Louis St. Laurent Fonds (MG26-L), Library Archives Canada (LAC), Ottawa, ON.

<sup>45</sup> Letter from Mrs. J. Davis, n.d., in “National Research, Hydrogen Bomb, 1950” Box 125, MG26-L, LAC.



There is also a letter from a young man named Oliver A. Stevens. Interestingly, it has its own archival folder, which also contains several departmental letters debating how to address the matter. Stevens was a student at the University of British Columbia and was a reservist in the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF). He wrote to Prime Minister St. Laurent to express his concern over the matter of atomic weaponry. While he acknowledged that the deployment of such weapons was a “military level” decision, he felt that a hydrogen bomb “capable of levelling ten square miles is not a military weapon but a murder weapon.” His reservations about morality, he explained, were rooted in his faith. As an RCAF officer who would potentially be responsible for delivering such a weapon in the event of war, Stevens openly declared that he would not operate an aircraft carrying a thermonuclear device, nor would he transmit or release them. The letter itself is a profile in the courage of one’s convictions, especially considering that Stevens was likely only eighteen or nineteen years old at the time.<sup>46</sup>

Advising the prime minister on how to respond to Stevens, Defence Secretary H.L. Cameron recommends his dismissal, noting that to allow a moral objector to remain a reservist in the RCAF constituted a liability. St. Laurent’s response, in his own hand, is a rare opportunity to see behind the veil of the office and gain an unfiltered perspective. While expressing sympathy for Stevens’ views, he also approves the dismissal. He writes, “I think [Stevens] should be told we also hope atomic weapons may never have to be used but we cannot train for possible warfare those whose conscientious objects would prevent them from such warlike activities as any future circumstances might cause the proper

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<sup>46</sup> Letter from Oliver A. Stevens to Louis St. Laurent, in “National Research, Hydrogen Bomb, 1950.2,” Box 125, MG26-L, LAC

commanders to consider advisable.”<sup>47</sup> It is unlikely that Stevens ever would have had to utilize such a weapon, given the Canadian government’s increasing reluctance to procure nuclear weapons across the 1950s. However, Stevens’ abject horror resonates.

### **Operation Castle**

The transition in public perception and a clearer understanding of nuclear weaponry’s true dangers dates to 1954, when the latest round of second-generation hydrogen weapons testing went awry. Rising public fear required President Eisenhower to take to the airwaves on the evening of April 5<sup>th</sup> to calm an anxious nation, indeed an anxious world. He assured Americans that the same way that a family bands together to handle domestic problems, with “courage and faith” without getting “panicky,” the nation would do the same. He warned listeners “not [to] fall prey to hysterical thinking.”<sup>48</sup> Looking back, sixty years later, the *New Yorker* referred to it as one of the president’s best speeches and bemoaned the lack of similar “instinctual” ability by politicians to reassure today’s American public in the wake of newfound crises.<sup>49</sup>

The speech has since come to be known as Eisenhower’s “Multiplicity of Fears” address, and it was the culmination to a month of panic and trepidation about the H-Bomb. The speech provides one of the best examples of Eisenhower, during his tenure, using paternalism to reassure the general public. There are references to home and family in the speech, and the comparison of national problems to those of an average American

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<sup>47</sup> Please see: “National Research, Hydrogen Bomb, 1950.2,” Box 125, MG26-L, LAC

<sup>48</sup> “Radio and Television Address to the American People on the State of the Nation,” April 5, 1954, Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The American Presidency Project*, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/233652>

<sup>49</sup> Jeffrey Frank, “Ike’s Advice: How to Avoid a Multiplicity of Fears,” *New Yorker*, November 18, 2015, accessed February 20, 2021, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/daily-comment/ikes-advice-how-to-avoid-a-multiplicity-of-fears>

household repositions him as father to the nation. As he told Americans, and likely more than a few Canadians that night, the current series of problems facing the country were no different from those facing the family, they were just “multiplied a millionfold.”<sup>50</sup>

The road leading to the need for this speech began on March 1<sup>st</sup>, 1954, when the AEC announced the detonation of an “atomic device.” It was the first in a series of hydrogen bomb tests to take place that month in the Pacific. Codenamed *Operation Castle*, it is likely that the government hoped to get ahead of the story and avoid a fresh wave of speculation similar to the one that plagued them after the *Operation Ivy* tests in 1952. The AEC’s press release was vague, although the inference by the media was that this was a new round of hydrogen tests. The *Washington Post* estimated that these new weapons were “twice as violent” as those from November 1952.<sup>51</sup> To get the sheer scale across the *New York Times* ran a comparison between the impact of an atomic bomb on Manhattan, and that of future H-bombs. The new weapons were shown to take out all of Manhattan, portions of Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx, and a large chunk of the state of New Jersey.<sup>52</sup> Suburbia was now directly in the line of fire.

The news cycle would likely have died out, similar to the one in November 1952, had three things not happened. First, on March 12<sup>th</sup> most newspapers ran some variation of the headline: “264 Exposed to Radiation in Atom Tests,” as the AEC took pains to stress that the 28 American personnel and 236 Pacific islanders were all stable and unharmed.<sup>53</sup> Scientists had miscalculated the explosive power of the hydrogen bomb, and the

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<sup>50</sup> “Radio and Television Address to the American People on the State of the Nation,” April 5, 1954, Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The American Presidency Project*, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/233652>

<sup>51</sup> “Atom Blast Opens Test In Pacific,” *New York Times*, March 2, 1954; Neil MacNeil, “‘Atomic Device’ Is Detonated By U.S.,” *Washington Post*, March 2, 1954.

<sup>52</sup> “Atom Tests Emphasize Stepped-Up Arms Race,” *New York Times*, March 7, 1954.

<sup>53</sup> “264 Exposed To Radiation In Atom Tests,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 12, 1954; “264 Exposed At Eniwetok To Radiation,” *Hartford Courant*, March 12, 1954.

radioactive cloud ultimately strayed beyond the exclusion zone. In exceeding all projections, it underscored the unpredictability of these explosions.<sup>54</sup> Second, Eisenhower pointed out in a press conference that scientists were “surprised and astonished” at the explosion’s size. Walter J. Murphy, the editor-in-chief of *Industrial and Engineering Chemistry*, warned this could be “interpreted by some to mean that scientists have very much under estimated the destructive power of the H-bombs... [and] that ones of still greater force might become uncontrollable.”<sup>55</sup> Third, and most problematic, news broke on March 16<sup>th</sup> that a Japanese fishing trawler had been caught within the nuclear test’s exclusion zone.

The coming days were filled with stories about the crew who became sick after being covered in radioactive coral dust from the March 1<sup>st</sup> test.<sup>56</sup> The story of the *Fukuryu Maru*, known in English as the *Lucky Dragon*, has since become well known and served as a cautionary tale. The vessel had been roughly 160 kilometres northeast of the blast zone when at 6:45 AM, the crew witnessed a blinding flash and 7-kilometre-wide fireball. The captain, Tsutsui Hisakichi, was unaware that the United States had recently notified the Japanese government of an extended exclusion zone, including the Bikini Atoll. Shortly after the explosion, a fine white powder of coral dust coated the ship and its crew. As one of the men remembers: “We had no sense that it was dangerous. It wasn't hot; it had no odour. I took a lick; it was gritty but had no taste.” The coming days saw the men

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<sup>54</sup> “Hydrogen Bomb Blast Amazes Atom Experts,” *Los Angeles Times*, March 14, 1954.

<sup>55</sup> “The President’s News Conference,” March 24, 1954, Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The American Presidency Project*, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/233628>; Walter J. Murphy, “The H-Bomb Tests,” *Chemical and Engineering News*, April 12, 1954, in “Atomic Bomb,” Box 1214, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL; See also, “Walter J. Murphy,” *Chemical and Engineering News* 37, no. 49 (December 7, 1959): 7.

<sup>56</sup> “Japanese Ship caught in Atom Test,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 16, 1954.

incapacitated with symptoms of radiation poisoning.<sup>57</sup> Canadian and American media accounts described crew members as suffering first from itchy skin, which then began to blister and turn black. Next, their hands began to swell, and their hair started to fall out.<sup>58</sup>

Ironically, one of the more prominent concerns of the news media in the aftermath of the incident was not for the health of the fishermen. They were ultimately depicted as aimlessly and stupidly wandering into harm's way. After all, had the U.S. Government not warned Japan, the newspapers asked. Rather, concern was over reports that the Japanese located radioactive fish that had made their way to market from the *Fukuryu Maru*. These tuna were so dangerous that scientists were quoted as saying they would have killed anyone who stood near them for a few hours.<sup>59</sup> A Calgary editorial pointed out in the aftermath that the issue of hydrogen weapons was now directly impacting the domestic sphere. "Housewives and their husbands," it said, "will not be able to pick up a can of tuna fish at the grocery store unless that can has been tested by a Geiger counter."<sup>60</sup>

It was a perfect storm of fear and confusion, which forced Lewis L. Strauss, the chairman of the AEC, to take the podium following the president's news conference on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1954. Strauss provided the first official confirmation by the agency that the United States possessed a hydrogen bomb and presented the March 1954 tests as crucial in keeping ahead of the Soviets. Concerning the *Fukuryu Maru*, he argued that typically radiation dissipates to safe levels outside the exclusion zone and stressed that fish in the

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<sup>57</sup> Matashichi Oishi, "The Fisherman," in *Grappling with the Bomb: Britain's Pacific H-Bomb Tests*, ed. Nic Maclellan (Acton, Australia: ANU Press, 2017), 56-57; Aya Homei, "The Contentious Death of Mr. Kuboyama," *Japan Forum* 25, no. 2 (2013): 213.

<sup>58</sup> "Japanese Ship Caught In Atom Test," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 16, 1954; "23 Fishermen Burned By Atomic Explosion," *Globe and Mail*, March 16, 1954.

<sup>59</sup> "Japs Discover Radioactive Fish In Stores," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 17, 1954; Lindesay Parrott, "Nuclear Downpour Hit Ship During Test at Bikini... Radioactive Fish Sought In Japan," *New York Times*, March 17, 1954.

<sup>60</sup> Editorial, "Is There Any Safety Margin Left?," *Calgary Herald*, March 26, 1954.

Marshall Islands were already traditionally poisonous at certain times of the year because of their natural diet. This argument, of course, ignored the fact that such fish had not previously also been radioactive. Strauss referred to the fears about radioactivity and its influence on food supply chains as overblown.<sup>61</sup> A hard-headed cold warrior, he privately told those around him that the hysteria surrounding the tests was likely a plot by those “who wish we did not have such a weapon and don't care if Russia has it.” He went so far as to privately accuse the crew of the *Fukuryu Maru* of being a “Red spy unit.”<sup>62</sup>

Even as Strauss was attempting to deflect public concern, Eisenhower’s presidential office files provide insight into an administration that aimed to retake control of the narrative. On March 31<sup>st</sup>, the White House distributed film of the *Operation Ivy* tests from November 1952 to the press. Eisenhower had seen the footage the previous June, and there was much debate in the White House about releasing a stripped-down educational version of the video to the general public. The debate carried through until March 1954, and it is likely that the blowback from *Operation Castle* ultimately tipped the decision in favour of release. It was hoped that the film could be used in such a way as to help educate and continue to shape the public’s understanding of hydrogen-based weaponry. There were strict instructions that the documentary footage was to be embargoed for a week, until April 7<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM.<sup>63</sup>

Though the nascent media landscape of the 1950s was small and confined, it is surprising that the Eisenhower administration expected such sensational footage to remain

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<sup>61</sup> “Strauss Tells Inside Story of Bomb Tests,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 1, 1954.

<sup>62</sup> Shane Maddock, “The Forth Country Problem: Eisenhower’s Nuclear Non-proliferation Policy,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 28, no. 3 (1998): 555-56.

<sup>63</sup> Ned O’Gorman and Kevin Hamilton, “The Sensibility of the State: Lookout Mountain Laboratory’s Operation Ivy and the Image of the Cold War ‘Super,’” *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 19, no. 1 (2016): 24-25, 30-33; “Confidential Note To Editors (Not For Publication),” March 25, 1954, in “Hydrogen Bomb, 1953-55,” Box 1214, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL.

secret for an entire week. Predictably, the embargo “blew up” less than twenty-four hours after the materials were issued. On the morning of April 1<sup>st</sup>, syndicated national columnist Drew Pearson (who also revealed the Gouzenko Affair) regaled morning readers with a “preview of the horrible holocaust which must be seen in Technicolor to be fully appreciated.”<sup>64</sup> The White House immediately lost the chance to shape the narrative. With the embargo broken, television news carried the film that evening, while newspapers and newsmagazines would run photo-spreads in the coming days.<sup>65</sup>

Interviews and editorial letters reveal the degree to which public opinion showed both panic and concern with what they had seen. Coming so soon after the news of the *Fukuryu Maru*, what is evident is people were finally coming to grips with the true degree of danger that nuclear weapons posed. The resounding emotion is *fear*. Regarding civil defence, a school superintendent in Boston asked: “How are we going to get all those children out of town?” Similarly pointing out the problems with evacuation planning, H.S. Larson of Chicago felt that if the bomb is going to come, “I would rather take it in my own back yard than in a ditch somewhere out on route 12.” Meanwhile, an editorial the *Cleveland Press* reminded readers that the images they were shown were two years old, and far more powerful bombs now existed. Finally, that week high schools in Nassau County got a taste of the chaos and confusion that would reign as a group of bemused teenagers took advantage of heightened fear and called in multiple bomb scares.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Telegram from “The Bell Syndicate,” April 1, 1954, in “Hydrogen Bomb, 1953-55,” Box 1214, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL; Letter from Edward K. Thompson to James Hagerty, April 7, 1954, in “Hydrogen Bomb, 1953-55,” Box 1214, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL; Drew Pearson, “First H-Blast Previewed,” *Washington Post*, April 1, 1954.

<sup>65</sup> Mary Cremen, “Appalling H-Bomb Explosion Shown 4 Times Over CBS,” *Boston Globe*, April 2, 1954; “Awesome, Eerie Power of H-Bomb Unleashed in Pacific,” *Los Angeles Times*, April 2, 1954; “On Nation-Wide TV,” *The New York Times*, April 2, 1954. See also “5-4-3-2-1 and the Hydrogen Age,” *LIFE*, April 12, 1954, for photographic coverage, as well as Cover, *Time*, April 12, 1954.

<sup>66</sup> “Editorialists and Man In The Street View,” *New York Times*, April 4, 1954; H.S. Larson, Letter to the

The White House saw a significant uptick in communication in the days after the April 1<sup>st</sup> leak to the hydrogen bomb footage. Thousands of letters, with a concentration from the East Coast, made their way to Washington, DC. One that stands out among those preserved is from George Wertheim of New York City, the locale that represented the heaviest concentration of letters to President Eisenhower. His letter is reminiscent of Oliver Stevens' to Louis St. Laurent, as he informs the president that he is of "the generation that will have to live with this awesome device." A high school senior, Wertheim felt that the hydrogen bomb was a "dubious tribute to man's ingenuity," and he asked for a meeting with the president to quell the "many fears in my heart."<sup>67</sup> An audience was not granted.

From a more international-minded perspective, James Summers of California argued that discontinuation of tests was necessary in a nation and world "much in need of sanity." Alice Bryant of Seattle felt the same, worried about the "anti-American feeling" the tests were causing. By comparison, Arnold Beichman chastised readers of the *New York Times* "who speak of 'our' responsibility, 'our' guilt, 'our' morbid fear, [with] underlying total obliviousness to the continually growing totalitarian danger which exists." In contrast, Nola Luxford argued in that paper that the only reason for "this sudden desire to terrorize the people" by showing them *Operation Ivy* was as "propaganda... in order to make it easier for those in power to send our young men into Indo-China[.]" Such an escalation was not something a reader of the *Boston Globe* felt was worth the chance. Anyone willing to risk an atomic weapon on their city, they said, "for the sake of some miserable jungle in

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Editor, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, April 6, 1954; Clipping, "No Place to Run, No Place to Hide," *Cleveland Press*, April 3, 1954, in "Hydrogen Bomb, 1953-55," Box 1214, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL; "Stop Bomb Scares," *New York Times*, April 6, 1954.

<sup>67</sup> Letter from William Hopkins to Ann Whitman, April 28, 1954, in "Hydrogen Bomb, 1953-55," Box 1214, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL; Letter from George Allen Wertheim, April 1, 1954, in "Hydrogen Bomb, 1953-55," Box 1214, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL.



Asia doesn't know real estate values."<sup>68</sup>

Canadian periodicals demonstrate a comparable level of anxiety. The *Vancouver Sun* ran a front-page headline on March 24<sup>th</sup>, declaring the H-Bomb tests as “out of control.” The article relied on the observation of one congressional witness, Chet Holifield, to the *Operation Castle* tests. The Congressman observed that the expectations of the test went “so far beyond what was predicted that you might say it was out of control.”<sup>69</sup> Two days later, on the front page, the *Sun* applied the 450-mile exposure area of the continued tests to Canada's Pacific Coast, with Vancouver as Ground Zero. Calgary, Seattle, and Portland were all judged to be at risk from the radiation emitted by a single hydrogen blast on British Columbia's mainland.<sup>70</sup> Both the *Toronto Telegram* and the *Toronto Daily Star* also ran infographics that showed the city overlaid by the effects of a hydrogen bomb. The entire downtown core would be destroyed by a single bomb, with catastrophic damage extending into Etobicoke, North York, and Scarborough.<sup>71</sup> Millions would die or suffer the effects of radiation sickness.

In a letter to the editor of the *Montreal Gazette*, N. Gans inquires as to the point of “bigger and better bangs,” when roughly 200 H-Bombs of the existing magnitude would be enough to destroy most of life on earth.<sup>72</sup> An April 5<sup>th</sup> cartoon in the *Toronto Daily Star* mirrored this sentiment, depicting two physicists riding nuclear bombs. The first, on the

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<sup>68</sup> James Summers, Letter to the Editor, *LIFE*, April 19, 1954; Alice Bryant, Letter to the Editor, *Daily Boston Globe*, April 5, 1954; Arnold Beichman, Letter to the Editor, *New York Times*, April 7, 1954; Nola Luxford, Letter to the Editor, *New York Times*, April 7, 1954; “Editorial Points,” *Daily Boston Globe*, April 5, 1954.

<sup>69</sup> “U.S. H-Bomb Tests Now 'Out of Control',” *Vancouver Sun*, March 24, 1954.

<sup>70</sup> “World Recoils at H-Bomb Test,” *Vancouver Sun*, March 26, 1954; Dillon O’Leary, “Commons Ignore It,” *Vancouver Sun*, March 26, 1954.

<sup>71</sup> “If Toronto Were H-Bombed,” *Toronto Telegram*, April 1, 1954; “Toronto Downtown Would Be Flattened By H-Bomb,” *Toronto Star*, April 1, 1954

<sup>72</sup> N. Gans, Letter to the Editor, *Montreal Gazette*, March 27, 1954.

smaller weapon, exclaims, “Why! — With This Bomb We Can Destroy Civilization.” “Yes,” the second physicist answers, “But With This One We Get Littler Pieces!”<sup>73</sup> It was a complete “misuse of scientific knowledge,” James Colebrook wrote to the *Montreal Gazette*, which “reflects the true state of political morality.”<sup>74</sup> Thus, Canadian opinion seemed to reflect that of its External Affairs Minister, Lester B. Pearson, who told the House of Commons that he felt “almost horror at the magnitude of the destructive forces now being made available for human use.” He agreed with the sentiments raised by other members, that Canada should push for a “new look” by the United Nations into matters of disarmament and nuclear weapons control.<sup>75</sup>

What is most curious, however, is that in a moment of abject fear for the nation there is no comparable address or even a statement from the Canadian prime minister following the events of March and April 1954.<sup>76</sup> The prime minister never specifically addresses the hydrogen bomb tests, and he is shockingly absent from the media coverage discussed above. In all fairness to St. Laurent, he returned mid-March from a world tour and thus was out of the country for a significant portion of early 1954.<sup>77</sup> As stated, commentary on the situation is left to External Affairs minister Lester B. Pearson, and only *after* he was pressed in Parliament for information by a member of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, Harold E. Winch. The member cited recent commentary by

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<sup>73</sup> Cartoon, “Physicists,” *Toronto Star*, April 5, 1954.

<sup>74</sup> James F. Colebrook, Letter to the Editor, *Montreal Gazette*, April 6, 1954.

<sup>75</sup> Reginald Hardy, “H-Bomb Control Called Urgent,” *Calgary Herald*, April 1, 1954; Lester B. Pearson, discussion on “Reference of Estimates of Department [of External Affairs] to Standing Committee,” House of Commons, March 31, 1954, accessed through the *Linked Parliamentary Data Project*, University of Toronto, <https://www.lipad.ca/full/1954/03/31/9/>

<sup>76</sup> The author searched through the *Hansard* records from Louis St. Laurent’s return to Canada in mid-March, until the end of April 1954, reviewing all public comments by the prime minister. Accessed through the University of Toronto’s *Linked Parliamentary Data Project* (LiPaD), <https://www.lipad.ca>.

<sup>77</sup> Greg Donaghy, “A Voyage of Discovery: St. Laurent’s World Tour of 1954,” in *The Unexpected Louis St. Laurent*, ed. Patrice Dutil (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2020), 472-79.

U.S. congressman Chet Holifield, who noted that protection against an atomic or hydrogen attack was a “delusion.” The only result of these weapons, Holifield said, could be “mass extermination.” Winch asked for the government’s views on the matter in the context of a larger discussion regarding External Affairs, and Pearson’s reply admitted the need to look towards some kind of international control for nuclear weaponry.<sup>78</sup>

So, where was “Uncle Louis?” He certainly appears in the parliamentary record in late March and early April, though his speeches are limited and mostly focused on pressing legislation. The answer is that following his world tour, St. Laurent entered what Dale Thomson describes as “a state approaching physical and mental exhaustion.” To put it plainly, Thomson says, St. Laurent “ceased to lead.”<sup>79</sup> Winston Churchill, who visited Canada in June 1954, described the prime minister “in dreadful sorts.”<sup>80</sup> Concerns that the prime minister was ailing date to the last campaign. A cartoon in the *Globe and Mail* depicted St. Laurent on stage at a rally, with the shadows of Pearson, Paul Martin, and J.W. Pickersgill behind him. It asked: “A Vote For Lou Is A Vote For Who?”<sup>81</sup> These criticisms would become far more prominent in coming years as these bouts of nervous exhaustion, bordering on what Greg Donaghy labels as depression, plagued St. Laurent off and on for the remainder of his premiership.<sup>82</sup>

In contrast, Eisenhower’s April 5<sup>th</sup> address to the nation provided paternalistic reassurance. In an editorial that Walter J. Murphy sent the president, he acknowledged the

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<sup>78</sup> Harold Edward Winch, discussion on “Reference of Estimates of Department [of External Affairs] to Standing Committee,” House of Commons, March 31, 1954, accessed through the *Linked Parliamentary Data Project*, University of Toronto, <https://www.lipad.ca/full/1954/03/31/9/>

<sup>79</sup> Dale C. Thomson, *Louis St. Laurent: Canadian* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1967), 373.

<sup>80</sup> Donaghy, 479.

<sup>81</sup> Cartoon, “A Vote For Lou,” *Globe and Mail*, June 22, 1953, in Box 318, Series 3C, George Alexander Drew Fonds (MG32-C3), Library Archives Canada (LAC), Ottawa, ON.

<sup>82</sup> Donaghy, 478-79.

“existence of considerable fear and apprehension on the part of peoples everywhere.” “It is not difficult for most people,” he said, “to believe that we are close to Armageddon.”<sup>83</sup> Returning to the content of Eisenhower’s “Multiplicity of Fears” speech, beyond the appeals to family and nation, he clarifies that the United States of America would only use the hydrogen bomb as a means of defence. He also attempted to position the new weapon as merely one in a series of technological advances made to warfare across a “single lifetime.” It is a clear effort to try again and downplay the H-Bomb; the musket and the cannon are not comparable to a thermonuclear detonation. Still, Eisenhower does warn that “the advances of science have outraced our social consciousness” and points to “how much more we have developed scientifically than we are capable of handling emotionally and intelligently.” Here, he contrasts the problems of international geopolitics with that of the family, mentioned at the opening of this section.<sup>84</sup> Communications scholar Thomas Doherty describes Eisenhower, in these moments, playing the “calm father to a nervous nation,” and praises the speech for its tone.<sup>85</sup>

### **The Organization Man**

The “false consciousness” on atomic weaponry that Andrew Burtch talks about pervading in the early 1950s in the United States, and to a lesser extent in Canada, was thus firmly broken asunder by the revelations of March/April 1954. Again, Burtch asks, speaking for the citizens of Canada and the United States: “What point was there in fighting

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<sup>83</sup> Walter J. Murphy, “The H-Bomb Tests,” *Chemical and Engineering News*, April 12, 1954, in “Atomic Bomb,” Box 1214, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL.

<sup>84</sup> “Radio and Television Address to the American People on the State of the Nation,” April 05, 1954, Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The American Presidency Project*, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/233652>.

<sup>85</sup> Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 101.

fires when the entire city would be cratered?”<sup>86</sup> As *LIFE* magazine observed, alongside the leaked photos from the *Operation Ivy* film, there were now “staggering difficulties” with the concept of civil defence. Public shelters in cities would be rendered ineffective by the 175-foot-deep crater made by the hydrogen bomb. Nor would evacuation be an easy feat. The article, using Washington, DC as ground zero, points to multiple issues. How does one mobilize the elderly, infirm, and disabled on short notice? What about the roughly 3,600 bedridden hospital patients on any given day? Furthermore, the city contained only enough vehicles to evacuate several hundred thousand of 1.3 million people. Even then, the bridges leaving the city would quickly snare with automobile and foot traffic. Finally, even if all these matters were figured out, it would take more than a few hours’ notice to evacuate everyone beyond the Maryland and Virginia suburbs that would still be within the “moderate impact zone.” None of this even took into account the threat of a radiation cloud that could be carried downwind for hundreds of kilometres.<sup>87</sup> How do you evacuate to the countryside when you do not know which way the wind may shift? As David Seed observes in his examination of Cold War cultural narratives, civil defence only truly continued because it was a psychological necessity.<sup>88</sup>

Up until this point, radiation sickness was not a concept that was well understood by the general public. As discussed, pamphlets on the atomic bomb compared the effects to a “sunburn,” while newer H-Bomb literature was forced to become more forthright. In the United States, *What You Should Know About Radioactive Fallout* (1958) tries a mixture of reassurance and bluntness. It reminds readers that radioactivity already surrounds us, in

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<sup>86</sup> Burtch, 3, 10-11.

<sup>87</sup> “5-4-3-2-1 and the Hydrogen Age,” *LIFE*, April 12, 1954.

<sup>88</sup> David Seed, *Under The Shadow: The Atomic Bomb and Cold War Narratives* (Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2013), 42.

low doses in our everyday lives, before launching into an explanation that the 1954 H-Bomb tests confirmed that the weapons could contaminate an area 220 miles wide. The booklet was not as cheery as earlier iterations and speaks to the need for evacuation policies and decontamination procedures. However, to read between the lines, the indication is that the best protection, to paraphrase CDA chief Val Peterson, was not to be in your neighbourhood when the bomb dropped.<sup>89</sup> The Canadian booklet *How Nuclear Fission Can Affect You* (n.d.) admitted that “1954 ushered in a new era.” Written by J.F. Wallace, the Assistant Director for Canada’s Emergency Measures Organization, it also offers an honest assessment of radioactivity. It observes that high radiation levels can be expected up to three hundred miles from the blast site. It observed that a hydrogen bomb would kill nearly all of those within a six-mile radius and cause skin burns and fires within fifteen miles. As 80% of Canadians lived within six miles of a city, it advised: “The best place to be is as far away... as possible.”<sup>90</sup>

There is a shift during the mid-1950s in the public’s relationship with science, long understood as an arbiter of positive change and societal advancement; new weapons of mass destruction resulted in growing questions about social progress.<sup>91</sup> Fears about radioactive experimentation and a growing sense of powerlessness are perhaps best found in the era’s media consumption. For example, it is not a shock that two of the most popular films in the mid-1950s explored potential hazardous side effects of nuclear weapons testing. *Godzilla*, first released in Japan in 1954, tells the story of a 50-metre tall, dinosaur-

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<sup>89</sup> Scheibach, “*In Case Atom Bombs Fall*,” 39-45; Rose, 4.

<sup>90</sup> J.F. Wallace, “How Nuclear Fission Can Affect You...,” Canadian Civil Defence Pamphlets, *Canadian Civil War Museum*, accessed February 19, 2021, <http://civildefencemuseum.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/How-Nuclear-Fission-Can-Affect-You.pdf>; “Emergency Management Organization National Digest,” February 1961, p. 16, accessed from <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/lbrr/archives/emo%201-1-1961-eng.pdf>

<sup>91</sup> May, 26.

like creature awakened by hydrogen bomb tests. Similarly, the Warner Brother's film *Them!* (1954) chronicles an attack on Los Angeles by a colony of giant radioactive ants created as a result of radioactive fallout in the desert of New Mexico.<sup>92</sup>

A key theme in these films is humankind's powerlessness over the potential danger wrought by such powerful atomic weapons. They serve as a time capsule of the fears and insecurities that were prevalent in this era. For example, at the very end of *Them!*, after the nest of radioactive giant ants has been destroyed, FBI Agent Robert Graham asks: "If these monsters got started as a result of the first atomic bomb... what about all the others that have been exploded since then?" Graham stands in for a public that feels it had come to understand the dangers of atomic weaponry, only to recently have their reality upended by the sheer force of weapons testing. Replying to Graham, one of the film's scientist characters, Dr. Harold Medford, stoically answers that nobody has the answer to that question. "When Man entered the atomic age," Medford says, "he opened the door into a new world. What we'll eventually find in that new world, nobody can predict."<sup>93</sup>

Dealing with the unknown impact of these new weapons is a consistent theme for films in this era. *The Incredible Shrinking Man* (1957), based on a book written by Richard Matheson in 1956, tells the story of Scott Carey who was exposed to a cloud of radioactive mist that causes him to slowly shrink in size.<sup>94</sup> As a metaphor for the sense of "crisis" that began to emerge in regards to masculinity in the mid-1950s, there is perhaps no better link than this film. Not only was the Cold War a danger from without, with monster horror stories standing in for radioactive destruction, but now it was also shown that it had the

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<sup>92</sup> Rose, 40.

<sup>93</sup> *Them!*, directed by Gordon Douglas (1954; Burbank, CA: Warner Brothers, 2015), BluRay.

<sup>94</sup> Rose, 40.

ability to permeate the protection of the domestic sphere; the same sphere that was supposed to guard against atomic weapons, homosexuality, and communism.

Of course, the fears about masculinity were not about men *physically* getting smaller. Rather the concern was that the modern comforts of the domestic sphere, combined with the conformity of corporate culture, converged to reduce men to a fraction of their former selves. The situation of Scott Carey in the film serves as a very on-the-nose metaphor of these concerns. As he became smaller, his own home became more and more of a danger, and he became further constrained. He was reliant on and under the control of his wife, in a parable for emergent anxieties raised about how the female-dominated domestic sphere contributed to the erosion of the agency of men. This will be discussed further in coming chapters.<sup>95</sup> In a blunt allegory, Carey eventually shrinks small enough that he is forced to take up residence in a girl's dollhouse. Finally, the movie's penultimate scene involves Carey, now less than an inch tall, being chased out of this dollhouse by the family cat and into the basement of the house. As Carey attempts to navigate this new space he is quickly confronted by a spider. Forced to defend himself with a sewing needle, yet again a nod domesticity, he manages after great struggle to kill the arachnid. The story then comes to an end with Carey accepting that although he may be diminished in size, his sense of self and manhood could still prevail.<sup>96</sup>

Transcending the fictional realm, the mid-1950s saw a rise in editorials and

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<sup>95</sup> *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, dir. Jack Arnold (1957; Universal City, CA: Universal Pictures, 2012), DVD; See also: Philip Wylie, "The Abdicating Male," *Playboy*, November 1956; Margaret Mead, "American Man In A Woman's World," *New York Times Magazine*, February 10, 1957. These articles, and their focus on the contribution of women to the erosion of masculinity will be examined further in Chapter Three. As Steven Watts notes in *JFK and the Masculine Mystique* (2016) happens in increasing frequency in the second half of the fifties (25).

<sup>96</sup> *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, dir. Jack Arnold (1957; Universal City, CA: Universal Pictures, 2012), DVD.



literature that raised the alarm about the impact of modernity on manhood and the domestic sphere. Some of the earliest pieces, like Jean Mayer's "Muscular State of the Union" (1955) in *New York Times Magazine* and John Kelly's "Are We Becoming A Nation of Weaklings" (1956) in *American* magazine, primarily raised physical softness. As Mayer notes: "Our motorized, mechanized, 'effort-saver' civilization is rapidly making us as soft as our processed foods, our foam rubber mattresses, and our balloon tires."<sup>97</sup> Deborah McPhail surveys these concerns from the Canadian perspective, finding similar worries in periodicals like *Maclean's* and the *Globe and Mail*. McPhail concludes that "obesity served as a general seat of anxiety during the Cold War period in Canada." Built into this was the obvious fear that men would be unable to fight or adequately defend their nation.<sup>98</sup> The prevalence of sedentary office jobs and suburban comforts was blamed not only for making men unfit, but feminizing them as well. It was said that their lives and commitments left little opportunity to experience the kind of adventure that would make them feel like a "self-made man." Rather, the corporate job and suburban life was eroding men.<sup>99</sup>

It was on this last point that William Whyte centred his analysis in *The Organization Man* (1956), which is one of the definitive texts on concerns about masculinity in the mid-1950s. Discussed briefly in the introduction to this dissertation, Whyte's diagnosis of the problem centres on a lack of individualism in postwar life. Initially, the corporate job, suburbia, and modern conveniences were seen as offering a

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<sup>97</sup> Jean Mayer, "Muscular State of the Union," *New York Times Magazine*, November 6, 1955; John B. Kelly, "Are We Becoming A Nation of Weaklings?" *American*, March 1956.

<sup>98</sup> Deborah McPhail, "'What to do with the 'Tubby Hubby'?' 'Obesity,' the Crisis of Masculinity, and the Nuclear Family in early Cold War Canada," *Antipode* 41, no. 5 (2009): 1028, 1030-34.

<sup>99</sup> Steven Watts, *JFK and the Masculine Mystique* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016), 17-25; Christopher E. Forth, *Masculinity in the Modern West* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 202-204; James Gilbert, *Men in the Middle: Searching for Masculinity in the 1950s* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 191.

form of stability to a generation that had known so much instability. They proved comforting and reassuring in an increasingly tense early postwar period.<sup>100</sup> A decade later, however, with the advent of a third global war looking increasingly likely, it is not surprising that what started as a stabilizing force came to be seen as constricting. Whyte is careful to stress that his “book is not a plea for nonconformity.” He does admit to benefits in the shift from the rugged individualism of the nineteenth century’s “self-made man” towards the collectivism of the twentieth century’s “social ethic.” At the same time, he calls for a “drastic re-examination of the now orthodox view that the individual should be given less of the complete task.” He condemns a century of mechanization that has seen work broken down into a series of components. Whyte does not provide a solution, but is rather one of the first to sociologically examine the growing problem.<sup>101</sup>

What is apparent, at its core, is that the fear of the “organization man” stems from concern about the *total* collapse of the self-made man. As Michael Kimmel points out, it is this lack of individuality offered by society that left Western “men strained against two negative poles - the over conformist, a faceless, self-less nonentity, and the unpredictable, unreliable nonconformist.”<sup>102</sup> Like the effects of radioactivity, these ideas played themselves out in the cultural realm. Sloan Wilson’s *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955), a quote from which opened this chapter, resonated strongly with readers and warranted a movie adaptation the following year. Gregory Peck starred as protagonist Tom Rath, a middle-class television executive in Manhattan, who commuted from his suburban

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<sup>100</sup> William F. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (1956; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 10, 280-81, 298-312; Scheibach, *Atomic Narratives and American Youth*, 41.

<sup>101</sup> Whyte, 4-6, 10, 13, 401-402.

<sup>102</sup> Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 155, 158-59.

Connecticut home where he lived with his wife and three children. He was a World War Two veteran and thought that he had everything he needed - a home, a good job, and family. Nonetheless, Tom experiences an existential mid-life crisis working in a corporate world that threatens his sense of autonomy. In the end, he turns down an opportunity to advance, to avoid having his life consumed by his work.<sup>103</sup>

The idea of the “gray flannel suit” like the “organization man” quickly came to stand in as phrases that represented the perils of conformity and the realities of the modern-day businessman. In *The American Male*, a 1966 study on the perceived “crisis,” author Myron Brenton observes that a major problem for men was that they did not feel as masculine as they did during the war. This view is represented in Wilson’s novel, with Tom Rath’s character frequently reflecting in alternating horror and nostalgia on his wartime experience. By comparison, Brenton observes, “present-day working conditions do not permit fulfillment of the traditional psychological aims.”<sup>104</sup> These aims, as Louis Lyndon defines them in a 1956 article in *Women’s Home Companion*, centred on an “indestructible dream of greatness and adventure” that modernity did not offer. Rather, “before the day is out, the gray flannel suit has become a straitjacket and the dream has been nibbled away by confidential memos.”<sup>105</sup>

## **Conclusion**

While fears about the destructiveness of hydrogen weapons and the erosion of masculine character began in the mid-1950s, they would pervade through the decade and

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<sup>103</sup> Sloan Wilson, *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (New York: Arbor House, 1983).

<sup>104</sup> Myron Brenton, *The American Male* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1966), 15, 194.

<sup>105</sup> Louis Lyndon, “Uncertain Hero: The Paradox of the American Male,” *Women’s Home Companion*, November 1956.

carry into the early 1960s. Understanding the shift in psychology during the years between late 1953 and early 1956 proves crucial to the coming chapters, as well as the influence that these perceptions about masculinity would have on electoral politics. It is no coincidence that as public fears escalate about the dangers of hydrogen weaponry, new concerns about manliness arise. It mirrors, most closely, the fears that emerged at the turn-of-the-century regarding manhood in the age of the industrial machine. To return to Robert Lifton's work, the domestication of nuclear fears in the early years of the Cold War came with a promise that if one followed the rules and adapted oneself, survival was promised.<sup>106</sup> The radioactive aftermath of the *Operation Castle* tests drastically altered this agreement. It became clear that the destructive force of these weapons left little room for a targeted population to emerge unscathed. Abstract discussions about how the H-Bomb was a thousand times more powerful are beyond the brain's ability to process. What it can understand is burned, blistering skin on Japanese fisherman one-hundred-and-sixty kilometres from the blast site.

As this chapter has shown, the public received mixed messages early on about the survivability of an atomic attack. Accounts of the devastation that took place in Hiroshima and Nagasaki were widely available. Newspapers and magazines depicted the visual impact of a nuclear strike on cities. Simultaneously, civil defence pamphlets dating to 1950-1951 sought to downplay the risk of atomic bombs. The literature on both sides of the border compared radiation to a sunburn or x-ray and focused on the survivability of the blast outside the impact perimeter. May's concept of "domestic containment" and Lifton's theorization about "domesticating" fear blend the idea of placing faith in gender norms

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<sup>106</sup> Lifton, 337.

with attempts to downplay the risk of nuclear weaponry. The home and family become sources of comfort and stability, and civil defence literature reassures that taking a few simple measures within the home will provide protection against external radiation. Furthermore, visuals leaned heavily on these domestic ideals. For example, the Canadian civil defence mascots, 'Bea Alerte' and 'Justin Case,' were paragons of gender conformity and constantly rescuing hapless young adults.

Although the United States exploded its first hydrogen bomb in November 1952 and the Soviets gained a functioning equivalent nine months later, understanding of the true dangers of the weapon date to early 1954. As Paul Boyer observes, the *Operation Castle* tests were a turning point in public concern about nuclear weaponry. The hydrogen bomb would become a central feature of Adlai Stevenson's second bid for the presidency two years later in 1956. By then, concern about fallout was widespread, and discussions about leukemia, bone cancer, genetic damage would become common topics of discussion.<sup>107</sup> It is not surprising then, that movies and literature reflect amplified fears about the unknown dangers of radioactivity. From long-sleeping monsters, to giant ants, to shrinking men, there is concern about what nuclear weapons mean in the long term - even just from the radiation released from tests.

Concerns about masculine decline, which emerged alongside increased nuclear fear in the mid-1950s, would continue to grow towards the end of the century. Movies like *The Incredible Shrinking Man* (1957), and books like *The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit* (1955), as well as its subsequent film, speak to an emergent uncertainty regarding masculinity, as did sociological works like William Whyte's *The Organization Man* (1956), which finally

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<sup>107</sup> Boyer, 352-353.

gave the problem a name. At this time, much of the blame, at this point, fell on both the corporate world for eroding masculine agency, as well as suburbia, where the domestic sphere was said to be making men soft and pliable. It would only take a short leap before women would take an oversized share of the blame, as many articles in the late-1950s would conclude. This will be covered in the coming chapters. Nonetheless, it may seem foolish to refer to these concerns as a “crisis,” as Connell, Whitehead, Bederman and other scholars point out that the patriarchy is never in danger of losing power. However, in this era, the paternalistic hegemonic ideal itself is challenged by concerns that its core tenants are not *truly* enough, especially given that the hydrogen bomb could annihilate the home and the family.<sup>108</sup> Similarly, there is a genuine concern around this time that masculine toughness was eroding through the rise of the “organization man.” This fear pervades well into the early 1960s.

The next chapter returns to the electoral process in the United States (1956) and Canada (1957), as the two nations diverge slightly in their leadership styles. But, both races embody the uncertainty that has emerged, with publications continuing to discuss both the dangers of radioactivity and the “decline of the American male,” as Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. would soon define it. Adlai Stevenson seeks to make Eisenhower’s re-election effort about his health, tapping into a rising sense of insecurity and the spectre of Richard Nixon with his hand on the nuclear button. Growing global conflict only further highlights the importance of the next presidential term, as hydrogen weapons are increasingly brought into public discourse. Surprisingly, the breakout star of the 1956 race is not Stevenson, who

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<sup>108</sup> R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 84; Gail Bederman, *Manliness & Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 11; Stephen M. Whitehead, *Men and Masculinities* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2002), 154-59.

is too narrowly defined by his masculine flaws, but rather the young Senator John F. Kennedy. Meanwhile, in Canada, Louis St. Laurent's leadership continues to falter, Progressive Conservative leader George Drew is sidelined by his own health issues, and an ambitious upstart, John Diefenbaker, steps into the role of Opposition leader. Despite being only a decade younger than the prime minister, Diefenbaker feeds into a narrative about youth and endurance. The Progressive Conservative Party also stokes renewed concerns about masculine individualism on a national level, feeding a recurring discussion about independence.

## Chapter Three

### THE SUPERMEN FALTER

*“We are expected to be satisfied with the Great White Father’s assurances that this is ‘not a subject for detailed public discussion.’ This benign, ‘Don’t worry, kiddos. Just go on up to bed and daddy will take care of everything,’ is the death knell of democracy.”*<sup>1</sup>

*~ Letter from Janice Holland to President Eisenhower, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1956*

#### Introduction

There is a famous photo of President Dwight Eisenhower and Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent riding together in a golf cart, waving to the assembled crowd. It was taken on December 11<sup>th</sup>, 1956, as the two leaders played golf at Augusta National in Georgia. Eisenhower was there on vacation. When the president heard that the Canadian prime minister was in Fort Lauderdale, he invited St. Laurent to play a round of golf before flying back to Ottawa. The meeting itself was informal, and if diplomatic issues were discussed they were off the record. Cameras captured the two men on the course: Eisenhower in a sweater and flat cap, St. Laurent in a sweater-vest and tie. The president drove the golf cart while the prime minister smiled and waved at the cameras.<sup>2</sup> They look every bit the grandfathers they now were. Their projection of benevolent paternalism was useful electorally in the late 1940s and early 1950s, but by 1956 it was impossible to deny that both men were looking *old*.

Eisenhower suffered a heart attack in September 1955 and required several weeks of hospitalization, followed by recuperation for the remainder of the year. In June 1956, he experienced a bout of ileitis, which required abdominal surgery to remove a portion of his

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Janice Holland, dated October 13, 1956, in “Sept. to Date 1956 (1), Box 1215, General File, White House Central Files, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library (DDEPL), Abilene, KS.

<sup>2</sup> W.H. Lawrence, “President Golfs With St. Laurent,” *New York Times*, December 12, 1956.



inflamed intestine. This was followed by further recuperation at his Gettysburg farm throughout July.<sup>3</sup> Following the heart attack, a wave of speculation began that he might not run for a second term. It rose again in July 1956, after the surgical procedure. Publicly, Eisenhower had always been noncommittal on a re-election campaign. In private, the president had repeatedly emphasized his desire to serve a single term. As he wrote his brother Milton in December 1953, “If ever for a second time I should show any signs of yielding to persuasion [to run], please call in the psychiatrist - or even better the sheriff.... I feel there can be no showing made that my ‘duty’ extends beyond a one time performance.”<sup>4</sup>

St. Laurent, meanwhile, suffered no major health crises, but was plagued by recurring bouts of exhaustion (and possible depression) following a Commonwealth tour in early 1954. There were genuine concerns that leadership had become too much for the prime minister, but the Liberal Party had no one to match the image he cultivated with the public. Despite his declared intention to run again, by 1955 it was clear St. Laurent’s heart was not in it. As journalist Bruce Hutchinson observed, “The Old Man is really through.” Lester Pearson, meanwhile, expressed concern to a friend about St. Laurent’s “tired and discouraged” state. He was not, Pearson complained, “giving as much confidence or leadership.”<sup>5</sup> Important to these observations is the fact that they were *before* the pipeline debate that ailed both St. Laurent and George Drew.

In May 1956, the Liberal government pushed to gain funding for a bill that would financially aid the construction of the indebted Trans-Canada Pipeline. The project, funded

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<sup>3</sup> William Hitchcock, *The Age of Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018), 280-85, 294-95, 308.

<sup>4</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Mandate For Change, 1953-1956* (New York: Doubleday, 1963), 566.

<sup>5</sup> Dale C. Thomson, *Louis St. Laurent: Canadian* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1967), 373-76, 399-402; John English, *The Worldly Years: The Life of Lester Pearson*, Vol. 2 (New York: Knopf, 1992), 154.

by U.S. backers, raised new concerns about American intrusion into the Canadian economy. The Canadian government bailing out an American corporation only further inflamed tensions. With its overwhelming majority, the government quickly pushed the project through, arguing that it was in Canada's best interest. To achieve a timely passage, they continuously invoked cloture, stifling parliamentary debate.<sup>6</sup> The session was exceedingly tense, and, not long after, Drew was admitted to hospital with, as his doctor put it, "severe physical and nervous exhaustion." He had only recently recovered from a bout of meningitis, and his medical team expressed concern about the strain of the job given the upcoming election campaign in 1957. If he did not resign, they worried that he would be dead in six months.<sup>7</sup> Drew's resignation as Opposition Leader came at the age of sixty-two. The ailing St. Laurent was seventy-four. Nevertheless, the Liberals needed the prime minister to run again. As one cabinet minister mused, even "if we have to have him stuffed."<sup>8</sup>

This chapter focuses on the presidential election of 1956 in the United States and the Canadian federal election of 1957. President Eisenhower sought a second term in office, while Prime Minister St. Laurent was looking for a third mandate. These two elections, with two ageing leaders, took place across a backdrop of increased geopolitical tension. These pressures included the nationalization of the Suez Canal, the subsequent invasion of Egypt, as well as the Hungarian Revolution, and the suicide of Canadian Ambassador to Egypt, Herbert Norman. Heightened tensions coincided with intensifying fears about the

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<sup>6</sup> Thomson, 426-29, 442-43; J.W. Pickersgill, *My Years With Louis St. Laurent* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 270-75.

<sup>7</sup> "Letters, Comments on Drew's Resignation," *Globe and Mail*, September 22, 1956; Bob Plamondon, *Blue Thunder: The Truth About Conservatives From Macdonald To Harper* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 2009), 209.

<sup>8</sup> Peter C. Newman, *Renegade In Power: The Diefenbaker Years* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 34.

possibility of nuclear war. In the United States, this disconcert takes the form of a discussion around the impact of nuclear fallout and a proposition to ban H-Bomb testing. In Canada, it is seen through rising anti-Americanism rooted in concerns about U.S. dominance over Canadian affairs.

In both elections, a question of ability and competence emerges. The paternalistic image that Eisenhower and St. Laurent projected in previous campaigns began to become a liability. In an era of increasingly dangerous nuclear weaponry and growing conflict, was paternalistic reassurance enough? As Chapter Two introduced, the mid-1950s brought a growing fear of nuclear weaponry and concerns that postwar modernity was creating weak men. Increased geopolitical conflict, which made nuclear warfare more likely, only intensified these fears. Thus, it is no surprise that the conversation shifted towards what kind of men the Canadian and American publics wanted to lead them. The coming pages use the re-election campaigns of Dwight Eisenhower and Louis St. Laurent to examine a transitional period in the mid-1950s for hegemonic masculine leadership. A shift begins from what I refer to as “atomic fatherhood,” outlined in Chapter One, to what will be defined as “man of destiny” approach to leadership that will be explored in Chapter Four.

In Eisenhower’s case, concerns about his age do not ultimately deny him a second term as president; however, American voters are forced to consider that there was a *real* possibility that he would not survive four more years in office. Adlai Stevenson and the Democrats, in attacking Eisenhower’s age and his health, sought to undercut his appeal. Was he still the comforting paternalistic father-figure, or was he a feeble “part-time president?” American voters hedged their bets. Meanwhile, in Canada, the “Uncle Louis” image does falter at the ballot box. Though the Liberal Party hoped he could again carry

them to victory, the man himself had changed. On the campaign trail, he appeared tired, irritable, and quick-tempered. What's more, with George Drew out of the way, the dynamics of the race shifted significantly. Now, St. Laurent went up against a populist firebrand in the new Progressive Conservative leader, John Diefenbaker. He proved to be a formidable opponent who offered Canadians a way forward, while linking the crises and concerns of the mid-1950s to the stagnation of the St. Laurent regime.

Martin Halliwell observes that much of the language that surrounds the Cold War is defined by a "rhetoric of disease." In early chapters, this point is seen in discussions about how homosexuality was viewed as a contagious and corrupting influence, how communism was an ideology that could infect the body politic, and how modern conveniences were making men's bodies soft both mentally and physically.<sup>9</sup> In reference to Eisenhower's health, Bevan Sewell expands upon the concept and argues that "weakness in the bodies of political leaders was seen as a 'synecdoche' for weakness in the body politic of the nation more broadly."<sup>10</sup> Sewell's research examines the impact Eisenhower's ill health, as well as that of Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, had on the Suez Crisis and American foreign policy. This discussion opens an interesting avenue of exploration when it comes to tying the body of the leader to the body politic. In a sense, it is a variation of Chapter One's conclusion that Eisenhower and St. Laurent came to embody fatherhood for the national family. Drawing upon the work of Halliwell and Sewell, it can be argued that fears about masculine decline was mirrored in concerns about the ailing bodies of their

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<sup>9</sup> Alexander Dunst, *Madness in Cold War America* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 2; See also, K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 52-53.

<sup>10</sup> Bevan Sewell, "John Foster Dulles, Illness, Masculinity and U.S. Foreign Relations, 1953-1961," *International History Review* 39, no. 4 (2017): 716

leaders.

The questions raised about Eisenhower and St. Laurent's abilities reflect larger societal discussions about masculinity at the time. It is important to stress that it is never implied that either man was insufficiently masculine. Rather, the hegemonic ideal had begun to shift. Raewyn Connell argues that masculine hegemony has the ability to disrupt itself. As hegemonic masculine ideals sit atop a hierarchy of competing and contrasting masculinities, there is an ongoing process of "alliance, dominance and subordination."<sup>11</sup> Together with James Messerschmidt, Connell acknowledges that "challenges to hegemony are common, and so are adjustments in the face of those challenges."<sup>12</sup> Questions about masculinity that begin to enter the political process represent the start of a hegemonic adjustment. As men in Canada and the United States begin to question their physical and mental well-being, it makes sense that they would also question what they want in the men that lead them. It is possible to say that Eisenhower and St. Laurent's physical decline stands as a metaphor for the unpleasant physical and psychological decline middle-class, middle-aged men felt in themselves.

### **The American Presidential Election of 1956**

The 1956 presidential election is often remembered for President Eisenhower's overwhelming victory and the fact that it was a "rematch" between himself and Democratic nominee Adlai Stevenson. The size of his Electoral College victory (457 to 73) and the fact that the Eisenhower campaign led in virtually every poll often relegates this election to a

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<sup>11</sup> R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 37.

<sup>12</sup> R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, "Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept," *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (2005): 835.

lesser examination than its predecessor.<sup>13</sup> However, it is important to emphasize that this election was not a rematch between Eisenhower and Stevenson that rehashed the same issues and debates. It had its own unique character. Current scholarly examination of the 1956 election tends to fixate on the geopolitical situation surrounding the Suez and Hungary that reached its peak during the final critical days of the campaign. To a lesser extent, the literature explores questions regarding Eisenhower's health in the context of the campaign, as well as Stevenson's fruitless attempts to raise a nuclear testing moratorium.<sup>14</sup> Traditional analysis tends to miss the Stevenson campaign's concerted effort to undermine President Eisenhower's paternalism by actively using his health against him. The spectre of Richard Nixon in the Oval Office, it was hoped, would be enough to get voters to settle for Stevenson.

President Eisenhower and the First Lady spent the late summer of 1955 in Fraser, Colorado, with Mamie's mother, Elivera M. Doud. On the night of September 23<sup>rd</sup>, the president went to bed early with what he thought was a severe case of indigestion that he attributed to the onions on his lunchtime burger. He slept fitfully for a few hours only to be awakened by crushing chest pain. Mamie called for his doctor, and Eisenhower was administered morphine. Painful bouts of intestinal discomfort were not unusual for him. The following afternoon, when the president awoke and the symptoms had yet to subside, an EKG was performed. The test found that Eisenhower was suffering from an acute

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<sup>13</sup> "1956 Presidential Trial Heats, Based on Registered Voters," *Gallup*, accessed May 2020, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/110548/gallup-presidential-election-trial-heat-trends.aspx>

<sup>14</sup> For more information please see: David Haven Blake, *Liking Ike: Eisenhower, Advertising, and the Rise of Celebrity Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), Chapter Four; William Hitchcock, *The Age of Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018), Chapter Thirteen; Bevan Sewell, "The Political Perils of Cold War Foreign Relations: Adlai Stevenson's Democrats and Foreign Policy in the 1956 Presidential Election," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 28, no. 4 (2017): 619-45; Douglas Slaybaugh, "Adlai Stevenson, Television, and the Presidential Campaign of 1956," *Illinois Historical Journal* 89, no. 1 (1996): 2-16.

massive anterior myocardial infarction. He was transferred to the hospital, placed into an oxygen tent, and was treated with anticoagulants to break up the clot.<sup>15</sup>

The Secret Service descended on Richard Nixon, and the vice president was forced to strike a careful balance in the coming days. In his memoirs, Nixon observes that while President Eisenhower was ultimately expected to make a full recovery, the early days after his heart attack were tenuous. The vice president aimed to support the administration while trying not to look like he was grasping for the presidency. Ultimately, as Nixon described it, he fell into somewhat of a “moderator” role when presiding over Cabinet and National Security Council meetings. The reality was, according to journalist Walter Lippmann, that the nation was run by a “council of state” in the coming weeks. Titular power in Washington resided with Nixon, while Chief of Staff Sherman Adams regulated access to the president in hospital.<sup>16</sup>

The heart attack created a new calculation regarding the upcoming election. Previously reluctant to run for a second term, Eisenhower began to look more forcefully towards possible successors. Nixon was the heir apparent, but the president had concerns about his public image. Nixon’s performance as a White House surrogate in the 1954 midterms had been divisive, at best. It likely contributed to the Republican Party losing their brief control of both houses of Congress. Part of the problem was that, in serving as a hatchet man for Eisenhower, Nixon had solidified his perception as a ruthless right-wing partisan in the mould of McCarthy. Added to this was Eisenhower’s personal doubts. He was unsure his vice president could carry on with the young, moderate Republican Party

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<sup>15</sup> Hitchcock, 280-82.

<sup>16</sup> Jeffrey Frank, *Ike and Dick: Portrait of a Strange Political Marriage* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013), 112-116; Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1978), 164-66.

he was trying to build. Writing to friend Swede Hazlett, Eisenhower stressed his desire to see “someone nominated who not only believes in the program I have been so earnestly labouring to have enacted into law, but who also has the best chance of re-election.”<sup>17</sup> Earl Warren appears to have been considered as Eisenhower’s preferred choice of successor. However, Warren was reluctant to trade his position as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court for a shot at the presidency. Given the lack of prospects, Eisenhower bleakly told his press secretary: “I don’t want to [run], but I may have to.”<sup>18</sup>

It was against this backdrop that the fifty-five-year-old Adlai Stevenson announced on November 15<sup>th</sup>, 1955, that he would seek to be the Democratic nominee for president for a second time.<sup>19</sup> Shortly after declaring his candidacy, Gallup ran polling on a hypothetical race between Stevenson and Nixon. They found that 50% of Americans would vote for Stevenson, compared to only 44% for the vice president. While 6% of those polled remained undecided, when pressed to choose a preferred candidate at that moment, they also broke for Stevenson by a 2-1 margin.<sup>20</sup> It is fair to say that the race that Adlai Stevenson entered was very different from the one in which he ended up running.

In the press, discussion of Stevenson’s candidacy was treated with some skepticism. *Newsweek* raised concerns about his “fine finish,” while the *Christian Science Monitor* asked whether Stevenson could produce anything different from 1952.<sup>21</sup> However, the

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<sup>17</sup> John W. Malsberger, *The General and the Politician* (Lanham: Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 50, 65-66; Irwin F. Gellman, *The President and the Apprentice: Eisenhower and Nixon, 1952-1961* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 292-93.

<sup>18</sup> Hitchcock, 285; Eisenhower as quoted by Ann Whitman, in Diary Entry on January 30, 1956, in Box 8, Ann Whitman Diary Series, DDEPL.

<sup>19</sup> “Stevenson Will Be Candidate For Nomination,” *Los Angeles Times*, November 16, 1955.

<sup>20</sup> George Gallup, “Adlai Remains Choice Over Nixon by 5-4 Vote,” *Washington Post*, November 18, 1955.

<sup>21</sup> “A ‘Moderate’ Stevenson,” *Newsweek*, November 21, 1955, Folder 5, Box 276, Series 4.2, Adlai E. Stevenson Papers (MC-124), Mudd Manuscript Library (MML), Princeton, NJ; “Mr. Stevenson Risks It,” *Christian Science Monitor*, November 16, 1955.



most scathing criticism came from the right-wing *National Review*, which published a parody on Stevenson's announcement. It mocked his perceived meek and indecisive nature:

I have come to feel that I am not the right kind of person to be President, above all in such a period of continuous crisis as the present. I am too subjective, too filled with doubts, even ultimate doubts, about man and history and my own duty, to be able to face with necessary firm confidence the harrowing decisions that the Chief Executive must almost daily take. Although my knowledge and my intellectual training are above the norm of political leaders, I am in a certain sense – the sense in which we judge that George Washington had weight and depth – too superficial.<sup>22</sup>

“Filled with doubts” and “superficial,” it is easy to see that the gendered constructs from the previous campaign still lingered on his persona. Still, the hope was that Stevenson could run a more critical and proactive campaign in 1956. The candidate stressed to advisor Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. that he wanted his speeches to be “simple, vivid, [and] concrete.” He acknowledged that a change in method was necessary and that in the past, he had been too philosophical.<sup>23</sup>

The problem was, as a campaigner, Stevenson remained prone to a certain level of aloof detachment from the voters that was attributed to his cerebral nature. An incident during the Florida primary perhaps gives the best example. It again pulls Stevenson into sharp contrast with Eisenhower's grandfatherly nature. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Harry Ashmore, who worked on Stevenson's campaign, remembers a meet-and-greet in a small Florida town where a child handed the candidate a stuffed alligator. Ashmore recounts having to pull Stevenson aside after:

When you are shaking hands in a supermarket and a little girl in a starched dress steps out of the crowd and hands you a stuffed alligator, what you say is 'Thanks

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<sup>22</sup> “The Land of Might-Have Been,” *National Review*, November 26, 1955, Folder 5, Box 276, Series 4.2, MC-124, MML.

<sup>23</sup> Kenneth S. Davis, *The Politics of Honor: A Biography of Adlai E. Stevenson* (New York: Putnam, 1967), 306; Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., *Journals, 1952-2000* (New York: Penguin Press, 2007), 37.

very much, I've always wanted one of these for the mantelpiece at Libertyville.' What you don't say is what you did say: 'For Christ's sake, what's this?'"<sup>24</sup>

Stevenson took great amusement from the incident, and Ashmore remained perplexed when following their conversation the candidate went on to tell anyone who would listen how awkward the encounter was. In fairness to Stevenson, another account credits him with playing into the absurdity of the moment, holding the alligator aloft and gesturing with it as he continued to converse with the crowd.<sup>25</sup> Still, the incident serves as a good reminder of how Stevenson struggled to throw off, in Douglas Slaybaugh's words, his "abstracted and detached" intellectualism.<sup>26</sup>

In March 1956, Eisenhower announced his decision to run again. Not long after, Adlai Stevenson privately raised concerns about the president's fitness for office. This would ultimately become a major line of attack for Democrats. Trying out what would later become a campaign theme in a letter to friend Agnes Meyer, Stevenson bemoaned that the Republicans were so eager to win that they were willing to settle for a "part-time" presidency.<sup>27</sup> Stevenson's true fear, however, was Nixon's potential to ascend to the Oval Office upon Eisenhower's death. He "loathed and despised Richard Nixon," to quote biographer Kenneth Davis.<sup>28</sup> In July 1956, Stevenson wrote to President Truman, hoping to enlist his help in the fall campaign. While they could not directly attack Eisenhower's health, Stevenson stated, he hoped the former president would be willing to educate the public on the *strain* of the office. As Stevenson observed, "a symbol is not enough and

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<sup>24</sup> Harry S. Ashmore, "Too Old To Cry," in *As We Knew Adlai*, ed. Edward P. Doyle (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 229.

<sup>25</sup> Davis, 326.

<sup>26</sup> Douglas Slaybaugh, "Adlai Stevenson, Television, and the Presidential Campaign of 1956," *Illinois Historical Journal* 89, no. 1 (1996): 3.

<sup>27</sup> Adlai E. Stevenson, *The Papers of Adlai Stevenson*, Volume VI, ed. Walter Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1976), 82.

<sup>28</sup> Davis, 401.

[the] over-delegation of powers, for any reason, as well as undue inaccessibility of the President can be damaging and dangerous.”<sup>29</sup> Truman would also be useful, in a darker manner, of reminding the American public of how quickly a vice president can ascend to office.

His own mortality is part of the reason Eisenhower had concerns about Nixon heading into the 1956 campaign. While volumes have been written on the subject of their relationship, the president’s true motivations about the vice presidential nomination in 1956 remain unclear.<sup>30</sup> Eisenhower met with Nixon shortly after his return to the White House following his heart attack. On December 26<sup>th</sup>, 1955, the pair had a conversation about building up Nixon’s profile. Eisenhower felt that a cabinet position in a second administration would help Nixon gain executive experience to launch a presidential run in 1960.<sup>31</sup> Eisenhower’s memoirs indicate that he felt the position of Secretary of Defence would be most appropriate. Nixon, highly disillusioned by Eisenhower’s suggestion, took it as a lack of faith in him as vice president. He felt that Ike was being swayed by advisors concerned that his presence was a drag on the ticket.<sup>32</sup> Polling conducted in July 1956 indeed shows that Nixon represented a 4-6% drop in the popular vote for the Republican ticket. While Eisenhower was leading Stevenson handily at this point and Nixon’s unpopularity did not endanger re-election, it did raise problems in the effort to regain control of the Congress.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Stevenson, *Papers of Adlai Stevenson*, Vol. VI, 172.

<sup>30</sup> See Jeffrey Frank, *Ike and Dick: Portrait of a Strange Political Marriage* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013); John W. Malsberger, *The General and the Politician* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014); Irwin F. Gellman, *The President and the Apprentice: Eisenhower and Nixon, 1952-1961* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

<sup>31</sup> Frank, 122-23.

<sup>32</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace, 1956-1961* (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 8-9; Nixon, *Memoirs*, 166-70

<sup>33</sup> Malsberger, 99.

Further insight on this issue can be found among friend Milton Katz's papers, in a memorandum about a conversation he had with Eisenhower on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1956. Interestingly, this meeting takes place the day after Nixon informed the president of his desire to remain on the ticket. Eisenhower expressed exasperation with Nixon's decision to Katz. He had trained Nixon as best as he could, he observed, but that his vice president remained an enigma. Eisenhower was unsure what made Nixon "tick" and what kind of "human being" he was. He relayed to Katz that Nixon in Cabinet meetings rarely offered his own opinions, instead he merely synthesized what others said. Eisenhower stated he would "not choose Nixon as the inspiring and imaginative leader of a people, the man to lead a crusade." He also told Katz that had Nixon chose not to run on the ticket again, he favoured Christian Herter, the governor of Massachusetts, for vice president.<sup>34</sup> Similar sentiments about Nixon occur in records of Eisenhower's discussions with Len Hall, the chair of the Republican National Committee (RNC), and his brother Milton. Together, these accounts indicate that he may not have been truthful in his assertions about his desire to build Nixon up.<sup>35</sup>

In June 1956, Eisenhower had to be taken from the White House to Walter Reed Hospital by ambulance. The president had long dealt with ileitis, but he began vomiting blood on the morning of June 8<sup>th</sup>. It was determined that a portion of his ileum was constricted and had to be removed. What followed was three weeks of recovery in the hospital, where Eisenhower lost twenty pounds, had to be treated for an infected wound, and continued to suffer from intestinal distress. This was the second severe illness resulting

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<sup>34</sup> Nixon, *Memoirs*, 172-73; Milton Katz, "Conversation with President Eisenhower, 11 A.M.," April 27, 1956, in "Harry S. Truman Library," Box 60, Small Manuscripts Collection, DDEPL.

<sup>35</sup> Frank, 139.

in hospitalization within the year. As biographer William Hitchcock points out, it only played into the validity of Stevenson's criticism of a part-time presidency.<sup>36</sup> Eisenhower's hospitalization and surgery also brought with it a fresh wave of speculation regarding the possibility that Nixon would end up as the replacement nominee, or at least as president within the next four years.

The Democratic National Convention was held from August 13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>, 1956, in Chicago's International Amphitheatre. Stevenson scored well over the 686 ½ votes needed to clinch the Democratic nomination on the first ballot. Shortly after sixty-seven votes from the Pennsylvania delegation put him over the top, the former governor made his way to a waiting limousine that drove him to the Amphitheatre.<sup>37</sup> There, he made Speaker Sam Rayburn aware of his desire to speak and emerged on stage in a surprise address to the euphoric convention floor:

The American people have the solemn obligation to consider with the utmost care who will be their President if the elected President is prevented by a Higher Will from serving his full term.... It is a sober reminder that seven out of thirty-four Presidents have served as the result of such an indirect selection. The responsibility of the Presidency has grown so great that the nation's attention has become focused as never before on the office of the Vice-Presidency. The choice for that office has become almost as important as the choice for the presidency.<sup>38</sup>

Thus, Stevenson informed the delegates that he would leave it up to them to select his vice president, and then with a quick "until tomorrow night" he then stepped from the platform, unleashing a frenzy among the crowd. It is perhaps the most underrated (and underhanded) political calculation in American history, made all the more remarkable by the fact that Stevenson was not a political animal. In highlighting the need for the delegates to pick the

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<sup>36</sup> Hitchcock, 294-95; 306-309.

<sup>37</sup> Davis, 332-33.

<sup>38</sup> Stevenson, *Papers of Adlai Stevenson*, Vol. VI, 181.

vice president, Stevenson opened the general election campaign with a shot at Eisenhower's health.

It is also possible that Stevenson, in throwing open the nomination, was trying to elevate the profile of Senator John F. Kennedy for vice president. He had already chosen the Massachusetts senator to place his name into nomination, and Stevenson was aware that Kennedy had been campaigning for the vice presidency for several months. At this point, Kennedy saw the vice-presidential nomination, win or lose, as his ticket to the presidency. Biographer Robert Dallek feels that Kennedy's opportunity to place Stevenson's name into nomination was given as a concession for failing to choose him outright for the vice presidency. He also points to concerns among the party brass like Jim Farley and Sam Rayburn about Kennedy's Catholicism.<sup>39</sup> However, the only two contenders with a shot at the nomination were Estes Kefauver and John F. Kennedy. Given the bruising primary, Stevenson was not a fan of the Tennessee senator. "I just instinctively don't like that fellow," he told Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Immediately before the convention, Stevenson had also privately expressed the desire for a running mate other than Kefauver. "Someone else with a fresh face and greater potential use in the Congress," he felt, "would be far more valuable in the long run."<sup>40</sup>

Kennedy was a young, media-savvy senator with a beautiful, poised wife who was pregnant with their first child.<sup>41</sup> He made up for many of Stevenson's flaws as a politician,

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<sup>39</sup> Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 2013), 203-208.

<sup>40</sup> Schlesinger, *Journals*, 8; Stevenson, *Papers of Adlai Stevenson*, Vol. VI, 175; Robert Dallek points out in *An Unfinished Life* (2013) that Stevenson felt that he needed a Southerner to balance the presidential ticket (p. 206). Given the balloting, the only other young Southerner with an actual shot at the vice presidential nomination was Albert Gore, Sr., who ran a distant third behind Kefauver and Kennedy on the first and second ballots. Gore ultimately dropped out to endorse Estes Kefauver.

<sup>41</sup> Shortly after the convention, Jacqueline Kennedy would go into premature labour and give birth to a daughter, Arabella, who was not due for another two months. The child was stillborn and Jacqueline Kennedy later associated the excitement of the Convention with the miscarriage. As a result, she played a

and as a man. As Stevenson observed after the convention: “[Kennedy] was the real hero of the hour... we shall hear a great deal more from this promising young man.”<sup>42</sup> In the end, he came close to being the running mate. On the second ballot, Kennedy led with 648 delegates to Estes Kefauver’s 551.5. This left Kennedy 38 votes short of the nomination. However, Kefauver managed to snatch victory out of the jaws of defeat when several state delegations were persuaded to switch to him at the end of the second round.<sup>43</sup> While the general consensus seems to be that a Stevenson-Kennedy ticket still would have also gone on to lose the election, there is an unanswered question: would Kennedy have energized voters in a way that Kefauver did not?

Letters from the public seem to indicate that he would have. Writing to Eisenhower, one American mirrored the president’s own concerns about a successor. There was, he wrote, a “lack of bright young Kennedys” in the Republican Party. “I fear,” he continued, “[this] will only too clearly be revealed on the television screen during the [Republican] convention week starting tomorrow.” Another letter from Linnea Brosnan, concurs. She felt that John F. Kennedy was an incredible asset for the Democratic Party and observes that the “[Republicans] will need an intelligent, thoughtful speaker, and one who is able to create personal identification with an audience as well as one who can be very serious, humorous, and able to break into Mr. Kennedy’s basic arguments....” Clearly, these writers did not feel the Richard Nixon was up to the task.<sup>44</sup>

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highly reduced role on the campaign trail during her husband’s bid for the presidency in 1960, at which time she was pregnant with John, Jr. For more information on the aftermath of the 1956 Convention and the relationship between Jack and Jacqueline Kennedy, please see Fredrik Logevall, *JFK: Coming of Age in the American Century, 1917-1956* (New York: Random House, 2020), 644-46.

<sup>42</sup> Stevenson, *Papers of Adlai Stevenson*, Vol. VI, 206.

<sup>43</sup> Dallek, 207.

<sup>44</sup> Letter from C. Ludwig Baumann, Jr., August 19, 1956; and Letter from Linnea Brosnan, September 19, 1956; both found in “Folder: A-B,” Box 1, Letters Referred to RNC, Bulk Mail File, White House Central Files, DDEPL.

Letters to Kennedy himself are equally revealing, especially on the issue of youth and masculinity. A telegram from Mary Finch states that while she likes Kennedy and would vote for him as a vice-presidential candidate, “you do not have a man like Ike [on the] ticket.”<sup>45</sup> Meanwhile, Leslie I. Laughlin of Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, observes that as a Republican, she felt Kennedy’s “presence on the Democratic ticket would have made it so much more difficult for the Republican Party to win in November.”<sup>46</sup> Finally, J. Lincoln Ritchie of Los Angeles wrote to Kennedy stating that he was not overly disappointed in his loss. “Why be satisfied with second place, when in 1960 you could lead the ticket,” he asked. Then getting a jab in at Richard Nixon, “the Boy Scout from Whittier,” Ritchie pointed out that if Nixon was qualified to be vice president, Kennedy could easily be president. “Hell,” he said, “[Nixon] could not even carry your briefcase.”<sup>47</sup>

Such letters point to a yearning developing by the mid-decade for what Steven Watts views as a “vibrant masculine mystique.” He points out that Kennedy’s popularity grew over the coming four years because he offered a vigorous, athletic alternative in the face of fears about masculine decline.<sup>48</sup> As Watts outlines, there are several key focuses said to be eroding masculine agency in the mid-to-late 1950s: corporate culture, consumerism, and women.<sup>49</sup> Increasingly, publications examining the issue placed the blame with what Philip Wylie referred to as the “abdicated male.” His November 1956 piece in *Playboy*, of the same name, bemoans the fact that the rise of suburbia and domestic life had led to loss of

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<sup>45</sup> Telegram from Mary Neal Finch, August 14, 1956, in “Kennedy for Vice President Correspondence,” Box 135, Series 11, President’s Office Files, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library (JFKPL), Boston, MA.

<sup>46</sup> Letter from Leslie I. Laughlin, August 17, 1956, in “Kennedy for Vice President Correspondence,” Box 135, Series 11, President’s Office Files, JFKPL.

<sup>47</sup> Letter from J. Lincoln Ritchie, September 20, 1956, in “Kennedy for Vice President Correspondence,” Box 135, Series 11, President’s Office Files, JFKPL.

<sup>48</sup> Watts, 8, 54-55.

<sup>49</sup> Watts, 15-30.



authority for men. "In America," he complains, "men are merely earners not spenders.... [and women] own America by mere parasitism." Combined with the conformity imposed by organization, he worries about the future of men. This was not entirely new territory for Wylie. As early as 1942, in his bestselling *Generation of Vipers*, he had been raising the alarm against the influence of the domestic sphere and the impact of "Momism" on young boys, turning them into sissies.<sup>50</sup>

In February 1957, anthropologist Margaret Mead penned an article entitled "American Man In A Woman's World" for *New York Times Magazine*. Though her approach was inherently less sexist than Wylie's, it is interesting Mead comes to similar conclusions and raises corresponding alarm bells. Her major concern is that men have become risk-averse, and she similarly condemns the "organization man" and his inability to make sufficient change to his position and agency. Certainly, part of the problem Mead notes, is "the position of women," although she places female dominance over the domestic sphere largely as the result of forcing educated women back into the home. This action had thus forced women into the very position that Wylie condemns and has trapped men into a provider-protector position. The responsibilities of the male to make money to pay for the mortgage, new appliances, and his family prevent him from taking the risks necessary to advance his career and exert his agency, in Mead's opinion.<sup>51</sup> These criticisms would build across the coming few years, and many would assert that the Eisenhower administration

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<sup>50</sup> Philip Wylie, "The Abdicating Male," *Playboy*, November 1956; See also: Philip Wylie, *Generation of Vipers* (New York: Rinehart & Company, 1942), 184-204; In this chapter, entitled "Common Women," Wylie coins the term "Momism" and raises his personal alarm about the impact of the growing power of women in society. He is especially concerned about the impact that mothers have in raising their sons, and states that because of their mother, boys are "shielded from [their] logical development through [their] barbaric period, or childhood" (195-96). Interestingly, and relevant to this exploration, he also points out that "mom is organization-minded," creating a linkage between "momism" and what a decade later would become termed the "organization man" (190).

<sup>51</sup> Margaret Mead, "American Man In A Woman's World," *New York Times Magazine*, February 10, 1957.

was simply overseeing a passive era of cultural decadence and domesticity. An ailing president was presiding over a generation of masculine decline.

Accepting the Democratic nomination for President of the United States, Adlai Stevenson promised not to bring Eisenhower's health into the campaign (although he already had). He artfully stressed that "[a president's] ability personally to fulfill the demands of his exacting office is a matter between him and the American people." This is why the Democrats, he reminded Americans, have chosen the second most qualified individual to serve as president, should it be "God's will that I do not serve my full four years."<sup>52</sup> There was, of course, continued strategy in this. As mentioned, Stevenson consistently had polled better against Nixon than Eisenhower. A study following the election found that 21 out of 100 Eisenhower voters would have switched to Stevenson had Nixon been the nominee. In this situation, Stevenson would have won the popular vote by 54%.<sup>53</sup> There was wide disconcert about Nixon. One study observed that while Eisenhower was seen as a father figure by Americans, Nixon was the overambitious and aggressive brother who lacked the maturity and empathy necessary in a leader.<sup>54</sup> While such a contest would have likely been seen as a choice between two equally unpalatable alternatives, against Nixon's aggressiveness, Stevenson seemed to have the advantage. To invoke David Riesman, the "inner-directed" egghead won out against the "other-directed" cold warrior. When forced to choose, the individualist would have beat the conformist. This preference fits with concerns about masculinity in this era.

However, this alternative outcome also raises the question as to why, if Nixon was

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<sup>52</sup> Stevenson, *Papers of Adlai Stevenson*, Vol. VI, 183-184.

<sup>53</sup> Davis, 409.

<sup>54</sup> Memorandum, "Images of Presidential Possibilities," August 1956, Folder 7, Box 280, Series 4.2, MC-124, MML.

so despised, Stevenson's attempts to raise concerns about Eisenhower's health were so unsuccessful? The answer can be found in several distinct blunders on the part of the Stevenson campaign. First, and perhaps most obvious, the vice presidency does not have the same electoral pull as the top of the ticket. Second, as already briefly discussed, Stevenson continued to fail to change perceptions about his image as a viable, masculine alternative to Eisenhower. Finally, in highlighting nuclear disarmament as his major campaign issue, Stevenson appealed to a vocal minority of the electorate, but set himself up to the portrayal by the Eisenhower campaign as a would-be president who would make American more vulnerable.

Journalist David Lawrence towards the end of the 1956 campaign, observed that the "vice presidential issue" failed to catch on because, to the average person, the vice presidency does not matter. A majority of Americans, in his view, were unaware of the vice-presidential nominees. Conducting a rudimentary straw poll in New York City, Lawrence noted that only one out of ten could name Estes Kefauver as the Democratic candidate. Though Nixon fared slightly better, it is still somewhat shocking that only three out of ten people could name the sitting vice president of the United States.<sup>55</sup> In a far more recent (and scientific) study, Christopher Devine and Kyle Kopko have similarly concluded that, historically, there is only a marginal impact on polls by the vice-presidential candidate. Comparing the favourability of the presidential and vice-presidential candidates, they conclude that the top of the ticket had three times the impact on determining voting probability over the identity of the running mate.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> David Lawrence, "Vice Presidency Fails To Become Issue," *Pantagraph* (Bloomington, IL), October 11, 1956, in "Newsclippings, Folder 4, Box 278, Series 4.2, MC-124, MML.

<sup>56</sup> Christopher Devine and Kyle C. Kopko. *The VP Advantage: How Running Mates Influence Home State Voting in Presidential Elections* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016), 170-71; It is important

Nonetheless, the Stevenson campaign worked hard to stress the spectre of Richard Nixon in the Oval Office. In a speech in Los Angeles in October, he warned his fellow citizens that “in one direction lies a land of slander and scare; the land of sly innuendo, the poison pen, the anonymous phone call and hustling, pushing, shoving; the land of smash and grab and anything to win.... This is Nixonland. But I say to you that it is not America.” Given the historical hindsight of an eventual Nixon presidency, Stevenson’s words seem oddly prophetic. They also mirror Louis St. Laurent’s warnings against electing George Drew in 1949 and 1953. It is an attempt at winning over voters, not because of Democratic policies, but rather because the vice president was someone seen as temperamentally unfit to inherit the presidency. Stevenson stressed in that same speech that a vote for Eisenhower was likely to place “Richard Nixon’s hand on the trigger of the H-Bomb.”<sup>57</sup> This was not a man who could be trusted with the nuclear arsenal. He was not calm and deliberative like Eisenhower. Rather, Nixon was depicted by Democrats as an irrational demagogue.

Given the public’s negative opinion of Nixon, it was crucial for Eisenhower and the Republican Party to reassure voters about the president’s health. Eisenhower informed the nation that he would not have accepted the nomination if he were not “confident of [his] own physical strength to meet all the responsibilities of the presidency.”<sup>58</sup> Writing for the *New York Times*, Russell Baker commended how skillfully the White House handled this issue during the campaign. By focusing on educating the public about coronary issues and ileitis, Republicans stemmed the flow of misinformation. Additionally, they provided a full

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to note that their study, while exploring the historical implications of the vice presidency as far back as Richard Nixon, does not utilize data from before 1968 in analyzing voter behaviour. Nonetheless, this study gives insight into how consequential (or lack thereof) the vice president has been in voting consideration, with a large portion of the Cold War included in the study (p. 158)

<sup>57</sup> Jeff Broadwater, *Adlai Stevenson and American Politics: The Odyssey of a Cold War Liberal* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1994), 171; Stevenson, *Papers of Adlai Stevenson*, Vol. VI, 300-307.

<sup>58</sup> “Eisenhower vs. Stevenson: Campaign Debate,” *New York Times*, November 4, 1956.

disclosure from Eisenhower's doctors, to further reassure Americans that the president was healthy and that there was nothing to hide. As one doctor put it after the president's intestinal surgery, Eisenhower was "better than ever."<sup>59</sup>

Meanwhile, letters from the public highlight that Stevenson's image remained tarnished. His time in the primaries had done little to change America's impression of him, and the attacks by Richard Nixon four years prior resurfaced. Again, a common concern in 1956 was that Stevenson was a divorced man. For example, JFK received a letter from Margaret Adams of California, begging him not to run on the ticket with Stevenson. It would be a betrayal of his Catholic religion to run with a divorced man, she said.<sup>60</sup> Others, in support of Eisenhower, made similar statements to those in 1952. They focused on the fact that "[America] need[s] a family man, because family is the backbone of the nation," and that the nation needed a "GENTLEMAN to go on at the 'Helm'... and NOT a man of less calibre who wouldn't even handle, rule, or keep together his own small realm of home life."<sup>61</sup> Internal polling from October 1956 observed that Stevenson's biggest weakness was, in fact, his divorce, while a July 1959 study, conducted by the University of Michigan, found that concern about Stevenson's divorce had *increased* between the two contests.<sup>62</sup>

It is worth taking a moment to look at how Stevenson's status as a divorced male contributed to speculation that he was homosexual. Chapter One highlighted the link Western society made in the 1950s between intellectualism, homosexuality, and

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<sup>59</sup> Russell Baker, "Eisenhower's Health Ignored In Campaign," *New York Times*, October 28, 1956.

<sup>60</sup> Telegram From Margaret A. Adams, August 17, 1956, in "Kennedy For Vice President Correspondence," Box 135, Series 11, President's Office Files, JFKPL.

<sup>61</sup> Letter from John Cunningham, received September 4, 1956, and Letter from Mrs. Andrew E. Barrett, September 19, 1956; both found in Box 1, Letters Referred to RNC, Bulk Mail File, White House Central Files, DDEPL.

<sup>62</sup> Memorandum, "Images of Presidential Possibilities," August 1956, Folder 7, Box 280, Series 4.2, MC-124, MML; Report, "The American Voter," Chapter Three, July 1958, University of Michigan, in "Polls, General," Box 1047, Series 15.06, Campaign Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKPL.

communism. It also addressed how Stevenson's status as an "egghead" was tied to effeminacy and weakness. While rumours about Stevenson's sexuality were never an overt campaign tactic by the Eisenhower-Nixon campaign, Nixon's coded innuendo about Stevenson made the linkage in voters' minds. Similarly, the growing concern about Stevenson's divorce nationally between 1952 and 1956 points to increasing public discomfort with Stevenson's status as a single man for an extended period of time.

Direct speculation about Stevenson's potential homosexuality, however, was largely limited to the Washington elite. Robert Kennedy, who worked for the Democratic presidential campaign in 1956, would frequently call his brother to complain about Stevenson's indecisiveness. "Adlai's a faggot," he put it quite plainly.<sup>63</sup> Stevenson was, according to one U.S. Senator, a "seraglio of middle aged ladies," who would flock to him at parties and events. Speaking of these gatherings later, former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy observed that "women who were scared of sex loved Adlai." Careful to caution that she was no psychologist, she agreed with the idea that older women were drawn to him because he did not pose a threat.<sup>64</sup> Interestingly, historian David Blake points to these comments as proof that Jack and Jackie were very much aware of the necessity of sexual politics in winning over the public. Kennedy's 1960 campaign aimed to project a masculine sexual vigor designed to circumvent where Stevenson faltered.<sup>65</sup>

Still, Stevenson's biggest liability came from his proposal to unilaterally stop testing hydrogen weapons. It was a policy he first raised during the primary in April 1956. Then,

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<sup>63</sup> Edmund F. Kallina, Jr., *Kennedy v. Nixon* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2010), 36.

<sup>64</sup> Senator William Benton, as quoted in David Haven Blake, *Liking Ike: Eisenhower, Advertising, and the Rise of Celebrity Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 133; Jacqueline Kennedy, et al, *Historic Conversations on Life with John F. Kennedy* (New York: Hyperion, 2011), 241-42.

<sup>65</sup> Blake, 177.

discussion on the matter did not take place again until the start of the general election.<sup>66</sup> In a speech to the American Legion on September 5<sup>th</sup>, Stevenson bemoaned the Republican charge that a Democratic administration was more likely to drag the United States into war. He observed that the Eisenhower administration spent \$15 billion more, year over year, on military expenditures than the Truman administration ever had. Turning towards the issue of nuclear weapons, he then noted that “in the atomic age no plan for defense is enough unless it is accompanied by a plan for disarmament.” He called on the Eisenhower administration to reconsider its position on testing hydrogen weapons, observing that American cessation of tests would bring other nations along.<sup>67</sup>

On the campaign trail in California, Nixon immediately dismissed Stevenson’s proposal for a unilateral cessation as “naive.” He asserted that contrary to popular belief, communists were actually increasing internal subversion in the United States, and he stressed that “now is the time to increase our vigilance - not relax it.”<sup>68</sup> A few weeks later, Eisenhower similarly struck out at the core of Stevenson’s proposal by intimating that to follow his opponent’s guidance would be a sign of weakness:

We cannot prove *wise* and *strong* by any such simple device as suspending, unilaterally, our H-bomb tests. Our atomic knowledge and power have forged the saving shield of freedom and the wise future use and control of atomic power can be assured not by any theatrical national gesture - but only by explicit and supervised international agreements.<sup>69</sup>

Meanwhile, in Stevenson’s view, Soviet refusal to allow for adequate inspection had

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<sup>66</sup> Stuart Gerry Brown, *Conscience in Politics: Adlai E. Stevenson in the 1950’s* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1961), 199-201

<sup>67</sup> Broadwater, 168-69; “Text of Adlai’s Speech Before Legion Convention,” *Washington Post*, September 6, 1956.

<sup>68</sup> Gladwin Hill, “Nixon Warns U.S. Against Relaxing Vigilance on Reds,” *New York Times*, September 7, 1956; “Nixon Calls Adlai’s Bomb Ideas Naive,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, September 7, 1956.

<sup>69</sup> Emphasis added; “Text of the Address By The President Personally Opening His Campaign for Re-Election,” September 19, 1956, in “Eisenhower, Speeches (3),” Box 34, Clippings and Publications, RNC Files, DDEPL.

blocked the concept of a test-ban. America could show global leadership by unilaterally stopping testing and then use the political capital to leverage Soviet compliance with inspections.<sup>70</sup> Although he was advised that the issue did not poll well, he persisted. Snapping at one advisor, he informed them: “There are worse things that can happen to a man than losing an election.”<sup>71</sup>

As a result, Stevenson forestalled the small gains in polling that he made following the Democratic Convention and ran a consistently losing campaign throughout the general election. As the chairman of the DNC, Stephen Mitchell, would later say: “To my mind [discussion of the hydrogen bomb] was the only example of the criticism that ‘Stevenson talks over the heads of people.’ I don’t think most of us knew what he was talking about and the dreadful importance of the issue....”<sup>72</sup> John F. Kennedy had a similar assessment in his personal review of the 1956 election. He felt that the “H-Bomb [issue was] not fully understood.”<sup>73</sup> The subject only fed a resurgence of the “egghead” critique from the 1952 campaign, and again Stevenson fell into old habits. In an unsigned letter to the editor of the *Chicago Daily News* after the election, “E.J.” observes that Stevenson’s problem was that he “tried to force people to think about the issues and problems of our time.” Speaking to the malaise of the era, the letter continues: “The majority of people don’t want to think and they resent anyone who tries to force them to do so.... They scornfully call an intellectual an ‘egghead’ and return to the problem of deciding whether they can stand to drive their

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<sup>70</sup> Brown, 203-204

<sup>71</sup> Newton Minow, “Marching to the Beat of Mankind,” in *As We Knew Adlai*, edited by Edward P. Doyle (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 185.

<sup>72</sup> Stephen A. Mitchell, “Adlai’s Amateurs,” in *As We Knew Adlai*, edited by Edward P. Doyle (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 91.

<sup>73</sup> “The Meaning of the 1956 Election,” in “1956, KS14-KS16,” Box 40, Series 12, JFK Personal Papers, JFKPL.



last year's car while their neighbour has a new one."<sup>74</sup>

The issue generated an avalanche of mail to both the Stevenson and Eisenhower campaigns. In the archival papers of both men, there are entire boxes of telegrams and letters that provide a detailed snapshot of the American public's views on the matter of nuclear weaponry. As expected, the response was mixed; however, the anti-nuclear letters, often from mothers, church groups, and scientists, were more plentiful and passionate.<sup>75</sup> Many Americans were concerned specifically about the effects of radiation, especially nuclear fission by-product Strontium-90, on the planet's health.<sup>76</sup> To put public fears into perspective, roughly 28% of Americans favoured Stevenson's calls for a unilateral test ban, while 42% favoured a multilateral ban. The position did not enjoy majority support, but a strong minority of Americans favoured some form of a test ban.<sup>77</sup>

The letters most relevant to this study are those that made their case in gendered terms. For example, Edna Greig wrote to Stevenson about her friend who was so disturbed by the discussion of the hydrogen bomb that she struggled to sleep. Edna, in turn, expressed worry about the president's approach to nuclear weapons. Eisenhower, she felt, was "encouraging us to lapse back into childhood when they told us not to worry, that we could

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<sup>74</sup> Clipping, "Ike's Victory Intellectual Defeat," in "Newsclippings," Folder 4, Box 278, Series 4.2, MC-124, MML.

<sup>75</sup> For example, Esther Gayman of Seward, Illinois writes to Stevenson in her capacity as mother of two small children. She supports the test ban and plans to vote for him, but she worries about the continued arms race as the United States and the Soviet Union keep building more destructive bombs. Meanwhile, a letter from Z.B. Greene asks Stevenson why the dangers of atomic testing are being downplayed, especially when the fishermen of the *Lucky Dragon* had to be hospitalized (Folder 4, Box 260, MC-124). Wes Barton wrote to Eisenhower and attached a clipping from the *Chicago Tribune* which observes that soil tests in Illinois and Wisconsin in the past two years have shown doubling and tripling levels of Strontium-90. He asks, "haven't enough informed specialists brought out the fact that these tests are going to kill the American people from radiation, one way or another, to have you call a halt to this crazy monkey business?" (Folder 155-B, Box 1215, General File, DDEPL).

<sup>76</sup> Brown, 202.

<sup>77</sup> Eugene Rosi, "Mass and Attentive Opinion on Nuclear Weapons Test and Fallout," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (1965): 283.

leave everything up to them.”<sup>78</sup> The nod to paternalistic governance here is interesting, as is Edna’s understanding that it was not working; the world was getting more dangerous anyways. Meanwhile, a letter from Janice Holland to Eisenhower, which she also sent to the *New York Times*, criticized the Republican campaign’s unwillingness to deal with the issue of increasingly dangerous weapons. “We are expected to be satisfied,” she said, “with the Great White Father’s assurances that this is ‘not a subject for detailed public discussion.’ This benign, ‘Don’t worry, kiddos. Just go on up to bed and daddy will take care of everything,’ is the death knell of democracy.”<sup>79</sup> Again, the father-as-leader stereotype emerges, with the same frustration about being told to trust in government.

The urgency to many of these letters, in part, comes from the geopolitical backdrop to the campaign. In July 1956, President Nasser seized control of the Suez Canal in Egypt while Eisenhower was recovering from bowel surgery. The nationalization of the waterway was retaliation for the Americans cutting funding for the Aswan Dam Project. Just a week before the American election, Israel, followed by their British and French co-conspirators, moved to regain control of the canal. Meanwhile, Hungary was facing an anti-communist rebellion centred in Budapest. It had intensified to the point that the Soviet Union dispatched military units to disperse protestors and restore order. Stevenson criticized both these events as a “catastrophic failure” in Eisenhower’s foreign policy and leadership. Yet again, on October 31<sup>st</sup>, the president was forced to go on television to reassure a troubled nation, just before the election, that these events were not the start of World War Three.<sup>80</sup>

Part of the problem for Stevenson was that in the final weeks of the campaign, the

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<sup>78</sup> Letter from Edna Greig, October 26, 1956, Folder 4, Box 260, Series 4.2, MC-124, MML.

<sup>79</sup> Letter from Janice Holland, October 13, 1956, in “Sept. to Date 1956 (1), Box 1215, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL.

<sup>80</sup> Hitchcock, 314-332; Brown, 170-72.

Democrats had not positioned themselves to take advantage of the geopolitical moment. Stevenson had done little to offer a concrete *alternative* foreign policy, instead choosing to attack Eisenhower's health and spend any political capital he had on pushing for a test ban. This strategy left the campaign blindsided by the events in Egypt and Hungary, and with little room to maneuver. Bevan Sewell points out that rather than distinguish themselves from Eisenhower's foreign policy, the Democrats merely offered criticisms and tried to project an image of intellectual and moral superiority.<sup>81</sup> This is borne out by the fact that in the final week, partially out of a desire not to contradict administration efforts, Stevenson's only suggestion was that the Republicans should have acted *sooner*. In one of his final campaign speeches, on the eve of the election, Stevenson criticized Eisenhower for playing golf during major events along the path to conflict, including the British rejection on August 11<sup>th</sup> of a Suez conference.<sup>82</sup> It was his final attempt to highlight Eisenhower as a part-time president, unable to take on the strenuous duties full time. Further, he bluntly reminded voters on television the night before the election that "a Republican victory tomorrow would mean that Richard M. Nixon would probably be president within the next four years.... I recoil at the prospect of Mr. Nixon... as guardian of the hydrogen bomb...."<sup>83</sup>

As the ballots were counted on election night, Eisenhower split his focus between international crises and the draft of his victory speech — there was no need for a concession. Eisenhower won 457 Electoral College votes to Stevenson's 73, a slightly more commanding win than four years prior. The Republican ticket won roughly 35.5 million

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<sup>81</sup> Broadwater, 171-73; Sewell, "Political Perils," 625.

<sup>82</sup> Brown, 170-71; Broadwater, 171; Davis, 347.

<sup>83</sup> Stevenson, *Papers of Adlai Stevenson*, Vol. VI, 324

votes to the Democrat's 26 million. Stevenson's strength remained concentrated in the South, although Eisenhower managed to pick up Kentucky, Louisiana, and West Virginia. In turn, Stevenson picked up Missouri.<sup>84</sup> A study by The Brookings Institute following the 1956 campaign found that any remote chance Stevenson and the Democrats had of succeeding in the election was taken away by the situation in Hungary and the crisis in Egypt.<sup>85</sup>

As the *New York Post* observed the morning after the 1956 election, it was Eisenhower's "personality" that again carried him to the presidency, rather than any specific set of policies or programs. As proof of this, the paper pointed out that many congressional and gubernatorial Republican candidates were not successful riding on his coattails. This was attributed, in part, to the right-wing candidates the party generally fielded in comparison to Eisenhower's moderate positions.<sup>86</sup> As Secretary of Labour Arthur Larson later remembered, while Eisenhower's apolitical nature appealed to a wide swath of the American electorate, he failed in expanding the Republican base by the end of his two terms. He could not replicate Franklin D. Roosevelt's success in forging a lasting coalition based on a distinct set of policy proposals.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Broadwater, 171.

<sup>85</sup> Rodney M. Sievers, *The Last Puritan? Adlai Stevenson in American Politics* (Port Washington, NY: Associated Faculty Press, 1983), 89; While Gallup polling showed Eisenhower with a steady base of support around 61-63% from the beginning of 1956 until September, Stevenson had narrowed the race slightly during the general election. Polls in September had 52% for Eisenhower and 40-41% for Stevenson. An internal Stevenson campaign poll, from October 24, 1956 showed the gap had narrowed further, with 44% support for Eisenhower to 37% support for Stevenson (Folder 7, Box 280, MC-124, MML). Many during the Suez Crisis appeared to have moved away from Eisenhower and into the undecided column. Just before the election, however, Gallup shows that support again coalescing around Eisenhower, at 59% to Stevenson's 40%. For more information on Gallup polls, see "Gallup Presidential Election Trial-Heat Trends, 1936-2008," Gallup, accessed May 23, 2020, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/110548/gallup-presidential-election-trial-heat-trends.aspx>

<sup>86</sup> "The Morning After, *New York Post*, November 7, 1956, Folder 4, Box 278, Series 4.2, MC-124, MML.

<sup>87</sup> Arthur Larson, "Eisenhower's World View," in *The Eisenhower Presidency: Eleven Intimate Perspectives of Dwight D. Eisenhower*, edited by Kenneth W. Thompson (New York: University Press of America, 1984), 46.

At the same time, the 1956 election also points to changing perceptions about the kind of man that voters wanted as a leader. Kennedy's popularity post-convention was perhaps the first inkling of this in federal politics. He gave dozens of speeches as a Stevenson surrogate during the general election; and received far more invitations than he could accept. While the campaign wanted him to focus his efforts on states where he would be most useful, one Stevenson aide remembers that: "[Kennedy] pretty much ran his own campaign." His popularity, often stronger than the candidate's, proved frustrating to Democratic headquarters.<sup>88</sup> Following Stevenson's loss in November, the young senator quickly turned his sights towards 1960. When Stevenson ally and close friend Newton Minow reassured him in the spring of 1957 that he would be a shoo-in for vice president in three years, Kennedy responded incredulously: "Vice President? Newt, I'm going to run for president."<sup>89</sup>

### **The Canadian General Election of 1957**

In December 1956, the Progressive Conservative Party (PC) elected a new leader to replace the ailing George Drew. John Diefenbaker was a front-bench MP who had previously run for the leadership twice, losing to John Bracken and then to Drew.<sup>90</sup> Raised in Saskatchewan, he represented a sharp break from the Ontario-Quebec dominance of Canada's two main political parties. His parents, William and Mary, descended from German immigrants and Scottish settlers to the Selkirk settlement in Red River, respectively. John was born in Neustadt, Ontario, in 1895. When he was eight years old, his family moved to a homestead north of Saskatoon. As opposition leader and then prime

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<sup>88</sup> Thomas Oliphant and Curtis Wilkie, *The Road to Camelot* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2017), 54.

<sup>89</sup> Oliphant and Wilkie, 66.

<sup>90</sup> Newman, 27-28.

minister, Diefenbaker leaned heavily into the imagery of growing up on the Canadian frontier. He was raised in a log cabin that he helped his father build, and he used these stories in marketing himself as a self-made man.<sup>91</sup> As one piece of campaign literature from 1957 put it, “[Diefenbaker] knew what it was to break land on the virgin prairie and haul a first crop.”<sup>92</sup> A defence attorney by trade, Diefenbaker was elected to represent Lake Centre by 280 votes in the 1940 election. He soon gained a reputation as a vocal critic of the longstanding Liberal government and in 1952 his seat was redistricted by the government in an effort to defeat him. A neighbouring riding in Saskatchewan, Prince Albert, coalesced around their native son to return him to Ottawa.<sup>93</sup>

While the St. Laurent government did try to get rid of Diefenbaker, it would be a mistake to say that they feared him. If anything, the Liberal Party felt that Diefenbaker was a gift when he was elected as Leader of Opposition. As St. Laurent confidant and biographer J.W. Pickersgill observed, top Liberals felt that he was too histrionic to appeal to voters. As the prime minister observed privately, “it’s not enough to win a decision of not guilty in running the country,” deriding Diefenbaker’s lack of experience.<sup>94</sup> Even many Progressive Conservative MPs saw their new leader as an “interim” figure who would lose the upcoming election. At best, they felt he could help the party gain some seats in the West before handing the reins over to a traditional PC leader. He was to be a “caretaker of the party.”<sup>95</sup> Diefenbaker was seen as too temperamental and too progressive. He was, as

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<sup>91</sup> Denis Smith, *Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker* (Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter, and Ross, 1995), 1-5; Patrick Nicholson, *Vision and Indecision* (Don Mills, ON: Longmans, 1968), 16-19, 36.

<sup>92</sup> Pamphlet, “John Diefenbaker,” in “Election Campaign Material,” Box 193, Series VII/A, John G. Diefenbaker Papers (MG 01), Diefenbaker Centre, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK.

<sup>93</sup> Gordon Donaldson, *Eighteen Men: The Prime Ministers of Canada* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1985), 188; Smith, 108-109, 191-92.

<sup>94</sup> Thomson, 493-94; Pickersgill, *My Years With Louis St. Laurent*, 323.

<sup>95</sup> Summary of Peter Stursberg’s column in the *Toronto Star* on December 13, 1956, in “Newspaper

biographer Denis Smith put it, a “Rogue Tory.”<sup>96</sup>

A few major issues defined the 1957 campaign. Canada was in a period of economic growth and the standard of living had improved for many. This created two problems. There were large sections of lower-income Canadians who felt that they were being left behind. Additionally, those who were more affluent found that the materialism of the fifties left them looking for something more. They wanted a larger purpose. Into this void, Diefenbaker and the Progressive Conservatives spoke of what they would *do* for people, while St. Laurent and the Liberals relied heavily on highlighting what they had *done*. For the Liberals, it was a tactic that worked in the last two elections. Why change it?<sup>97</sup> Diefenbaker, meanwhile, worked to depict St. Laurent’s Liberal Party as old and tired, lacking the vitality many felt they too were missing. He also managed to tap into the nation’s ever-present anti-American inclinations and turn the conversation towards self-assertion and independence. Although seemingly incongruent, it is interesting how well appealing to personal and national individualism worked in conjunction. The same way that modernity and a consumer-driven society was felt to be eroding the agency of men, the influence of the United States over Canada perceived as eroding the agency of the state during the Cold War.

Progressive Conservative Party campaign literature focused on “restoring the supremacy of the people in Parliament,” attacking the Liberals for their use of cloture during the pipeline debate. It promised to strengthen Canada’s trade relationship with the Commonwealth and proposed to shift a portion the nation’s trade away from the U.S.

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Summaries, 1956,” Box 9, Series XIV/D, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>96</sup> Smith, 214-215.

<sup>97</sup> Newman, 49.

Massive tax reductions were also highlighted, with the assertion that, on average, Canadian families were overtaxed \$120 a year by a federal government running a surplus. Nor were the Liberals supposedly using this revenue to adequately increase social security benefits, such as old-age pensions and veterans' allowances, which were not keeping pace with inflation.<sup>98</sup> Instead, the PCs said, the government provided aid to Trans-Canada Pipeline Ltd., which was 85% American-owned. It was Texas oil tycoons who stood to profit heavily from the completed pipeline.<sup>99</sup> It is not hard to see how the picture became one of a government beholden to American interests, with little sympathy for the common man.

The Suez Crisis in October and November of 1956 only further inflamed anti-American tensions. Though the Liberal government's peace plan, led by External Affairs Minister Lester Pearson, is hailed in the history books as a defining moment for Canada, the reality is more complex. St. Laurent's decision to not back the United Kingdom's invasion, aligning instead with Eisenhower's more neutral position, angered many Canadians. Nationwide, polling showed a divided populous with 43% favouring British and French action, and 40% opposed.<sup>100</sup> Diefenbaker sought to capitalize on this sentiment, and letters that poured into both parties give some idea of the anger. As one Vancouverite wrote, the Liberals "embrace Britain with one arm [and] they stab her with the other."<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Booklet, "A New National Policy," in "Election Campaign Material, 1957," Box 193, Series VII/A, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>99</sup> Smith, 201-203; Pamphlet, "Black Friday," in "Election Campaign Material, 1957," Box 193, Series VII/A, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre; For a more detailed account of the parliamentary debate please see Dale Thomson, *Louis St. Laurent: Canadian*, 420-31.

<sup>100</sup> Thomson, 483; John G. Diefenbaker, *The Personal Letters of a Public Man: The Family Letters of John G. Diefenbaker*, ed. Thad McIlroy (Toronto: Doubleday, 1985), 75.

<sup>101</sup> Letter from E. McGill, dated May 19, 1957, in "Elections, 1957," Box 35, Series XII/B, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre; Another Canadian expressed concern to Diefenbaker that Pearson's "cowardly" actions saw Canada line up with Russian interests, rather than "our own flesh and blood." Meanwhile, St. Laurent got his own share of critical letters. Mrs. Jessie Shaw wrote to the prime minister that the Liberal approach to the Suez Crisis was "spineless." She caustically asked if the Canadian people were "expected to change into jellyfish[?]" Sources: W.J. Deadman, November 21, 1957, in "Congratulations, 1957," Box 93, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre; Mrs. Jesse Shaw, July 11, 1956, in "Intervention -



Frustration then reached a fever pitch after the suicide of Canada's Ambassador to Egypt, Herbert Norman, the following spring. The ambassador had been previously investigated by the United States Senate in 1950, for communist proclivities during his service for External Affairs in Tokyo. Following the Suez Crisis, the Subcommittee on Internal Security reopened the investigation.<sup>102</sup> The Americans were concerned that the Canadian Ambassador was too close to the Soviet-sympathetic Egyptian leader.<sup>103</sup> Rather than face another investigation, he jumped to his death. Again, the letters poured in. Many condemned what was seen as interference by the United States in Canadian affairs. One writer asked what right the U.S. Senate had to "slander a person of another nation," while an unsigned letter from a "World War Two veteran" insisted that it was "murder."<sup>104</sup>

As John English observes, on the campaign trail "the American alliance seemed less beneficent; Liberal paternalism less benevolent; and the charm of compromise less attractive." Still, even though Canadians were looking for change, Diefenbaker was a hard sell. At the drop of the writ, polling put the Liberals at 46.8% support to the Conservative's 32.9%.<sup>105</sup> The election itself became another battle of personalities. As one young Liberal staffer confidently stated at the time: "St. Laurent will be seventy per cent of the campaign.

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Suez," Box 219, Louis St. Laurent Fonds (MG26-L), Library Archives Canada (LAC), Ottawa, ON.

<sup>102</sup> Smith, 219; Donald Barry, "Cleared or Covered Up - The Department of External Affairs Investigations of Herbert Norman," *International Journal* 66, no. 1 (Winter 2010-11): 147-48; Norman's name had been found in the notebook of a Queen's professor of mathematics, Israel Halperin, during an offshoot of the Gouzenko investigation. Norman was interviewed by the RCMP in 1950 and admitted to associations with radical leftists in his days as a student at the University of Toronto and Cambridge. However, he denied membership or affiliation with the Communist Party. He came under scrutiny again by the RCMP in 1952, following revelations that he had been part of a "communist study group" at Columbia University. Though twice cleared by the RCMP, suspicion by the FBI and the U.S. Congress never fully disappeared. Following the height of the Suez Crisis, during peace negotiations at the UN, concern about Norman was revived by the United States Congress (Barry, 149-57).

<sup>103</sup> Barry, 148-49, 153-57.

<sup>104</sup> Letter from A.T. McFarlane, dated April 19th, 1957; Letter from a "Veteran World War II," n.d.; both found in "Egypt Ambassador Vol. 2, 1957," Box 179, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>105</sup> English, 183-85.

What do we need a program for if we have him?”<sup>106</sup> Meanwhile, the Progressive Conservatives took a page out of the Liberal playbook and centred their campaign on Diefenbaker. They ran under the slogan: “It’s Time For A Diefenbaker Government.” While covering the opening of the campaign at Massey Hall, the *Toronto Star* noticed that among the large photos of the leader and placards stating: “We’ll Win With John,” the words “Progressive Conservative” were conspicuously absent.<sup>107</sup> Meanwhile, candidates were urged to utilize Diefenbaker’s name as much as possible, along with his image in campaign offices and literature to constituents. Their leader, noted a candidate manual, had “wide appeal to Canadians in all walks of life. [Diefenbaker] is identified with the welfare of the common man.”<sup>108</sup>

The issue for the Liberals was that next to Diefenbaker, in biographer Denis Smith’s opinion, the prime minister looked “old-fashioned, quaint, decrepit, [and] tired.” By comparison, Diefenbaker “came to symbolize the evangelistic reformer thundering from the platform as from the pulpit, decrying the sin of pride, offering leadership on the way to the promised land.”<sup>109</sup> While this could be brushed off as hagiographical prose, Diefenbaker’s opening campaign oratory spoke of a “date with destiny.” He urged those in the audience to “throw off the ‘arrogant’ yoke of the Liberals.” He talked of the need to “return to the vision of the nation-builders who made Confederation” and derided the policies of the “ivory tower boys,” getting a job in at effeminate intellectualism of the civil

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<sup>106</sup> Thomson, 354, 498.

<sup>107</sup> Mark Harrison, “Campaign Opens To Lead Tories,” *Toronto Star*, April 26, 1957, in Scrapbook #14, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>108</sup> Booklet, “Advertising and Publicity: Hints for Candidates,” in “Election Campaign Material,” Box 193, Series VII/A, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>109</sup> Smith, 218.

service. He offered himself to Canadians as a study in contrast.<sup>110</sup> The agenda that he outlined for the campaign's six weeks was a gruelling one. He covered 30,000 miles. Diefenbaker often ended the day hundreds of miles from where he began. According to the *Globe and Mail*, it was an attempt to highlight "the fresh and vigorous leadership" he offered Canadians.<sup>111</sup> The itinerary sought to run rings around the ageing prime minister, who was used to a leisurely schedule of greeting children at train stops.

St. Laurent began his campaign, yet again, with a Western tour. At his opening rally in Winnipeg, the prime minister stressed that the Liberals had provided Canadians with prosperity over the last twenty-two years. He told the audience that his party was best positioned to continue this economic growth. He cautioned that the Progressive Conservatives could not increase social services and also cut taxes. In contrast to Diefenbaker's opening rally at Massey Hall, the *Toronto Telegram* observed a "lack of sparkle" to the prime minister's address. In fairness, it stressed that St. Laurent had received a death threat that same day through the *Winnipeg Free Press*. The unidentified writer accused his government of "selling this country to the U.S.A." and observed that: "When I kill the Prime Minister, in the eyes of God I will be doing my duty to this country.... I was told to kill the enemy of the state." While dismissed by St. Laurent as a crank letter, it is an extreme example that represents the restlessness many in the country were feeling.<sup>112</sup>

The Western tour was an effort to try and shore up Liberal support in Diefenbaker's

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<sup>110</sup> Mark Harrison, "Campaign Opens To Lead Tories," *Toronto Star*, April 26, 1957, in Scrapbook #14, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre; For full speech, please see: "Major Campaign Speech No. 1," Massey Hall, Toronto, April 25, 1957, "The Federal Elections of 1957 and 1958," Online Exhibit, *Diefenbaker Centre*, accessed May 2021, [https://diefenbaker.usask.ca/documents/online-exhibits/1957-1958-elections/campaign\\_speech\\_1957.pdf](https://diefenbaker.usask.ca/documents/online-exhibits/1957-1958-elections/campaign_speech_1957.pdf)

<sup>111</sup> "This Pace Can Kill," *Globe and Mail*, April 25, 1957, in Scrapbook #14, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>112</sup> "Let Well Enough Alone Says PM," *Ottawa Journal*, April 30, 1957; and Allan Kent, "No Kick In Kickoff to PM's Campaign," *Toronto Telegram*, April 30, 1957; in "GE - Aug 1955 - May 1957," Box 395, MG26-L, LAC.

home territory, given the growing strength of the Progressive Conservatives in Ontario and the Maritimes. However, after only a few days on the trail, the *Sudbury Star* observed that the campaign was shaping up to be one of “youth vs. age.” This was despite the fact that Diefenbaker was sixty-one and St. Laurent was now seventy-five. Yet, as the *Star* notes, St. Laurent was “not showing the vigor of past campaigns.”<sup>113</sup> This allowed the Progressive Conservatives to present a narrative of vitality and renewal. The *Calgary Herald* similarly felt that while the PM got a “friendly, cordial reception everywhere... he started no fires in the grassroots.”<sup>114</sup>

Meanwhile, the *Globe and Mail* asked that for all the attempts at appealing to parents by charming their children, what had “Uncle Louis” St. Laurent actually *done* for parents? His \$1 increase to the family allowance was negated in income tax, and while families received a \$150 allowance per child, those in the UK got roughly twice that with half the cost of living as Canadians.<sup>115</sup> A similar benevolent paternalism was lacking, Diefenbaker pointed out, in increasing the Old Age Pension from \$40 to \$46 a month. This worked out to 20 cents a day.<sup>116</sup> One letter to the prime minister labelled it a “slap in the face to our senior citizens,” while another pensioner observed that his care and living costs amounted to \$80 a month.<sup>117</sup> Conservatives promised an increase. Shortly after the election, they amended the Old Age Security Act and raised pensions by another nine

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<sup>113</sup> Arthur Blakely, “The Election, Day by Day,” *Montreal Gazette*, May 6, 1957; and “Youth vs. Age,” *Sudbury Star*, May 2, 1957; both in “GE, May 2-6, 1957,” Box 395, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>114</sup> Douglas Leiterman, “PM Didn’t Dazzle The West,” *Calgary Herald*, May 9, 1957, in “GE, May 7-14, 1957,” Box 395, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>115</sup> “The Pied Piper of Ottawa,” *Globe and Mail*, May 8, 1957, in “GE, May 7-14, 1957,” Box 395, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>116</sup> “Diefenbaker Asks For P.E.I. Votes,” *Halifax Chronicle*, April 30, 1957, in Scrapbook #14, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>117</sup> Letter from [sic] to Louis St. Laurent, dated May 20, 1957; and Letter from TE Jones, dated May 23, 1957; both in “Election General,” Box 179, MG26-L, LAC, Ottawa, ON.

dollars, to \$55 a month.<sup>118</sup>

As Chapter Two explained, it was as early as 1954 that the “Uncle Louis” image had begun losing its charm. Journalist Bruce Hutchinson noted around that time the “tired look of the government and its leader.”<sup>119</sup> Greg Donaghy observes that following the prime minister’s world tour in February and March 1954, St. Laurent’s exhaustion with his position began to show. He would recover, but as Donaghy discusses, “bouts of exhaustion and depression... plagued the last years of his premiership.”<sup>120</sup> There are indications that St. Laurent experienced one of these ‘bouts’ on the campaign trail in 1957. The *Winnipeg Tribune*, near the end of the campaign, observed that the “Uncle Louis” image was not working this time around. The prime minister came across as a man who was “good enough to take time out from his duties at Ottawa to go through the formality of being re-elected.”<sup>121</sup> Peter Stursberg later reflected in *Maclean’s* that over time, “[St. Laurent] had become more patriarchal than avuncular, a sort of Victorian grandpapa, who did not believe that the serious and dignified... should be mixed up with wheeling and dealing and putting on [of political] circuses.”<sup>122</sup>

It is no doubt that part of the prime minister’s exhaustion stemmed from the challenge that Diefenbaker presented. A cartoon in *Maclean’s* during the contest depicts St. Laurent dreaming of the 1953 Opposition. They are represented by a crying baby boy that “Uncle Louis” is spanking over his knee. By comparison, the 1957 Opposition is

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<sup>118</sup> “Calendar of Events and Accomplishments, June 1957 to February 1958,” in “Elections General - 1957 to Jan 1958,” Box 94, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>119</sup> Smith, 200.

<sup>120</sup> Greg Donaghy, “A Voyage of Discovery: St-Laurent’s World Tour of 1954,” in *The Unexpected Louis St. Laurent*, ed. Patrice Dutil (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2020), 478-79.

<sup>121</sup> “Ducking the Real Issues,” *Winnipeg Tribune*, May 27, 1957, in “EF - 1957,” Box 13, Series XII/A, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>122</sup> Peter Stursberg, “The Day of the Great Upset,” *Saturday Night*, February 3, 1962, in “Election Clippings, 1962,” Box 14, Series XII/A, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

shown as grown into a hulking, menacing young man.<sup>123</sup> A satirical piece, it speaks volumes about the evolution of masculinity politics between the elections of 1953 and 1957. The paternalistic image that leaned heavily on St. Laurent's fondness for children and his position as a family man, was no longer sufficient and indeed was faltering. Back then, he had been able to chide the Opposition, the same way he chided children during the 1953 election. His paternalism had been all encompassing. Now, in 1957, this menacing figure the cartoon St. Laurent is dreaming of, stands representative of the threat Diefenbaker poses, as well as the threat of a new, vigorous hegemonic variant of masculinity. The cartoon inadvertently captures the process of hegemonic disruption that Connell addresses.

By 1957 televisions had permeated Canadian homes to the degree that the medium finally played a major role in the election. By January 1957, roughly 70% of Canadian households reported having a television.<sup>124</sup> Diefenbaker sought to make use of this new broadcast tool. As a memo from advertising man turned advisor Dalton Camp observed in February 1957: "The Liberals will use television in the 'commercial sense,' since it is apparent I believe[,] even to them[,] that the Prime Minister does not like the medium. It affords us the opportunity for a certain advantage."<sup>125</sup> What Camp meant was that when St. Laurent did go on television, it was often while speaking to Canadians from a desk. He only did this three times, and in all instances, he came off stilted, awkward, and barely looked at the camera. For his first broadcast, he resisted makeup and read from his notes.

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<sup>123</sup> Blair Fraser, "Backstage At Ottawa," *Maclean's*, in "Election Clippings, May to August 1957," Box 14, Series XII/A, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre, Saskatoon, SK.

<sup>124</sup> Peter Stursberg, *Diefenbaker: Leadership Gained, 1956-62* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 53; See also "Television Ownership," January 1957, Poll #255, Gallup Canada, Inc., Public Opinion Polls, ODESI, Gallup, <http://odesi1.scholarsportal.info/webview/>.

<sup>125</sup> Allan Levine, *Scrum Wars: The Prime Ministers and the Media*, (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1993), 204.

Eventually, he was convinced to wear a little makeup and use a teleprompter. J.W. Pickersgill attached a notation to the final text of his third address confirming this fact. Unfortunately, as Dale Thomson recounts in his biography, the Prime Minister then started the address by telling the Canadian people about the makeup and the teleprompter. He felt that any other course of action would have been deceitful.<sup>126</sup>

By comparison, as media scholar Paul Rutherford observes: “Diefenbaker was the country’s first master of the art of politics in the dawning age of television [in Canada].” However, his embrace of television should not be mistaken for the fact that he was comfortable with the medium. Rather, he saw its benefits to bypass the press core and take his message directly into the homes of Canadians.<sup>127</sup> Diefenbaker worked with cameramen, directors, writers, and ad-men like Dalton Camp to navigate the new medium. This ended up creating a rather “relaxed, and intimate” demeanour when he brought himself into people’s homes, in contrast to the fiery orator from the campaign trail.<sup>128</sup> The Progressive Conservative campaign also put Diefenbaker front and centre as the party’s sole representative on television. By comparison, the Liberals relied on the three broadcasts from St. Laurent, then utilized Cabinet Ministers who similarly left “the impression that they are cogs in a great, dull, grey political organization, totally devoid of colour or imagination.” This commentary, taken from the *Winnipeg Free Press*, continues: “Whoever is advising the Liberal Party on its national television campaign must be a loyal and devoted Conservative.”<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Thomson, 512; For notations on speeches see: “First National Broadcast: April 29, 1957,” in Box 293; “Second National Broadcast: May 20, 1957,” in Box 295; “Third National Broadcast: June 5, 1957,” in Box 297; all found in MG26-L, LAC. Please note only the first and third speeches contain notations on makeup and a teleprompter.

<sup>127</sup> Levine, 204, 215.

<sup>128</sup> Milton Mackaye, “Canada’s Amazing Prime Minister,” *Saturday Evening Post*, August 30, 1958.

<sup>129</sup> Editorial from the *Winnipeg Free Press*, republished as “Liberals Strike Unhappy Medium,” in the

As the campaign progressed into the final weeks of May 1957, the patrician image the Liberals attempted to hold onto ultimately faltered and cracked. The prime minister's exhaustion and frustration was prone to bubble to the surface. Covering an event in Port Hope on May 21<sup>st</sup>, one paper observed that "the PM's kissing trail starts to wear thin." As the prime minister sat surrounded by young children, telling them of Canada's history, he became visibly annoyed. The article described the scene:

A couple of them sat at his feet pulling his trouser cuffs. Two others bobbed up in front of the microphones and stuck old box cameras in his face. Six or seven tore up and down the platform playing tag behind him... [One child] on the platform yelled to others down in the crowd.

Sighing, the prime minister eventually lost his patience and snapped that it was too bad the children did not want to hear about their nation's history because: "It's going to be yours to worry about an awful lot longer than it's going to be mine."<sup>130</sup>

It was around the same time as this event that the *Ottawa Journal* observed that St. Laurent was forced to take his campaign "out of the nursery." Now, he was forced to answer Diefenbaker's charges. The Liberal approach had been to harness onto the issue of provincial equalization payments to warn Canadians that Diefenbaker would put Ontario's prosperity first at the expense of the nation.<sup>131</sup> The Progressive Conservative platform was against equalization payments, which Diefenbaker felt divided provinces into "haves" and "have nots." The issue at hand was that more populous provinces were receiving less than their fair share of national contributions based on population. With the equalization system scrapped, provinces like Ontario and Quebec would receive more, \$118 million and \$35

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*Globe and Mail*, May 18, 1957.

<sup>130</sup> Richard Jackson, "PM's Kissing Trail Starts to Wear Thin," *Sudbury Star*, May 22, 1957, in "GE, May 15 - June 5, 1957," Box 395, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>131</sup> "What Mr. St. Laurent is Saying," *Ottawa Journal*, May 23, 1956, in "Clippings, May - Aug 1957," Box 14, Series XII/A, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.



million, respectively. Alberta and BC would similarly benefit, while smaller, less populous provinces like Diefenbaker's own Saskatchewan would see a reduction in federal funds.<sup>132</sup> In an attempt to offset coming losses in Ontario, the Liberals sought to depict Diefenbaker as in cahoots or under the control of Ontario premier Leslie Frost.

It was a last-ditch effort which one paper called a "hate-Ontario" campaign.<sup>133</sup> George Hees, a Diefenbaker surrogate, argued that St. Laurent had become "a petulant, irritable old man" during the campaign, ready to disrupt the nation when his "Uncle Louis" tactics faltered. "The mythological, benign old gentleman disappeared," Hees observed, and "reacted like a fading beauty queen confronted by a younger, more fascinating rival."<sup>134</sup> Interesting here, along with the *Ottawa Journal's* coverage of "Uncle Louis" being forced to leave the nurse, is that there is a newfound weakness attributed to St. Laurent. This was not present in commentary on his image in 1949 and 1953. His age and paternalism had come to be seen as feeble, almost feminine, against the more rugged version of masculinity that was being presented by Diefenbaker. The prime minister was the embodiment of the weakness that many Canadian men feared in themselves.

Moving into the final week of the campaign, things did not improve in regards to St. Laurent's image. The prime minister, tired of taking questions from reporters, snapped at one journalist that he was too "gullible" when he asked him to respond to a statement Diefenbaker recently made.<sup>135</sup> Then, the penultimate Liberal rally at Maple Leaf Gardens in Toronto ended "with a bang." That is, as Richard Jackson of the *Ottawa Journal*

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<sup>132</sup> "Why Should We Vote For You," *Maclean's*, June 8, 1957; and "Not Worth The High Cost," *Regina Leader Post*, May 24, 1957; both in "Clippings, May - Aug 1957," Box 14, Series XII/A, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>133</sup> Clipping, "Ducking the Real Issues," *Winnipeg Tribune*, May 27, 1957, in "EF- 1957," Box 13, Series XII/A, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>134</sup> "Creating Disunity: Hees Calls St. Laurent Petulant Old Man," *Globe and Mail*, June 5, 1957.

<sup>135</sup> "Mr. St. Laurent and the Press," *Globe and Mail*, June 8, 1957.

clarified, “the bang of a boy’s head on the cement floor of [the Gardens].” The incident, which made front-page headlines across the country the following morning, saw teenager William Hatton attempt to rush the stage. He had been heckling the prime minister with a group of friends, sporting “I Like John” buttons. It is unclear why the youth tried to make his way to the stage, but he was stopped at the top of the stairs by Toronto/York Liberal president Vincent Regan. Regan’s attempt to block him led to Hatton falling backwards off the stage and onto the arena floor. Press cameras captured the prime minister in horrified shock for the front pages the following morning. Meanwhile, Philip Givens, an area candidate, wondered out loud: “How many votes do you think this is going to cost us?”<sup>136</sup> It is fair to say that when your reputation as a benign patriarch is part of your electoral strategy, it is effectively rendered useless by cracking a teenage boy’s skull on the pavement of a hockey arena.

Naturally, Diefenbaker and the Progressive Conservatives tried to capitalize on the incident in final campaign speeches. He observed that the incident was a metaphor for the government’s approach to voters who disagreed with their policies: “Shove them off the platform. If they break their necks, that’s just too bad.”<sup>137</sup> Nonetheless, the Liberals went into Election Day fairly confident in their victory. Final polls put Liberal support somewhere around 48% nationally, compared to 34% for the Progressive Conservatives. At the same time, polling showed the PCs anywhere between 45-47% support in Ontario, to 41-43% for the Liberals in the final weeks.<sup>138</sup> Against this, Liberal projections placed

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<sup>136</sup> Richard Jackson, “Liberal Official Shoves Youth Off Platform,” *Ottawa Journal*, June 8, 1957, in “GE - June 6-19, 1957,” Box 395, MG26-L, LAC; Nicholson, 50-51; Thomson, 516-17.

<sup>137</sup> John G. Diefenbaker, *One Canada: Years of Achievement, 1956-1962* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), 21.

<sup>138</sup> Gallup Polling for May 25, 1957 and June 8, 1957, both in “Elections 1957,” Box 268, Series VII/B, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

them at an “absolute minimum” of 140 seats, which would have allowed them to maintain a minority government. However, they anticipated holding onto 35 to 40 seats in Ontario, bringing their total somewhere just over the 147 seats needed for a majority. In contrast, the Progressive Conservatives felt that they could take somewhere near 65 of the 85 seats in Ontario, upsetting Liberal fortunes in the province.<sup>139</sup> Nonetheless, the Liberals were so confident of victory that they cancelled their final advertising push in the last week of the campaign. Liberal headquarters felt that it was a waste of money.<sup>140</sup> *Maclean's* election edition went to print before the election results were finalized and also felt a Liberal victory was assured. It was Canada's own “Dewey Beats Truman” moment, as the magazine declared: “For better or worse, we Canadians have once more elected one of the most powerful governments ever created.... We have given [the Liberal] government an almost unexampled vote of confidence, considering the length of its term in office.”<sup>141</sup>

J.W. Pickersgill, who spent election night with Louis St. Laurent, observes that the first sign that things were going wrong came from Halifax. There, relatively safe Liberal seats were falling into Conservative hands. Though the Liberals held their own in Quebec, they were decimated in Ontario. The final results saw 105 seats for the Liberals to 112 for the Progressive Conservatives, even though the Liberals narrowly won the popular vote by 40.9% to 38.9%. The balance of power fell to the right-wing Social Credit Party with 19 seats and the left-wing Cooperative Commonwealth Federation with 25 seats. Canadians would certainly face another election within a year.<sup>142</sup> In his memoirs, Diefenbaker

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<sup>139</sup> Robert Taylor, “See Liberal Victory ‘Absolute Minimum’ Of 140 Safe Seats,” *Toronto Star*, June 3, 1957, in “GE – May 15-16, 1957,” Box 395, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>140</sup> “Upset,” *Time*, June 24, 1957.

<sup>141</sup> “The Election and Democracy,” *Maclean's*, June 22, 1957.

<sup>142</sup> Pickersgill, *My Years With Louis St. Laurent*, 325; Regenstreif, *Diefenbaker Interlude*, 31

explains his thought process on the outcome of the election:

The Liberals stood on their record of economic stability, blind to the problems of structural maladjustment.... They were further caught in a web of their own weaving in that the problem of our massive trade imbalance was the direct result of their policies of integrating the Canadian economy with the United States.<sup>143</sup>

By comparison, Conservatives sought to offer “a policy of positive government, although not unnecessary government.” He based his approach on Macdonald’s National Policy, which was focused on resource development, with a protectionist approach that was Amerosceptic.<sup>144</sup> As such, the Americans braced themselves, and as U.S. Ambassador Livingston Merchant cabled the State Department, there would now be an “intensification of nationalistic feeling” on Canada’s part.<sup>145</sup>

In summarizing the 1957 election for the *Financial Post*, Bruce Hutchison observes that the Liberals lost because they were seen as uncaring to the common man. Despite a budget surplus, they refused to provide a sufficient increase in old age pensions or reduce taxes.<sup>146</sup> Milton Mackaye in the *Saturday Evening Post* looked back a year later, following Diefenbaker’s second win in 1958, and felt that St. Laurent represented a man of “Quebec’s seigneurial tradition” and he approached the Canadian electorate “like the chairman of the board of a large corporation making his annual report to stockholders.” Diefenbaker, by comparison, “exudes personal magnetism” and has an evangelical style that allows him to “belabor his opponents as Billy Graham belabors the devil.” It was this style that appealed

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<sup>143</sup> Diefenbaker, *Years of Achievement*, 15.

<sup>144</sup> Diefenbaker *Years of Achievement*, 15-16.

<sup>145</sup> Asa McKercher, "Dealing With Diefenbaker: Canada-U.S. Relations in 1958," *International Journal* 66, no. 4 (2011): 1044-45; The memorandum McKercher refers to can be found here: “Telegram From Embassy in Canada to the Department of State,” June 11, 1957, Office of the Historian, United States Department of State, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v27/d369>

<sup>146</sup> Bruce Hutchison, “The Governing Forces,” *Financial Post*, October 5, 1957, in “GE - 1957-58,” Box 93, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

to young voters and unlikely voters.<sup>147</sup>

Letters to St. Laurent following his defeat indicate that beyond the feeling that the government had been in too long, which most papers highlighted, the desire for his grandfatherly paternalism had also waned. Sgt. M.K. Zahn, currently deployed with the Royal Canadian Air Force (RCAF) in Europe, wrote to St. Laurent after the election stating that he felt the Liberals lost because of their overbearing manner. That they had become the “governors of the people” rather than a “government for the people.” Though he did not blame St. Laurent’s character, he felt his government had become too amenable to the Americans. Zahn viewed St. Laurent as a mouthpiece for Eisenhower. There was a joke, he said, among military members in the morning before coffee: “Well, I don’t know, maybe Ottawa hasn’t phoned Washington yet today to see if it’s alright for us to have coffee.”<sup>148</sup> A similar letter from H.L. Evans of Brantford, Ontario, observed that beyond a general perception that the Liberal Party had been in too long, Diefenbaker had a “dignified” manner. Evans was a lifelong Liberal, the great-grandchild of an Upper Canadian rebel who was jailed in 1837. Nevertheless, he observed, Diefenbaker had an appeal to him that George Drew lacked, and at least twenty of his Liberal friends and family members, he said, had planned to vote for the Progressive Conservatives this time around.<sup>149</sup>

In congratulations to Diefenbaker and in condolences to St. Laurent, some interesting patterns emerge in letters that do indicate a gendered aspect to the campaign. The language used interestingly depicts the incumbent government as weak and effete. The Liberals, including Louis St. Laurent and Lester B. Pearson, are often described as

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<sup>147</sup> Milton Mackaye, “Canada’s Amazing Prime Minister,” *Saturday Evening Post*, August 30, 1958

<sup>148</sup> Sgt. M.K. Zahn to PM, June 18, 1957, in “Congratulations and Tributes, 1957-58,” Box 244, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>149</sup> Letter from H.L. Evans, May 27, 1957, in, “Election General,” Box 179, MG26-L, LAC.

“cowardly,”<sup>150</sup> “pussyfooting,”<sup>151</sup> and “overbearing.”<sup>152</sup> The paternalism of “Uncle Louis” government had shifted in image from benevolent to something akin to a nanny-state, carrying all the overbearing connotations of “Momism.” The solution, in the opinion of Mrs. G.D. Stevens, was for the Liberal Party to recruit “a number of *young*, forward-looking men” that would inspire Canadians “because they are potential leaders.”<sup>153</sup> The now-defeated government represented the masculinity of an era gone by. This is why Diefenbaker is often referred to as “dynamic”<sup>154</sup> and the right man for the job because he possesses “extraordinary stamina” both “mentally” and “temperamentally.”<sup>155</sup> One woman, writing to Diefenbaker, noted that when she brought along a picture of the new prime minister to her doctor, he stated that “[Diefenbaker] is a *real* man.”<sup>156</sup>

Thus, the Canadian election of 1957 can be interpreted as representative of the start of a changing understanding of what constituted masculine leadership in North America. St. Laurent, who had been “Uncle Louis” to Canadians and granted massive majorities in the early years of the Cold War, was narrowly taken down by a party that was a fraction of the Liberals’ strength. Part of the answer can be found in Diefenbaker himself. He had a genuine populist appeal, with oratory that spoke of renewal and a forward-looking Canada. He appealed to the promise of the future, telling Canadians that they had “an appointment

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<sup>150</sup> Letter from W.J. Deadman, dated November 21, 1957, in “Congratulations, 1957,” Box 93, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>151</sup> “Canadians Move Right,” *Santa Ana Register*, July 3, 1957, in “Congratulations U.S.,” Box 93, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>152</sup> Letter from W.M. Macdonald, dated June 15, 1957, in “June 10-21, 1957,” Box 233, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>153</sup> Emphasis added; Letter from Mrs. G.D. Stevens, dated June 11, 1957, in “June 10-21, 1957,” Box 233, MG26-L, LAC.

<sup>154</sup> Letter from Tommy and Evelyn Christie, dated June 20, 1957, in “Congratulations BC, 1957,” Box 93, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>155</sup> Telegram from Murt Seymour, June 10, 1957, in “Congratulations ON, 1957,” Box 93, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>156</sup> Emphasis added; Letter from Nettie W. Martin, dated February 4, 1958, in “Government Elections - General - Feb. 1958,” Box 94, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

with destiny.” Finally, he drew on their wariness of the United States and St. Laurent’s reliance on Eisenhower by speaking of putting “Canada First.” He tapped into concerns about malaise and stagnation, offering himself as a leader who could renew Canadian’s sense of self, to an electorate that had grown tired of the status quo. St. Laurent’s became the embodiment of physical masculine decline that many Canadians were worried about, thus eroding the comfort of the “Uncle Louis” image. As Peter Newman observes, Diefenbaker would have “flounder[ed] before the political strength of Louis St. Laurent in the 1949 and 1953 campaigns” and was the right man at the right time.<sup>157</sup>

During the Suez Crisis, St. Laurent took a lot of flak for criticizing the power that nations like the United Kingdom, France, and the United States held at the UN. He stated that: “The era when the supermen of Europe could govern the whole world has and is coming pretty close to an end.” The prime minister was referencing the era of big powers and colonialism, but detractors took it as a repudiation of British actions during the Suez Crisis. It was a mistake that J.W. Pickersgill refers to as “fatal.”<sup>158</sup> José Igartua has another view: it represented the overconfidence of the entrenched Liberal government.<sup>159</sup> Indeed, in his address to the Progressive Conservative leadership convention of 1956, the premier of Nova Scotia, Robert Stanfield quipped that “the age of supermen is fast coming to a close,” but in reference to St. Laurent.<sup>160</sup> It is an interesting metaphor when applied to the style of leadership of politicians like St. Laurent and Eisenhower. The prime minister was correct, an era was coming to a close, though it is unlikely he thought it would be his own.

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<sup>157</sup> Newman, 5

<sup>158</sup> Pickersgill, *My Years With Louis St. Laurent*, 315; See also: “Canadians At Odds Over Suez,” *Manchester Guardian*, November 28, 1956.

<sup>159</sup> José Igartua, *The Other Quiet Revolution: National Identities in English Canada, 1945-71* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2006), 125

<sup>160</sup> Newman, 46.

## Conclusion

The change in the rhetoric surrounding the American presidential election of 1956 and the Canadian general election of 1957, makes it apparent that the voting public was beginning to question the type of men that should lead them. In part, this change was because the elections themselves took place against backdrop of larger societal concerns about the impact of modernity on masculinity. The ideal of atomic fatherhood of the early postwar era was utilized to provide comfort, reassurance, and stability to the people of the United States and Canada. The nuclear family became a bastion of stability. However, by the mid-1950s, fears about the effects of increasingly powerful nuclear tests were coupled with a geopolitical situation that seemed to list from crisis to crisis. Such instability undermined the peace, security, and protection that the paternalism offered to the public by Eisenhower and St. Laurent; as did emergent concerns about masculinity itself. Though the role of fatherhood and the nuclear family was not called into question, concerns were raised about an erosion of manhood through corporate jobs, suburban lifestyles, and modern convinces. As Robert Lindner wrote in his 1956 book *Must You Conform?*, “If anything can be said to characterize the time we are living in, it is the extreme tension that exists between the individual and society.”<sup>161</sup>

Adlai Stevenson in the United States failed to capitalize on the change in the public’s mood. Whether it was his inability to offer a dynamic vision for the country or his prefixed image of masculine softness is unclear. However, despite understanding that he needed to offer a less effete and more resolute, anti-intellectual, masculine image, he quickly fell into old patterns that failed to excite voters. As a result, the Democratic

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<sup>161</sup> Robert Lindner, *Must You Conform?* (New York: Grove Press, 1956), 149.



campaign attempted to strike at the heart (literally) of Eisenhower's paternalism by going after his age and illness. Even though Eisenhower was re-elected, largely because of his cult of personality, the fact that the 1956 election was surrounded by such concerns about health and a "part-time presidency" speaks to a latent desire for something different. Furthermore, Eisenhower's concern with a lack of young, capable men to take his place indicates that the president was aware of this changing mood. There was a shift coming in politics that the Republican Party needed to respond to. Indeed, throughout his second term, concern about malaise and stagnation only begins to grow. This sentiment is fuelled, in part, by what *Look* magazine defines in 1958 as the "Decline of the American Male."

The appeal of Senator John F. Kennedy in the 1956 election, despite his narrow loss to Estes Kefauver in the vice-presidential balloting, is another sign that the American people were beginning to seek a new type of masculine leadership. In his memoirs, Eisenhower observes that he felt a Lyndon Johnson-John Kennedy ticket in 1956 would have been a much more formidable challenger. Stevenson-Kefauver was "probably the weakest [ticket] they could have named."<sup>162</sup> It is more than coincidental that Eisenhower would see the vote-getting power of Johnson-Kennedy, the only thing being that he got the order on the ticket wrong. In the years between 1957 and 1960, as Kennedy built up his bid for the Democratic nomination, he played into continued concerns about social and masculine weakness. As he stated in one article: "Outside the walls of every nation that has grown fat and overly fond of itself has always lurked a lean and hungry enemy." The solution, he stated, lay in finding a renewed national purpose, that allowed Americans to leave their complacency behind and climb to the hilltop.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 11.

<sup>163</sup> "We Must Climb To The Hilltop," by Senator John F. Kennedy, in "Pamphlets and Highlights," Box

In Canada, the newly elected Progressive Conservative leader, John Diefenbaker, went into the 1957 election looking to make similar use of the era's uncertainty. While Canadians also reflected a certain concern about the impact of modernity on masculinity, there was an added layer to worries about the loss of individualism. The increasing permeation of American cultural media, especially newspapers and magazines, caused anxiety about Canadian individualism on a national level. Louis St. Laurent, who up until now had been seen as a benign fatherly presence, began to be seen as somewhat weak and far too compliant to Washington. Adding to this image problem was the fact that the then 75-year-old prime minister was prone to bouts of exhaustion and depression and seemed generally frustrated to have to seek a new mandate from the Canadian people. It allowed for the Diefenbaker campaign to play into his age and undercut the "Uncle Louis" image. Unlike Stevenson, however, Diefenbaker did not specifically attack St. Laurent's age. Rather, he ran a campaign that sought to contrast the prime minister's lack of vitality with his own. As one newspaper put it, referring to the Progressive Conservative leader's schedule: "this pace can kill."<sup>164</sup>

During the Canadian election, Diefenbaker leaned in heavily to growing concerns about individuality and applied them to the nation. He stoked fears about American investment in Canada, utilizing the Liberal government's Trans-Canada Pipeline debacle as a way to highlight a "Canada First" policy. He utilized a split Canadian population during the Suez Crisis to raise disquiet about the Liberal government consistently following American foreign-policy making decisions. Diefenbaker pulled the Progressive Conservative Party from the wilderness of the Canadian right-wing and reoriented them as

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1036, Series 15.03, Campaign Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKPL.

<sup>164</sup> "This Pace Can Kill," *Globe and Mail*, April 25, 1957, in Scrapbook #14, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

a moderate alternative, promising fiscal responsibility and an expansive social welfare net. He is commonly referred to as a populist, with evangelical zeal in newspapers and biographies. He sought to provide Canadians with a sense of destiny to pull them out of the malaise of the 1950s. He could get it done, he said, because as a self-made man, he knew what it took to succeed and had the vision and determination to take Canadians along with him.

It is no coincidence that there is a parallel between some of John F. Kennedy and John Diefenbaker's rhetoric. These two men would be the next figures to dominate politics on the North American continent, and they are representative of a new electoral frontier emerging. Somewhat in 1957, but more in seeking a majority mandate in 1958, Diefenbaker pushed what became known as his "New Frontier" policy. It involved resource development, northern expansion, and nation-building. He invoked tropes about Canada's Western frontier that date to the turn of the twentieth century. By the late 1950s, there was an appeal in the masculine certainty of the nineteenth century, an era when the frontiersman (like Diefenbaker's father) could build a destiny for himself and his family with his own hands. At a time when men were worried about becoming an "organization man," the frontier came to invoke heavy nostalgia. Diefenbaker's rhetoric bears a remarkably similar contrast to that which Senator John F. Kennedy would use two years later. The American frontier had closed, the era of settling the American West was over, so Kennedy pointed to personal development, a flexible military response, physical fitness, and looking to the stars as a way to remake society. He, too, more famously, referred to a "New Frontier."

## Chapter Four

### MEN OF DESTINY

*“We are face to face with our destiny and we must meet it with a high and resolute courage. For us is the life of action, of strenuous performance of duty; let us live in the harness, striving mightily; let us rather run the risk of wearing out than rusting out.”*<sup>1</sup>

*~ Theodore Roosevelt  
President of the United States, 1901-1909*

#### **Introduction**

On October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1957, the Soviet Union launched the first artificial spacecraft into orbit. Sputnik, which translates to “travelling companion,” was a low-orbit satellite that was rather unremarkable from a technological standpoint. What mattered was that the Soviet Union had a missile powerful enough to reach Earth’s orbit. The logical fallacy corresponding to this achievement was that if the Soviets could reach space, nowhere in the Western world was safe.<sup>2</sup> Theoretically, an Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) launched from Moscow would take only sixteen minutes to reach New York City, and the warning time afforded by planes carrying nuclear payloads would be reduced from hours down to mere moments by a missile-based delivery system. In reality, these missiles were still early research prototypes, with the possibility for distance but little hope for the accuracy needed in launching a warhead.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, as President Eisenhower observed in his memoirs, the mere existence of the satellite exposed an immediate “psychological vulnerability” in the West. Not only were there fears that the Soviets would launch a pre-

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Zwonitzer, *The Statesman and the Storyteller* (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books, 2016), 310; This quote is taken from his opening campaign speech for the governorship of New York in October 1898.

<sup>2</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, *Waging Peace, 1956-1961* (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 205; W.J. Rorabaugh, *The Real Making of the President: Kennedy, Nixon, and the 1960 Election* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2009), 22.

<sup>3</sup> Andrew Burtch, *Give Me Shelter: The Failure of Canada’s Cold War Civil Defence* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012), 111-12; Rorabaugh, 24.

emptive strike on the United States, but that Sputnik housed anything from intelligence gathering cameras to nuclear weapons.<sup>4</sup>

The presence of Sputnik in orbit, coupled with the failed American attempt to launch their own satellite in December 1957, contributed to the Democratic Party's line of attack on defence. Opponents leveraged growing public concern and highlighted the possibility of an ICBM "missile gap" against the Eisenhower administration.<sup>5</sup> Taking the lead from Senator Stuart Symington, John F. Kennedy first raised the issue in August 1958. He charged that the Eisenhower administration had placed budgetary considerations ahead of defence, and asserted that manned bombers and European Intermediate Range Ballistic Missiles (IRBMs) represented insufficient retaliatory power. Kennedy argued that it wasn't enough to simply deter when the Russians could destroy 85% percent of the United States' industrial power, as well as 43 of 50 major cities, in a pre-emptive missile strike. Unless policies were reversed, he said, this gap would begin growing (conveniently) in 1960.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 226; John W. Malsberger, *The General and the Politician* (Landham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 129

<sup>5</sup> Using secret U2 reconnaissance flights, President Eisenhower was able to conclude with certainty that there was no missile gap. However, to reveal this highly classified information would also have made public the existence of American planes entering Soviet airspace for the purpose of spying (Smith, *Eisenhower: In War and Peace*, 733-34). As a result, much of the intelligence community took the Soviet Union at their word regarding ICBM production (Bury, *Eisenhower and the Cold War Arms Race*, 162). Both the Gaither Report (1957) and the Rockefeller Report (1958) expressed concern that the United States risked falling behind to a Soviet Union that possessed a first strike capability (Eisenhower, *Waging Peace*, 220; Rose, *One Nation Underground*, 29-30). A July 1958 column by Joseph Alsop in the *Washington Post* only exacerbated tensions, when it correctly reported that an internal NSC report estimated that the Soviets could possess a thousand ICBMs by the end of 1961. It was this column that led to Kennedy's focus on a "missile gap" in his campaign (Hitchcock, *Age of Eisenhower*, 385-86, 396-97). Even after Kennedy had secured the nomination and had no less than three meetings with Eisenhower intelligence officials, Kennedy continued to push the idea of a "missile gap," despite having been presented with evidence to the contrary. As Gary Donaldson stresses in *The First Modern Campaign* (2007), it is likely Kennedy saw the value in ignoring such information while on the campaign trail (p. 128).

<sup>6</sup> Rorabaugh, 22; Gary A. Donaldson, *The First Modern Campaign: Kennedy Nixon, and the Election of 1960* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 128; William I. Hitchcock, *The Age of Eisenhower* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018), 396-97. See also "Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy, in the Senate, August 14, 1958," in "U.S. Military Power, Senate Floor, 14 August 1958," Box 901, Series 12, Senate Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, John F. Kennedy Library (JFKPL), Boston MA. Transcript found here: <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/united-states-senate-military->

As concerns about continental vulnerability grew in the United States, the incoming Diefenbaker administration in Canada quickly found itself engulfed in a series of decisions regarding the nation's military integration with America. When he took office in June 1957, a draft bilateral defence agreement awaited the prime minister's assent. Louis St. Laurent had expected to finalize Canada's entry into North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) upon his triumphant return to the prime ministership. However, by virtue of the Canadian people, the implementation fell to John Diefenbaker. The new prime minister had campaigned against increasing American influence, yet he bowed to pressure from the Canadian and American militaries. The joint commanders stressed the dire need for rapid continental integration and the initial agreement was announced on August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1957.<sup>7</sup> However, Sputnik's launch two months later generated much uncertainty about Canada's role in the new organization, as focus shifted from concerns about Soviet bombers to Soviet missiles. Questions about investment, obsolete hardware, sovereignty, and joint control would come to plague the Diefenbaker administration.<sup>8</sup>

The uncertainty rendered by Soviet advances in missile technology only enhanced existing fears about social decadence and Western decline. Soviet successes at the turn of the decade had been attributed to captured German scientists and then blamed on Soviet espionage within the Canadian and American governments.<sup>9</sup> Now, as John Kenneth

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<sup>7</sup> Sean M. Maloney, *Learning to Love the Bomb* (Washington: Potomac Books, 2007), 100-103; Knowlton Nash, *Kennedy and Diefenbaker* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1990), 72-74; Reg Whitaker and Steve Hewitt, *Canada and the Cold War* (Toronto: Lorimer and Company, 2003), 130-32.

<sup>8</sup> Whitaker and Hewitt, 129; John Clearwater, *U.S. Nuclear Weapons In Canada* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1999), 18-24; Reg Whitaker "'We Know They're There': Canada and Its Others, with or without the Cold War," in *Love, Hate, and Fear in Canada's Cold War*, edited by Richard Cavell (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 40.

<sup>9</sup> Robert H. Zieger, "The Evolving Cold War: The Changing Character of the Enemy Within, 1949-63," *American Communist History* 3, no. 1 (2004): 10-12.

Galbraith laid out in *The Affluent Society* (1958), the West's consumer-oriented society was at fault. Galbraith observed that the same week that the Soviets launched Sputnik, the United States saw the launch of a new range of automobiles, including the Edsel. "A society which sets its highest goal on the production of private consumer goods," he stated, "will continue to reflect such attitudes in all its public decisions."<sup>10</sup> Previous chapters have already introduced the emergence of fears about the impact of corporate culture, the suburban nuclear family, and materialism on the social fabric, as well as on interpretations of masculinity. It was works like William Whyte's *The Organization Man* (1956) that sounded the alarm, alongside numerous periodicals. Conformity was said to weaken the individual spirit of men, while consumer culture made men soft and complacent.<sup>11</sup>

A flurry of publications at the end of the decade, like *Look* magazine's illustrated collection "The Decline of the American Male" (1958), continued to place blame on modernity, but also increasingly on women themselves. Central to many of the pieces in *Look* magazine's series was the problem of the home. The domain of the wife and mother was depicted as increasingly hostile to men. This is why J. Robert Moskin argued, the "organization man" had become so prevalent. He sought refuge in his work, and the office became "*his* castle."<sup>12</sup> Pieces by George B. Leonard, Jr. and William Attwood expand on this, pointing to the lack of individuality proffered by the suburbs and the pressure to keep up with the neighbours in material comforts. This put extended work pressure on men to continue to provide a steady paycheck.<sup>13</sup> In an article for *Esquire* that same year, scholar-

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<sup>10</sup> John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Affluent Society* (New York: Mentor Books, 1958), 272.

<sup>11</sup> William F. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (1956; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 7-13, 396-99.

<sup>12</sup> Emphasis in original; J. Robert Moskin, "Why Do Women Hate Him?" in *The Decline of the American Male*, from the editors of *Look* (New York: Random House, 1958), 20.

<sup>13</sup> George B. Leonard, Jr., "Why is He Afraid to Be Different?" in *The Decline of the American Male*, from the editors of *Look* (New York: Random House, 1958), 35; William Attwood, "Why Does He Work So

turned-political advisor, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., declared a “crisis of American masculinity.” Mothers, he said, smothered and feminized male children. Next, female teachers were said to prepare young boys for matrimonial subjugation. Finally, wives controlled an ever-increasing portion of major decisions and purchases for the home. However, Schlesinger also stresses that the solution does not necessarily lie in the suppression of women. Rather it was crucial for “men to become men again” by “recover[ing] a sense of individual spontaneity” against the realities of modern life.<sup>14</sup>

While these editorials offer analysis, they do little in the way of providing actual solutions. The only prescription for the man suffering from the tyranny of the organization and the home appears to be more individuality and, as Schlesinger states, more spontaneity. It was not a new problem. Indeed, it took several years for armchair experts to get there and build a consensus, but the conclusion is remarkably similar to one proffered in the late nineteenth century. To return to the introduction of this exploration, rapid industrialization and urbanization had also caused concerns about masculine degeneration. As Michael Kimmel put it, the sons of frontiersmen “found themselves trapped in [an] iron cage.”<sup>15</sup> Then, too, women became the scapegoat. The turn-of-the-century was an era rife with concerns about the softening effects of urban life on young boys, whose time was dominated by mothers and female teachers. Organizations like the Boy Scouts emerged, in part, to instil in young boys the rugged qualities of the backwoodsman. For grown men, there was an increased focus on athletics and fitness. Those suffering from a lack of

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Hard?” in *The Decline of the American Male*, from the editors of *Look* (New York: Random House, 1958), 56, 64.

<sup>14</sup> Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., “The Crisis of American Masculinity,” in *The Politics of Hope* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 292-93, 296.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 71.



masculinity, often referred to as “neurasthenia,” were told the solution was as simple as rugged activity, ideally in the fresh air and wilderness. For those unable to depart the city, escape was as simple as picking up one of many cowboy and frontier-themed novels.<sup>16</sup>

Facing a similar “crisis” of masculinity, the politics of the late 1950s and early 1960s again begin to look to the frontier, hoping to renew the spirit of the “self-made man.” Politically, John F. Kennedy found inspiration in Theodore Roosevelt and hoped to have the same sort of restorative effect on masculinity and society as the turn-of-the-century president.<sup>17</sup> He found common cause with Roosevelt, who was only forty-two-years-old when he succeeded to the presidency upon William McKinley’s assassination in September 1901. Roosevelt was selected as McKinley’s second term running-mate because, in the words of one convention delegate, Roosevelt was “the embodiment of those qualities which appeal everywhere to American manhood.”<sup>18</sup> During the Spanish-American War of 1898, Roosevelt had resigned his position as Assistant Secretary of the Navy to help lead a cavalry unit known as the “Rough Riders.” Their success in Cuba helped raise Roosevelt’s profile, who then made a successful bid for Governor of New York before being elected vice president.<sup>19</sup>

As a national war hero, turned nation’s youngest president, Roosevelt placed himself in the mould of the self-made frontiersman. As a child, he had been sickly and bookish boy, which led to charges as a young man that he was effeminate. Roosevelt credited his time spent in South Dakota, on a cowboy ranch, as imbuing him with a sense

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<sup>16</sup> Kimmel, 94-95, 100, 110-12, 123.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Oliphant and Curtis Wilkie, *The Road to Camelot* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017), 277.

<sup>18</sup> Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 105, 113.

<sup>19</sup> Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 170-76, 184, 190-92.

of frontier-based masculinity. As a politician, he would push imperialist expansionism and physical strength as the solutions to the loss of America's (masculine) spirit.<sup>20</sup> What he had done for himself he could do for America:

The twentieth century looms before us big with the fate of many nations. If we stand idly by, if we seek merely swollen, slothful ease and ignoble peace, if we shrink from the hard contests where men must win at hazard of their lives and at the risk of all they hold dear, then the bolder and stronger peoples will pass us by and will win for themselves the domination of the world.<sup>21</sup>

The reference to "swollen, slothful ease" draws parallels with the language that Kennedy utilized in raising his own concerns about modernity and masculinity a half-century later. However, while Roosevelt's fixation with masculinity stemmed from a fear of race suicide, Kennedy's interpretation was born of the need to maintain a free society over tyranny.<sup>22</sup>

In what became known as the "New Frontier," Kennedy picked up Roosevelt's mantle. His campaign for the White House was frequently couched in terms of throwing off the malaise and squander of the Eisenhower years and reinforcing the nation with new vigour.<sup>23</sup> If there were any doubt about the parallel he was trying to draw, he quickly put it to rest. A month after announcing his candidacy, he told a crowd at the Waldorf Astoria in February 1960: "We can no longer afford a William McKinley [in the White House], whose backbone according to Teddy Roosevelt was 'as firm as a chocolate éclair.'"<sup>24</sup> To ask those

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<sup>20</sup> Bederman, 196-98.

<sup>21</sup> Kimmel, 121.

<sup>22</sup> As Gail Bederman explains, Theodore Roosevelt's concerns about virile masculinity in the face of an industrializing nation were rooted in concepts of race suicide and imperialism. His fixation on maintaining a "strenuous life" as a solution for overcivilization was based on fears that white American men would let their "civilization" slip. Roosevelt further saw imperialism as a way to maintain a rugged masculinity through conflict, in absence of a frontier, while also viewing it as an obligation. Roosevelt saw the white American male as the most perfect form of manhood, whose duty it was to govern over and civilize the world (Chapter Five, *Manliness and Civilization*).

<sup>23</sup> Christopher E. Forth, *Masculinity in the Modern West: Gender, Civilization and the Body* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 204.

<sup>24</sup> Excerpts from Waldorf-Astoria Address, February 13, 1960 in "The Presidency: The Man in the White House," Box 1031, Series 15.01, Campaign Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKPL.

around him about the phrase “New Frontier,” which has since become a descriptor for the truncated Kennedy administration, its emergence was a total fluke. Max Freedman remembers that in drafting the acceptance speech for the Democratic nomination, they were left grasping for a phrase to summarize Kennedy’s vision. The candidate favoured “New America,” but the term had been previously used by Stevenson. “New Frontier” emerged out of “sheer desperation,” according to Freedman. Meanwhile, speechwriter Ted Sorenson would later claim to have found influence in historian Alan Nevins’ historical work on the “old frontier.”<sup>25</sup>

Canadian prime minister John Diefenbaker had a different interpretation: the Kennedy team *stole* it from his 1957 and 1958 campaigns. In his memoirs, he bemoans that Kennedy used the term without attribution.<sup>26</sup> His claims are aided by the knowledge that Max Freedman was a Canadian reporter, who consulted on the Kennedy campaign.<sup>27</sup> The emergent rivalry between these men, which will be examined further in Chapter Five, means that Diefenbaker’s assertion must be taken with a grain of salt. At the same time, it is curious that both men invoked the concept of the frontier frequently as part of their promise to get their nations moving again. On Diefenbaker’s part, he was similarly inspired by a statesman of comparable stature to Theodore Roosevelt: Canada’s founding prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald. As a successor to Canada’s first Conservative Party leader and first prime minister, John Diefenbaker idolized the “Old Chief.” As Cara Spittal observes in her exploration of Diefenbaker’s tenure, he aspired to be a nation builder of

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<sup>25</sup> Oliphant and Wilkie, 277.

<sup>26</sup> John G. Diefenbaker, *One Canada: Years of Achievement, 1956-1962* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), 13.

<sup>27</sup> Max Freedman, Oral History Interview, May 25, 1966, Oral History Collection, JFKPL, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/asset-viewer/archives/JFKOH/Freedman%2C%20Max/JFKOH-MAF-01/JFKOH-MAF-01>; “Max Freedman (1914-1980),” *Manitoba Historical Society*, accessed May 2021, [http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/freedman\\_m.shtml](http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/freedman_m.shtml).

similar stature. Furthermore, “Macdonald's narrative lore suited the ideological needs of a nation in the process of transformation from a small, agrarian and semi-industrial dominion into a modern industrial and technocratic state.”<sup>28</sup>

As Doug Owsram observes in his *Promise of Eden* (1980), the country’s expansion into the northwestern territory under Macdonald became linked with the patriotic idea of Canada’s development from colony to nation. Expansionists like Macdonald pushed a romanticized ideal of the West with promotional literature promising prosperity and large crop yields to prospective settlers. Drawing on Frederick Jackson Turner’s “frontier thesis,” the Canadian West was portrayed as an egalitarian utopia that offered a chance, unlike urban cities, to determine one’s own destiny. It attracted Canadians, Europeans, and even Americans, whose own West was “closing.” The reality, of course, was much more complicated. Macdonald struggled to settle the West during his two tenures in office (1867-1873 and 1878-1891). His attempts were met with fervent Indigenous and Métis resistance, which he countered with war and genocide. Settlement was plagued with crop failures and economic downturn.<sup>29</sup> Nonetheless, likely driven in part by the romanticism surrounding the American frontier, the settling of the Canadian West took on similar mythic overtones. As Diefenbaker told a Massey Hall audience on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 1957: “I believe that if this nation is to have a new birth of unity and freedom, we must go back to the vision and the idealism of Canada’s first Nation Builder. He led the way – Macdonald did, to national tolerance, dignity and unity.” In that spirit, he proposed “a new National Policy” rooted in

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<sup>28</sup> Cara Spittal, “The Diefenbaker Moment” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto, 2011), 144-46.

<sup>29</sup> Doug Owsram, *Promise of Eden* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 3-4, 104-110, 128-31, 168-71, 223; For a discussion regarding John A. Macdonald’s barbaric treatment of the indigenous peoples of Canada’s West, please see James Daschuk, *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Indigenous Life* (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2013).

the development of the North, a “New Frontier” comparable to that which Macdonald opened in the West.<sup>30</sup>

Eric Blanchard has observed that much of the rhetoric around masculinity in the political sphere is performative. He points to presidential campaigns like those of Teddy Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy as proof of this argument.<sup>31</sup> In that regard, this chapter proffers an exploration of John Diefenbaker and John Kennedy’s frontier politics, a concept which was utilized heavily in the Canadian federal election of 1958 and the American presidential election of 1960. K.A. Cuordileone, in addressing the progression of masculinity politics in the 1950s, speaks of “various permutations” that responded to the “singular historical moment in which a complex of shock-waves and circumstances... [converge] to summon the sense of a beleaguered manhood in need of rehabilitation.”<sup>32</sup> In Chapter Three, growing disconcert with the paternalistic politics was highlighted. Stevenson laid the stage for Kennedy to depict Eisenhower as a passive old man. Diefenbaker, meanwhile, toppled an aged and exhausted St. Laurent and set his sights on moving from a narrow minority government to a majority government. In speaking to Canadians and Americans in a post-Sputnik world, Diefenbaker and Kennedy sought to inspire. They offered a more forceful vision for hegemonic manhood through their leadership, depicting themselves as men of destiny who could lead their publics out of the malaise.

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<sup>30</sup> Spittal, 145; Denis Smith, *Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker* (Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter, and Ross, 1995), 225, 230; For full speech to Massey Hall on April 25, 1957, please see: “Major Campaign Speech No. 1,” Massey Hall, Toronto, April 25, 1957, “The Federal Elections of 1957 and 1958,” Online Exhibit, *Diefenbaker Centre*, accessed May 2021, [https://diefenbaker.usask.ca/documents/online-exhibits/1957-1958-elections/campaign\\_speech\\_1957.pdf](https://diefenbaker.usask.ca/documents/online-exhibits/1957-1958-elections/campaign_speech_1957.pdf)

<sup>31</sup> Eric M. Blanchard, "Rethinking International Security: Masculinity in World Politics," *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 21, no. 1 (2014): 66-67.

<sup>32</sup> K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 238.

## The Canadian General Election of 1958

The most poetic description of the triumph and chaos of the Diefenbaker years comes from Gordon Donaldson's *Eighteen Men* (1980). Those years seem now, he explained,

like an interlude... a national fishing trip to a wild, northern lake, where tales of the rude, hilarious past were told, and fantasies of the future took shape in the flickering firelight. No fish were caught, and we awoke, shivering in the morning.<sup>33</sup>

It is a harsh and unrelenting description, but not inaccurate. The curiousness of the quote comes from the association of Diefenbaker's tenure with a northern fishing trip. The solidification of the memory of Diefenbaker as a frontiersman is evident, even if the reality of Diefenbaker's frontier-based policies went largely unachieved. Peter Newman in *Renegade in Power* (1963) expresses skepticism in Diefenbaker's commitment as prime minister to the North. He argues that it was a superficial, performative political device utilized to get elected.<sup>34</sup> To an extent, it was. Without a Liberal government to condemn, the Progressive Conservative Party's policies played a much more focused role in the 1958 campaign. Little had shifted in their platform in the nine months they had been in office. Diefenbaker's focus on frontier imagery gave Canadian's something to vote *for*, rather than just a (Liberal) party to vote *against*. He promised a new chapter in Canada's history by invoking the settling of the West, while also appealing again to rugged masculine empowerment. Some of the major focuses of his "New Frontier" policy included resource development, infrastructure investment in the North (highways, bridges, airstrips),

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<sup>33</sup> Gordon Donaldson, *Eighteen Men: The Prime Ministers of Canada* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1985), 188

<sup>34</sup> Philip Isard, "Northern Vision: Northern Development during the Diefenbaker Era," (Masters Thesis, University of Waterloo, 2010), 11; Peter C. Newman, *Renegade In Power: The Diefenbaker Years* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 70-72, 217-23.

hydroelectric power, and new settlement.<sup>35</sup>

While the northern development policy was present in the 1957 election platform, it was brought to the forefront in the 1958 election. This was likely, in part, because the Diefenbaker government had moved swiftly during its minority term to achieve most of its social welfare and tax reduction promises. The Progressive Conservative government was largely unimpeded in passing much of this legislation by a Liberal opposition in the throes of a leadership contest. Louis St. Laurent, as outgoing Opposition Leader, had promised interim support to Diefenbaker to help get these legislative priorities through parliament.<sup>36</sup> The “Calendar of Accomplishments” that the party generated for the 1958 campaign highlights a significant increase in old-age pensions (from \$46 to \$55) and income tax reductions for 70% of Canadians. There was also increased investment in the National Housing Act, extensions to the eligibility period for unemployment insurance, and pay increases for the civil service and armed forces.<sup>37</sup> The St. Laurent Liberals left a \$282 million budget surplus, which one Liberal supporter later said the “greatest mistake” that the party could have made. It allowed the Tories to go on a “spending spree.”<sup>38</sup> As a result, Diefenbaker literally bought a lot of goodwill among Canadians.

In January 1958, the Liberals elected the sixty-year old, former External Affairs Minister, Lester B. Pearson, as their new leader. Until that point, Pearson had largely been an apolitical figure but had skyrocketed to national and international acclaim when he won

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<sup>35</sup> Newman, 70.

<sup>36</sup> Patrick Nicholson, *Vision and Indecision* (Don Mills, ON: Longmans, 1968), 82-83.

<sup>37</sup> “Calendar of Events and Accomplishments, June 1957 to February 1958,” in “EG - 1957 to Jan 1958,” Box 94, Series VI (PMO), John G. Diefenbaker Papers (MG 01), Diefenbaker Centre, Saskatoon, SK; Peter Regenstreif, “The Canadian General Election of 1958,” *Western Political Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (1960): 350; “Canada: Election Call,” *Time*, April 22, 1957.

<sup>38</sup> Letter from Miss Janet Armstrong, dated June 27, 1957, in “Elections Results, Parts III/IV (1957), Box 30, Series N1, Lester B. Pearson Fonds (MG26-N), Library Archives Canada (LAC), Ottawa, ON; Figure of \$282 million dollars verified by “Canada: Election Call,” *Time*, April 22, 1957.

the Nobel Peace Prize.<sup>39</sup> While Canadians were torn over the Liberal government's handling of the Suez Crisis, the fact that Pearson brought home a Nobel Prize for Canada was a point of pride. It also gave him a lock on the Liberal leadership. In his acceptance speech to the Liberal convention, Pearson struck out at the "atmosphere of uncertainty" surrounding Canada's economic downturn in the past few months. He told those assembled that it was Conservative inexperience and confused policies that were the reason for that winter's economic downturn. Roughly 744,000 Canadians were claiming unemployment, much of it driven by seasonal layoffs. Criticizing Diefenbaker's deviation from his traditional party line, Pearson seemed to blame much of the situation on Tory policies that were "born in controversy and frustration, were misshapen and unattractive after birth, and were then quietly smothered in one of the cruellest acts of political infanticide in history."<sup>40</sup>

The response to the speech, not surprisingly, divided down partisan lines. Naturally, many supporters wrote to the new Liberal leader, applauding his election. Beyond the evident congratulations, many remarked that they enjoyed being able to see his speech on television. An elderly priest from Kingston, who mentioned he had heard every prime minister since Laurier speak, commended Pearson's "grand performance."<sup>41</sup> The *Vancouver Sun* praised Pearson's "fighting" spirit, observing that the new Liberal leader left the "staid level of international diplomacy" and got into the ring. The *Montreal Gazette* noted that he was finally taking off the diplomatic gloves, while also poking fun at the "new Liberal look" in a cartoon. In it, the party's logo is replaced with a bowtie on the

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<sup>39</sup> John English, *The Worldly Years: The Life of Lester Pearson*, Vol. 2 (New York: Knopf, 1992), 196-97

<sup>40</sup> Tom Gould, "New Liberal Chief Blasts Tory Rule," *Vancouver Sun*, January 17, 1958; Regenstreif, "Election of 1958," 350.

<sup>41</sup> Letter from J.A.M, dated January 17, 1958, in "Congratulations - Liberal Leadership (3)," Box 80, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC.



convention podium, and the banners of Laurier, King, and St. Laurent behind Pearson are also sporting bowties.<sup>42</sup> This concept of taking the gloves off is a common trope. Letter writers praising Pearson's speech, such as P.J. Kennedy, and urged him "the Liberals to take off their gloves and expose the blatant Tory hypocrisy."<sup>43</sup> It is reminiscent of Nixon's attacks on the diplomatic corps as effete, overly educated men. Supporters were urging Pearson to get on Diefenbaker's level, to take off the mantle of the effete intellectual diplomat.

On the other side of the spectrum, the *Calgary Herald* observed that the "Federal Conservatives are no more afraid of Lester Pearson than they are of his bow tie." The accompanying cartoon in that day's edition depicts Lester Pearson and the former Minister of Heath, Paul Martin, as Columbus-like explorers, encountering "the people," who are represented by stereotypical and racialized Pacific islanders. Beyond the troubling racial aspects of the cartoon is the criticism that the Liberals are detached from the common man. Toronto's *Globe and Mail* agrees with this assessment, criticizing a speech that it says was full of poll-tested slogans. The author of the editorial admits they were somewhat confused by Pearson trying to depict himself as a "Galahad from some far away place, come to make all things right." Had he not been in Cabinet the past decade, the piece asked?<sup>44</sup> Writing to the prime minister, Harry Spencer of Toronto, observed that he and his colleagues found the speech rather "hollow." He likened Pearson to a "small boy whistling to keep up his

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<sup>42</sup> Tom Gould, "New Liberal Chief Blasts Tory Rule," *Vancouver Sun*, January 17, 1958; Arthur Blakely, "First Big Challenge Comes Monday In Commons," *Montreal Gazette*, January 17, 1958; Cartoon, "New Liberal Look," *Montreal Gazette*, January 17, 1958.

<sup>43</sup> Letter from P.J. Kennedy, dated January 22, 1958, in "Congratulations - Liberal Leadership (3), Box 80, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC.

<sup>44</sup> "Tories Not Afraid," *Calgary Herald*, January 17, 1958; Cartoon, "Nineteen Hundred and Fifty-Eight," *Calgary Herald*, January 17, 1958; "Lester Pearson, Politician," *Globe and Mail*, January 18, 1958.

courage, when walking through a graveyard after dusk.”<sup>45</sup>

With a new Liberal leader in place, the Progressive Conservative Party was anxious to return to the voters to secure a stable majority government. Allister Grosart, the party’s national director, expressed concern that the present rate of 6% unemployment would be blamed on the Diefenbaker government if it were in office much longer.<sup>46</sup> A memorandum from the Minister of National Defence, George Pearkes, also urged an election. He pointed to an increase in public support coupled with their desire for stability. The PCs held around 50% approval, up from the 39% of the popular vote they obtained in the 1957 election. Significant to their electoral fortunes was an increase in support in Quebec, from 31% to 42-43%.<sup>47</sup> Pearkes also pointed to the looming issue of the Avro Arrow as a reason to go to the polls soon, as “is not at all clear that we need to proceed with the construction.” Its cancellation and the subsequent layoffs would undoubtedly lead to electoral fallout in the seat-rich Toronto area.<sup>48</sup> What is interesting about these calculations is that Diefenbaker biographer Denis Smith argues that much of Diefenbaker’s focus on a “New Frontier” in the 1958 campaign was meant to distract from these other looming issues regarding

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<sup>45</sup> Letter from Henry Spencer, dated January 20, 1958, in “EG - 1957 to January 1958,” Box 94, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>46</sup> Peter Stursberg, *Diefenbaker: Leadership Gained, 1956-1962* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 38, 91.

<sup>47</sup> Gallup Polling, February 1, 1958, in “EG - February 1958,” Box 94, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre; “Political Affiliations in Canada,” in “Elections 1957-1967,” Box 103, Series VII/A, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>48</sup> Letter from George Pearkes, dated January 27, 1958, in “EG - 1957 to January 1958,” Box 94, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre; The Avro Arrow was commissioned by the Liberal government in 1953 to replace the aging CF-100 at an estimated cost of \$2 million per plane. By the 1957 election, the production costs of the plane were spinning out of control, and when the Tories took office it was estimated that each plane would cost \$12.5 million to produce. The total cost until that point was roughly \$250 million for development, with another \$530 million expected by 1961. The case for continuing with the Arrow was further harmed when the Soviets successfully proved ICBM capability in 1957. The Arrow could do little to protect against this new technology; it was a bomber interceptor. The cancellation of the contract was predicted to cost 14,000 jobs, mostly concentrated in the Greater Toronto Area. This led Diefenbaker in 1957 and 1958 towards what Patricia I. McMahon calls a “strategy of procrastination.” (Levine, *Scrum Wars*, 221; Smith, *Rogue Tory*, 307-10; McMahon, *Essence of Indecision*, 16-17, 37-38).

national defence and the economy.<sup>49</sup>

When Lester Pearson met the House as Opposition Leader on January 20<sup>th</sup>, he was placed in an impossible position. Given polling, the party was wary of an immediate election. Nonetheless, because of Liberal convention posturing, a confidence vote was expected. The Liberals were concerned that if they tested the confidence of the House, the Social Credit Party and Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) would back them and force an election. The situation led to a bizarre proposal that saw Pearson move for Diefenbaker to resign in place of an election and turn the government over to the Liberals. The hope was that the minority parties would reject this procedural amendment, that the Diefenbaker government would survive the vote of confidence and thus be unable to force an immediate election. In his speech, Pearson told the House: “I would be prepared, if called upon to form... a government to tackle immediately the formidable problem of ending the Tory pause and getting this country back on the Liberal highway of progress from which we have been temporarily diverted.”<sup>50</sup> It is worth noting that while it was thought of as a foolproof plan by top Liberals like J.W. Pickersgill, the only two people to warn Pearson against it were the women of influence in his life: his wife, Maryon Pearson and his assistant, Mary MacDonald.<sup>51</sup>

It backfired spectacularly. Diefenbaker went on the offensive. He produced a memorandum written by the civil service for the Liberal’s Department of Trade and Commerce in March 1957.<sup>52</sup> As part of budgetary preparations it outlined the following:

Since October (1956) the levels of persons without jobs and seeking work and of

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<sup>49</sup> Smith, *Rogue Tory*, 292-95, 307-10.

<sup>50</sup> Newman, 65-66; Stursburg, 87-89

<sup>51</sup> English, 200; Lester B. Pearson, *Mike*, Volume Three (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 31.

<sup>52</sup> Newman, 66; “Truth About The Hidden Report,” Liberal Campaign Committee, February 15, 1958, in “Liberal Party 1955-1958,” Box 268, Series VII/B, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

unplaced applicants have undergone increases that are clearly greater than seasonal. The percentage increases over the previous year can be expected to widen for most of 1957. This is a disquieting pattern.<sup>53</sup>

In his two-hour tirade to parliament, he spoke of Pearson's "shrieking defiance" at the convention and now "shrinking indecision" in the House. He accused the Liberals of hiding a downturn from the Canadian people to try and win the 1957 election. As one PC MP put it later: "Pearson looked at first merry, then serious, then uncomfortable, then disturbed, and finally sick." Diefenbaker would later joyfully recall that speech: "I operated on him without anesthetic." Pearson, meanwhile, labelled it "one of the most disastrous debuts of any political leader" and later stated that this proposal was his biggest regret.<sup>54</sup> This is because it provided Diefenbaker with leverage. He argued that he needed a majority to overcome the machinations of an arrogant Liberal opposition. Soon after, he secretly flew to Quebec City, where Governor-General Vincent Massey was in residence. The head-of-state approved the dissolution of the House and the start of the twenty-fourth general election.<sup>55</sup>

Opening the Progressive Conservative campaign, Diefenbaker spoke to a rally in Winnipeg on February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1958. After recounting his list of government achievements, largely focused on social welfare expansion, the prime minister then moved on to speak of his vision of northern development. Wrapping himself in the cloak of Sir John A. Macdonald, the prime minister discussed how he proposed to expand upon Macdonald's vision of a vast nation. It had gone unfulfilled in Diefenbaker's view. While the West had been settled, Canada had yet to look to the North. By focusing on new frontiers, his

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<sup>53</sup> Nicholson, 69.

<sup>54</sup> Smith, *Rogue Tory*, 276; Patricia I. McMahon, *Essence of Indecision: Diefenbaker's Nuclear Policy, 1957-1963* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2009), 23; Pearson, 30-31.

<sup>55</sup> Newman, 68.

government promised to provide Canadians with the ability to “control of their own economic and political destiny.” Speaking of road construction, national raw material processing, and resource development, Diefenbaker stated that he wanted to “see Canadians given a transcending sense of national purpose, such as Macdonald gave in his day.” In closing, he asked voters to give him a majority mandate that would allow his government to pursue the completion of this vision for Canada. Then speaking “to the young men and women of this nation,” he stressed, “Canada is within your hands. Adventure. Adventure to the nation’s utmost bounds, to strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.”<sup>56</sup>

Cara Spittal speaks of this speech specifically as cloaked in “masculine cultural themes.” She points briefly to Christopher Dummitt’s concept of the “manly modern” as the ideal representation of what Diefenbaker was trying to achieve. Diefenbaker’s reliance on the idea of the frontier, Spittal says, relates to Dummitt’s observation that Cold War masculinity struggled in a “modernized Canada in which patriarchal privilege has been shorn of some of its more traditional supports.”<sup>57</sup> Dummitt’s work speaks of the “manly modern” essentially as an attempt to navigate the “crisis” of masculinity of the early Cold War period. The concept reaffirms gender divisions through structures such as the nuclear family and the breadwinner role, yet at the same time it strains against the conformity of the system.<sup>58</sup> Dummitt points to the popularity of mountaineering and wilderness excursions in Canada during this era as one way that men, especially middle-class suburban

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<sup>56</sup> “Opening Campaign Speech, Winnipeg,” February 12, 1958, “The Federal Elections of 1957 and 1958,” Online Exhibit, Diefenbaker Centre, accessed August 2020, [https://diefenbaker.usask.ca/documents/online-exhibits/1957-1958-elections/campaign\\_speech\\_1958.pdf](https://diefenbaker.usask.ca/documents/online-exhibits/1957-1958-elections/campaign_speech_1958.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> Spittal, 178-79.

<sup>58</sup> Christopher Dummitt, *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 2-5.

men, sought to deal with feelings of powerlessness and isolation.<sup>59</sup> Christopher Greig expands upon the appeal of nature, pointing to a resurgence in organizations like the Boy Scouts in the postwar era. He quotes an Ontario Boy Scout leader in 1958: “[Canada was] in constant need of such men, possessed of the pioneer skills on the many Canadian frontiers that still challenge strength and determination. It would be unfortunate, and a great loss to the country if only those reared in rugged, isolated environments could answer that challenge.”<sup>60</sup>

The architect of Diefenbaker’s northern development plan was Merrill Menzies. A Saskatchewan economist, he was the brother-in-law of a close Diefenbaker ally in his Prince Albert constituency. It is not surprising to learn that Menzies was motivated by the view that Canada had lacked, for decades, a purposeful national myth. He pointed out to Diefenbaker that the settling of the West during the tenures of Macdonald, and then Laurier, was interpreted as transforming Canada from a colony to a nation. Furthermore, inspired by historian Harold Innis’ concept of the “investment frontier,” Menzies became convinced that resource development was the answer to many of Canada’s current problems, from unemployment to national determination. His “New Frontier” policy incorporated proposals for hydro development on the Columbia and Fraser rivers, as well as resource development in the Southern Yukon, Mackenzie Valley, and Great Slave Lake regions. Menzies even went so far as to propose the development of a new Northern province. Ultimately, he became Diefenbaker’s chief economic advisor, and, as historian Graham Taylor explains, provided Progressive Conservatives with a vision that countered the

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<sup>59</sup> Dummitt, 77-78.

<sup>60</sup> Christopher J. Greig, *Ontario Boys: Masculinity and the Idea of Boyhood in Postwar Ontario, 1945-1960* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2014), 71-72.

continentalist approach of the previous Liberal government.<sup>61</sup>

Diefenbaker pushed this plan for northern development throughout the campaign. A party memorandum on “talking points” provides further detail on specific government priorities in this area for the coming five years. In addition to heavy federal investment in highways in the Yukon and Northwest Territories, the government pledged between \$75 and \$100 million for road development in provincial hinterland. The Progressive Conservatives offered to match investment by the provinces in all such construction projects. The drive behind what came to be known as the “Roads to Resources” program was that it allowed for increased access to and across the North. The government also pledged to construct a Canadian railway link to Great Slave Lake in the Northwest Territories, and a power development station at Frobisher Bay on Baffin Island. Airstrips would be constructed in the North for mine creation where roads could not reach.<sup>62</sup> Given the economic situation that the country was facing, Diefenbaker pushed such development as a panacea for the Canadian economy and job creation.<sup>63</sup>

Pearson was skeptical of these plans and derisively referred to “Roads to Resources” as a policy of highway construction from “igloo to igloo.” This handed Diefenbaker a useful weapon, one which he utilized many times. He reminded Canadians that Liberal leader Wilfrid Laurier had once derided the creation of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). While Laurier had technically asked: “Who is going to ride that railway,

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<sup>61</sup> Smith, *Rogue Tory*, 225-227; Michael Bliss, *Right Honourable Men: The Descent of Canadian Politics from Macdonald to Chretien* (Toronto: Harper Perennial, 2004), 190; Graham D. Taylor, *Imperial Standard: Imperial Oil, Exxon, and the Canadian Oil Industry From 1880* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2019), 176; More information can also be found on Merrill Menzies in the finding aid to his personal papers at the University of Saskatchewan: <http://sain.scaa.sk.ca/collections/vii-e-merril-menzies-subseries>

<sup>62</sup> “Talking Points for PC Speakers and Workers, 1958,” “The Federal Elections of 1957 and 1958,” Online Exhibit, Diefenbaker Centre, accessed August 2020, [https://diefenbaker.usask.ca/documents/online-exhibits/1957-1958-elections/talking\\_points.pdf](https://diefenbaker.usask.ca/documents/online-exhibits/1957-1958-elections/talking_points.pdf)

<sup>63</sup> Newman, 70.

Indians and buffaloes?” Diefenbaker took poetic licence and attributed Laurier’s comments against the CPR as being constructed from “wigwam to wigwam.” Pearson’s remarks, the prime minister said, demonstrated a similar “lack of imagination, a lack of faith, and a complete lack of understanding.” Here he ties Pearson to the “organization man” — complacent, uninspired, passive. It was the job of the “Canadian government to open these doors of boundless opportunity so that our people may go in and possess their own great storehouse of wealth abundant.”<sup>64</sup> Pearson couldn’t do that, Diefenbaker insisted. The igloo quip was one that Pearson would come to regret. As he remembers it, the remark allowed Diefenbaker to “forever brand [him] as a narrow-minded, *effete* easterner who had sneered at the ‘vision of the North.’”<sup>65</sup> While Diefenbaker was the self-made man who could Canadians towards a new frontier, Pearson was the effeminate diplomat, who lacked the courage and inspiration to bring the nation to greatness.

Crucial to Diefenbaker and the Progressive Conservatives in making the transition from minority to majority government was the province of Quebec. As 1957 demonstrated, there was PC strength in Ontario, the West, and the Maritimes. However, the road to a majority government in Canada typically requires a combination of a strong performance

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<sup>64</sup> Stursberg, 99; Transcript, “Broadcast By the Prime Minister, The Right Honourable John G. Diefenbaker, on the CBC Network from Quebec, Thursday March 27 [1958],” in “Elections 1958 Speeches,” Box 95, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre; It is important to take a moment here to acknowledge the racist and colonial language used by both Pearson and Laurier. They dismissed both the North and the West, respectively, as primitive and unpopulated. This rhetoric ignores the diverse and populous Indigenous nations that inhabited the North American continent long before European contact. The government of Wilfrid Laurier, in the settling of the West, despite his abject disagreement with a railway line, was complicit in the death and destruction of Indigenous nations. As the West was “settled,” diminished Indigenous populations were ravaged by disease and starvation, forced onto reservations, and their children were taken and placed into residential schools. The governments of St. Laurent, Diefenbaker, and then Pearson, continued this legacy of colonial oppression. Furthermore, it was not only Pearson who demonstrated dismissiveness towards Indigenous culture through his rhetoric. Diefenbaker in his project of “settling” the North, ignores Indigenous land claims and pushes a colonizing project that sought to develop the land for resource extraction and settlement, with a disregard for those who already inhabited the land.

<sup>65</sup> Emphasis added; Pearson, 46.



in both Ontario *and* Quebec. An internal campaign memorandum from December 1957 observed that there was ground to be gained on two fronts. First, they needed to push how quickly the Liberals sought to cast off St. Laurent following his 1957 loss. This was likely to be interpreted by many, illness or not, as a lack of respect towards a man who had devoted himself to service of the party.<sup>66</sup> Second, doubts could be raised about Pearson among the fiercely anti-Communist Quebecois, given previous U.S. Senate investigations into possible communist associations alongside Herbert Norman.<sup>67</sup> In fairness, the latter suggestion appears not to have been pushed by Diefenbaker during this election, at least. This was likely a result of his personal disdain for the recent behaviour of the U.S. Senate during the Norman case. Nonetheless, the memo demonstrates that the Progressive Conservative Party had its eyes on Quebec in 1958 and was looking to make inroads in the traditionally staunchly Liberal province.

This is where the populist, right-wing Quebec Premier, Maurice Duplessis, enters into the calculation for the Progressive Conservatives. He had been reluctant to back Diefenbaker in 1957, given that no one expected a Progressive Conservative victory. However, the Quebec premier quickly moved his Union Nationale Party machinery behind the new prime minister in 1958. Duplessis secretly hoped that a strong contingent of Conservative Quebec MPs, loyal to him, would hold the balance of power in a Diefenbaker

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<sup>66</sup> In Volume Three of his memoirs, Lester Pearson relates how he travelled to Quebec with Lionel Chevrier, at the behest of St. Laurent's family, to convince him to resign. While the former prime minister wanted to resign, he was worried about public opinion. Arriving at his home in St. Patrick, Pearson and Chevrier found St. Laurent "in a low, depressed condition... obviously quite unequal to the demands of leadership" (22-23). They convinced him that public opinion would accept him stepping aside as Liberal leader, and Pearson helped draft his resignation. As Pearson observed: "To resign was sad, to continue would have been tragic" (24-26). Please see: Lester B. Pearson, *Mike*, Volume Three (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975).

<sup>67</sup> Election Memorandum, dated "December 1957[?]" in "Conservative Policy (1957-1958), Box 267, Series VII/B, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

government. Given the polling at the time, this looked like a realistic outcome.<sup>68</sup> In advising the Conservatives on how to market Diefenbaker to Quebecers, Duplessis focused heavily on masculinity politics. He said that the Progressive Conservatives needed to portray Diefenbaker as something between “Churchill, de Gaulle, Moses, God, and maybe the Devil.” His personal assessment followed:

Diefenbaker is a pretty boy, he looks good - nice hair, Nice eyes - he speaks well, he is a good orator, presents himself well. He *almost* looks like a man, which is saying something for a Conservative. I like him. He’s got something. What you should do is sell him as a man. Forget about the Conservatives, forget about the party, but build that man up.<sup>69</sup>

Duplessis, a right-wing populist who inherently understood the importance of image-making, harnessed onto several key points that would be crucial to Progressive Conservative success in marketing Diefenbaker. Not just to Quebec, but to Canada itself.

The first aspect, which the previous chapter explored, was the need to focus the campaign on the leader rather than the party. The Progressive Conservative “brand” in Canada, given twenty-two years of defeat, was not popular. This disconnect may have proven to be the critical mistake that polling firms made in 1957, significantly underestimating Diefenbaker’s personal appeal. They had typically asked voting intention by *party* rather than *leader*. It was no different in Quebec. The “parti progressiste-conservateur du Canada” did not draw voters. Much of this had to do with issues of conscription during both world wars. Tory politicians had taken a hardline for national draft policies that the Quebecois opposed. However, what made the Quebecois potentially receptive to Diefenbaker in 1958 was that the alternative was a foreign entity. The Liberal convention had chosen Pearson over Paul Martin, Sr., who was Catholic and half-French

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<sup>68</sup> Stursberg, 99-101.

<sup>69</sup> Emphasis added; Stursberg, 57.

Canadian. Lingering resentment over this opened the Quebecois to Diefenbaker's message of a renewed sense of destiny. It was also an unfortunate reality was that Pearson's last name was similar to the French word "personne," which translates to "no one." Unflattering jokes emerged in Quebec. For example: "Pauvre M. St. Laurent, il a Pearson pour le remplacer."<sup>70</sup>

Duplessis' second focus was on marketing Diefenbaker as a *man*. The myth-making surrounding Diefenbaker, relying on that born-on-the-frontier, "self-made man" image, was only enhanced in the 1958 campaign. The best example of the success in creating this persona comes from a May 1960 cartoon in *Maclean's*. It depicts Diefenbaker as a bricklayer. He is mortaring the bricks of a house in shirtsleeves and overalls, while three top-hat wearing, upper-class gentleman (a metaphor for the party establishment) are being walled out.<sup>71</sup> The benefit of focusing on Diefenbaker's appeal, a 1958 campaign memorandum outlined, was that he helped to correct the perception of the party as "Ultra Tory." Diefenbaker was reconnecting the party to the common man. Further assisting the Progressive Conservatives in this regard was the fact that Pearson was taking the "egghead, intellectual, know-it-all" path," which one campaign memorandum felt could also be used to the party's advantage.<sup>72</sup>

There are a few tropes at play here. Rather than marketing himself as a paternalistic or elite figure, Diefenbaker was rendered the everyman nation-builder. This is seen in 1958 campaign pamphlets like "John Diefenbaker: Great Canadian." Beyond listing the government's accomplishments, it focuses on Diefenbaker as a "man." It stresses that he

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<sup>70</sup> Langevin Cote, "An Eye for a Party Eye in Quebec's Campaign," *Globe and Mail*, February 12, 1958.

<sup>71</sup> Peter C. Newman, "Diefenbaker's Non-Tory Tories," *Maclean's*, March 26, 1960.

<sup>72</sup> "Confidential Memorandum," March 3, 1958, in "Elections 1958," Box 268, Series VII/B, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

is both a “man of the people” and a “man of his word,” accompanied by photos of the prime minister fishing, getting a haircut at a Prince Albert barbershop, and speaking with a farmer on a tractor.<sup>73</sup> An internal campaign memo from Allister Grosart to the O’Brien Ad Agency in January 1958 belabours the point. There was concern, Grosart writes, that Diefenbaker could be perceived as “maybe a little too pious” [read: effeminate]. The major sticking point here was that he was a teetotaler, which drew associations to the turn-of-the-century women’s movement. As Grosart observes, the “male image the party is trying to create of the Prime Minister is most important.” Suggested for campaign materials was the use of photos of Diefenbaker where he can be seen fishing or attending sporting events. Also helpful were photos where he was “wearing his Indian sweater surrounded by dogs.”<sup>74</sup>

By comparison, Pearson on the campaign trail was described as rather “reserved and shy.” Biographer Bruce Thordarson observes that Pearson’s diplomatic training left him often willing to consider multiple viewpoints and that he was naturally suspicious of rousing, emotional oratory.<sup>75</sup> As Pearson himself put it, “[I] always suspected and distrusted those who could arouse the masses by working on their emotions.... [turning] support into hysteria.” Thus, his reserved nature led to a hesitancy in putting himself out there with voters, according to journalist Vic Mackie.<sup>76</sup> In contrast to Diefenbaker’s campaign, Pearson placed the Liberal emphasis on “prosperity, progress, and peace.” In reality, he sounded a little bit like Eisenhower circa 1952. He pushed tax cuts as the most effective way to combat unemployment and stimulate the economy. The Diefenbaker

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<sup>73</sup> Pamphlet, “John Diefenbaker: Great Canadian,” in “Elections 1958,” Box 268, Series VII/B, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>74</sup> Spittal, 180-81.

<sup>75</sup> Bruce Thordarson, *Lester Pearson: Diplomat and Politician* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1974), 105.

<sup>76</sup> English, 163-164.

campaign, he said, was running on “manufactured melodrama.”<sup>77</sup> The Liberal Party platform in 1958 emphasized that Pearson’s plan would put money into the pockets of Canadians *now*. It condemned public works projects as long-term job creation rather than short-term relief.<sup>78</sup>

The Liberal camp also sought to elevate issues of international security, given Pearson’s recent win of the Nobel Peace Prize. The party stressed that while all Canadian political parties were united behind the cause of peace, the world was dangerous and “experience counts.” Canada had “too much at risk to stake anything less than the best.”<sup>79</sup> Speaking to Canadians on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 1958, he emphasized his past as Minister of External Affairs. The office of the prime minister, he said, would give him the power to “bring about policies... that would make for and perhaps even one day help to establish a secure, enduring and creative peace, a peace we must build if we are to be saved from the scourge and sacrifice of nuclear war.”<sup>80</sup> Unfortunately for Pearson, his offerings fell flat. Polling from the 1958 campaign demonstrated that imminent nuclear war was not a factor in the electoral decision. The Liberals were stymied, in part, by the Progressive Conservatives’ active effort to keep the election focused on domestic issues. The party knew that Pearson’s strength came from foreign policy, and it advised candidates to avoid such attacks.<sup>81</sup>

While Diefenbaker played on the national mood, Pearson sought to appeal to reason. As one editorial put it halfway through the campaign, Pearson “seeks to persuade rather

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<sup>77</sup> Speech Transcript, “Lester B. Pearson, National Leader of the Liberal Party,” n.d., in “Liberal Party, 1955-58,” Box 268, Series VII/B, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>78</sup> Campaign Platform, “The Pearson Plan: Canada’s Liberal Path to Prosperity, Progress and Peace,” “Plateformes Électorales,” *Poltext*, Université Laval, <https://www.poltext.org/>.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Transcript, National Broadcast on CBC, March 18, 1958, in “Nuclear Tests,” Volume 4, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC.

<sup>81</sup> Regenstrief, “Election of 1958,” 357; McMahon, 25.

than dazzle.”<sup>82</sup> Nowhere was the difference between the image of these two men starker than on television. The medium first entered Canadian politics, as discussed in the last chapter, during the 1957 election. It enhanced Diefenbaker’s image and diminished that of St. Laurent. Nine months later, against Pearson, Diefenbaker achieved a similar effect. As Patrick H. Brennan observes, Pearson did not translate well on the medium. His kind, sincere humility again was useful as a diplomat, but he came off as reserved as a politician. Brennan similarly points to the concept of Pearson as a “snobbish intellectual,” who came off “well-intentioned but none too practical,” and ultimately was viewed as an “increasingly, a weak and muddling figure.”<sup>83</sup> Naturally, there was concern that Pearson came off as effete. An internal Liberal campaign memo, in preparation for the subsequent election, reinforces this view. It observed that: “You are a bit too abstract. You discuss issues in a way that’s right for the House of Commons but seems impersonal on television.”<sup>84</sup> Underscored here is the issue of Pearson’s intellectualism, which the Liberals would work to counter in successive elections. Similar to Adlai Stevenson, there was concern about Pearson’s abstract and detached nature. He was unable to appeal to the common man like Diefenbaker.

On March 31<sup>st</sup>, 1958, Canadian voters went to the polls in what Peter Regenstreif describes as a “luxury election.” Although there was the issue of the economic downturn, it never took off. It seemed to be dwarfed by Diefenbaker’s vision and a willingness by Canadians to give him a chance.<sup>85</sup> The final Gallup poll conducted before the election

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<sup>82</sup> Thordarson 105; Clipping, “The Calm Campaign,” in “Elections General, March 1958,” Box 94, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>83</sup> Patrick H. Brennan, “‘A Good Man For The Middle Innings’: Lester Pearson and the Media, 1963-1968,” in *Pearson: The Unlikely Gladiator*, edited by Norman Hillmer (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1999), 121

<sup>84</sup> “Notes for Discussion, 25 July, 1961,” in “Elections, Part 2,” Volume 82, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC.

<sup>85</sup> Regenstreif, “Election of 1958,” 352.

showed strong public interest, with 52.9% support for the Progressive Conservatives, compared to 27.5% for the Liberals. Of the 10% of voters who were undecided, those who declared a current lean broke for the PCs by 36% to 25%. When support is separated by province, over 61% in Ontario expressed favour for the PCs. The party also ran strong in the West and led the Liberals roughly 46% to 40% in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Newfoundland remained a Liberal stronghold, while crucially, the PCs maintained a lead in Quebec by roughly 44-40 over the Liberals.<sup>86</sup> This placed Diefenbaker and the Progressive Conservative Party in a strong position as voters cast their ballots.

The results saw the Conservatives sweep Canada in what CBC television coverage called an “earthquake.” Of the 265 seats in the House of Commons, the Progressive Conservative Party took 208. It was the largest majority mandate handed to a party since Confederation. The Liberals won only 49 seats, while the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) took 8 seats. The Social Credit Party under Solon Law was wiped out, and both M.J. Coldwell and Stanley Knowles, the CCF leaders, lost their seats.<sup>87</sup> Pearson, who narrowly managed to hold onto his own seat, was told by his wife: “We've lost everything. We even won our own seat.”<sup>88</sup> Her husband had been the Liberal leader for only three months and Maryon Pearson knew the party would need him to stay on to rebuild. The *Ottawa Citizen* declared that the Liberal Party was nearly dead and acknowledged it would take many elections before the Tory majority was chipped down. It was likely to be a process begun by Pearson, but finished by another.<sup>89</sup> Indeed, many felt

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<sup>86</sup> “Voting Habits, Poll #267, March 1958b, Gallup Canada, Inc., Public Opinion Polls, ODESI, <http://odesi2.scholarsportal.info/webview/>

<sup>87</sup> Frank Feigert, *Canada Votes, 1935-1988* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 15-16, 21.

<sup>88</sup> English, 202.

<sup>89</sup> Frank Swanson, “It’s The End of an Era in Politics,” *Ottawa Citizen*, April 1, 1958.

that a new era of Canadian politics had begun, and the Tories would govern for a generation.

Part of what was responsible for this surge was Diefenbaker's ability to mobilize a million and a half voters who did not normally vote for the Progressive Conservative Party. In Quebec alone, between the elections PC party approval increased from 31% to 50%. In Canada as a whole, Diefenbaker attracted 54% support to the Liberal's 39%.<sup>90</sup> Though many voters shifted their vote, Diefenbaker's ability to turn out the unlikely voter was also crucial to this outcome.<sup>91</sup> Speaking about the appeal of his frontier-based rhetoric, the *Calgary Herald* noted that Diefenbaker "captured and expressed the spirit of Canada" and that he "touched something very deep in the hearts of millions of people." "The traditionally quiet, dour, undemonstrative Canadian," the *Herald* continued, "has become a dreamer of great dreams."<sup>92</sup> Roly Graham of Toronto, writing to congratulate the prime minister, felt similar. He observed that Diefenbaker's overwhelming victory was "proof of the hunger of the average Canadian for something to tie to — a star to follow[,] a dream to vision, a fairy tale to image, in short, an old time Gold Strike...."<sup>93</sup>

Post-election coverage in the months after the election continued to touch on themes of the frontier and Diefenbaker's personality as a decisive factor in his victory. The story that he seemed most proud of was an article in the *Saturday Evening Post* at the end of August 1958, entitled "Canada's Amazing Prime Minister." He kept what appears to be the cover of the Canadian edition of the *Post* in a personal scrapbook. It labelled him Canada's

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<sup>90</sup> "Percentage of Popular Vote by Parties and Provinces, 1957 and 1958," in "Elections 1957-1967," Box 103, Series VII/A, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>91</sup> Milton Mackaye, "Canada's Amazing Prime Minister," *Saturday Evening Post*, August 30, 1958.

<sup>92</sup> "The Road Ahead," *Calgary Herald*, April 1, 1958.

<sup>93</sup> Letter from Roly Graham, dated April 1, 1958, in "Congratulations Ontario 1958," Box 95, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.



“self-made man.”<sup>94</sup> In the article itself, Milton Mackaye provides an in-depth biography of the prime minister, observing that “Diefenbaker’s background is one to capture [the] American, as well as Canadian imagination.” His youth on a one-hundred-and-sixty-acre homestead northeast of Saskatoon is recounted, alongside his political rise, and the vision he offered Canadians. As Mackaye describes it, Diefenbaker “built a fire under [Canadians’] lukewarm nationalism.”<sup>95</sup> A second article, that Diefenbaker also scrapbooked came from a story by Stanley Burke in the *Montreal Star*. He labelled the prime minister’s vision as Canada’s version of “Manifest Destiny” and described Diefenbaker as “the son of a western schoolteacher [whose] thinking is typical of the frontier[:] wide-sweeping, boundlessly optimistic, impatient of detail and delay.” His appeal in Burke’s opinion was because he represented “the average man’s desire for recognition and self-respect.”<sup>96</sup>

To return to *Look* magazine’s 1958 series, “The Decline of the American Male,” George B. Leonard, Jr.’s piece “Why Is He So Afraid to Be Different?” helps to understand why Diefenbaker’s rhetoric that spoke to Canadians’ “desire for recognition and self-respect.” Through the character of “Gary Grey,” Leonard tells the story of a junior executive who struggles to speak of his life in terms of “I” rather than “we.” He felt pressured by the mantra that “The Group was always right,” and the knowledge that “the individual had his single duty: adjust.” Nor was his own home a refuge from the pressure of the organization. Leonard observes that suburban norms, psychological advice on child rearing, and automatic appliances all enforced a sense of conformity. The article itself

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<sup>94</sup> Cover, *Saturday Evening Post*, August 30, 1958, in Scrapbook #32, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>95</sup> Milton Mackaye, “Canada’s Amazing Prime Minister,” *Saturday Evening Post*, August 30, 1958.

<sup>96</sup> Clipping, Stanley Burke, “Canada’s Manifest Destiny,” *Montréal Star*, October 28, 1958, in Scrapbook #32, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

borders on the dystopian, but it represents a very real fear in this era about the sublimation of individuality. Leonard nostalgically reflects on “his ancestors.... [the ones who] fought tyrants and Indians.”<sup>97</sup> The rhetoric of the 1958 election was designed to tap into such frontier-based nostalgia and speak to the era’s concerns about not only the decline of masculine agency, but individuality in general.

### **Diefenbaker and Eisenhower**

The week after Diefenbaker was elected to a majority term, *Maclean’s* magazine published a savage attack on President Eisenhower. Penned by journalist Bruce Hutchison, it was marketed as the second of three articles on the “present crisis in the free world.” Entitled “The Eisenhower Tragedy,” it observes that the president was “weary” and “almost past his mortal endurance.” It is a sharp contrast with Diefenbaker’s ascendance and fits in with the new Progressive Conservative administration’s nationalistic tone. Hutchison takes on what had come to be known as the “malaise” of the later Eisenhower years. He noted: “The glare of Sputnik illuminated many dark corners in the current world. It revealed at once the failures of a presidency.” A nation that leads in science, machinery, and production was somehow beaten to space by the Soviets. Again, here is the criticism of those like George B. Leonard, Jr. in *Look*, that the West had become the land of the “organization man,” complacent and uninspired. Hutchison lays the blame at the feet of the White House, and Eisenhower’s physical decline again becomes a metaphor for the “crisis” of masculinity facing both the United States and Canada.<sup>98</sup>

Hutchison’s article is also representative of the growing anti-American feeling in

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<sup>97</sup> George B. Leonard, Jr., “Why is He Afraid to Be Different?” in *The Decline of the American Male*, from the editors of *Look* (New York: Random House, 1958), 25-48.

<sup>98</sup> Bruce Hutchison, “The Eisenhower Tragedy,” *Maclean’s*, April 12, 1958.

Canada at the time. According to Walton Butterworth, who would later serve as John F. Kennedy's ambassador to Canada, 1958 marked a sharp turn in Canada-U.S. relations. Frustrations included a trade imbalance, the Canadian desire to forge economic relations with Communist China, surplus American agriculture harming Canadian farmers, and American investment that had grown from \$3.58 billion in 1950 to \$8.33 billion by 1957.<sup>99</sup> In attempting to forge a working relationship with the now entrenched Diefenbaker administration, Eisenhower made a state visit to Canada in early July 1958. A memo from John Foster Dulles to the president just before the visit emphasizes the need to improve relations between the two nations. Dulles stresses that "some members of the government have been prone to play upon the emotional response that such assertions evoke and to try to make the United States the whipping boy for many of Canada's ills."<sup>100</sup>

The State Department briefing sketch of Diefenbaker demonstrates diplomatic caution. He reads as somewhat of an enigma. It acknowledges that with "evangelical fervour [the prime minister] has promoted his vision of national destiny and with his assured majority he should be able to carry out his announced program." Regarding his personality, Diefenbaker was described as "dynamic" but also "intelligent and often shrewd."<sup>101</sup> At the same time, Pearson is not seen as a preferable alternative. His "overwhelming defeat" was blamed by the State Department on his "inexperience" and "occasionally clumsy and uncertain campaigning." The overall impression of Pearson's

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<sup>99</sup> Asa McKercher, "Dealing With Diefenbaker: Canada-U.S. Relations in 1958," *International Journal* 66, no. 4 (2011): 1043-45.

<sup>100</sup> Memo from John Foster Dulles to Eisenhower, dated July 3, 1958, in "Canada (7)," Box 6, International Series, Ann Whitman Files, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library (DDEPL), Abilene, KS; Full text also available here: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v07p1/d280>

<sup>101</sup> Diplomatic Profile, "Diefenbaker, John George," July 1958, in "Briefing Book, Canada, Trip of the President, 1958 (2)," Box 11, Confidential File, White House Central Files, DDEPL.

performance thus far is described as “disappointing and unimpressive.”<sup>102</sup>

Eisenhower’s diplomatic party, which included Mamie and John Foster Dulles, was received with the usual fanfare by Governor General Vincent Massey and Prime Minister Diefenbaker. His speech to the Canadian Parliament on July 9<sup>th</sup>, 1958, however, was somewhat of a soporific address that was clearly designed to repudiate Diefenbaker’s assertions. The president addressed points of contention such as continental defence, the trade imbalance, and foreign investment. He stressed, as Dulles puts it in his memorandum, the “common global responsibilities” of the two nations.<sup>103</sup> It is a marked contrast from his speech five years prior, which talked about the “shadow of the atomic cloud” and highlighted that “no shadow can halt our advance together.”<sup>104</sup> Eisenhower’s speech in 1958 seems to yearn for the unity of 1953 and comes off as somewhat of a lecture. As the *New York Times* summarized the speech, Eisenhower explained to Canadians that many of their “grievances... were more imaginary than real.”<sup>105</sup> The *Ottawa Citizen* observed that it was likely to be “a little hard to take for many,” while the *Globe and Mail* noted that the speech was both “candid” and at the same time “came as a sharp surprise.”<sup>106</sup>

It is interesting to compare this speech with one by John F. Kennedy, given at the University of New Brunswick Convocation in October 1957. After addressing the shared

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<sup>102</sup> Diplomatic Profile, “Pearson, Lester Bowles (Mike),” July 1958, in “Briefing Book, Canada, Trip of the President, 1958 (5),” Box 12, Confidential File, White House Central Files, DDEPL.

<sup>103</sup> “Address to Members of the Canadian Houses of Parliament,” July 09, 1958, Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed August 2020, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/233709>; Memo from John Foster Dulles to Eisenhower, dated July 3, 1958, in “Canada (7),” Box 6, International Series, Ann Whitman Files, DDEPL; Full text also available here: <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1958-60v07p1/d280>

<sup>104</sup> “Address to Members of the Canadian Houses of Parliament,” July 09, 1958, Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed August 2020, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/233709>

<sup>105</sup> Raymond Daniel, “President Backs Policy on Trade in Canadian Talk,” *New York Times*, July 10, 1958.

<sup>106</sup> Harold Morrison, “Stay United - President,” *Ottawa Citizen*, July 10, 1958; Harvey Hickey, “U.S. Wheat, Oil Policies Upheld by Eisenhower,” *Globe and Mail*, July 10, 1958.

history between New Brunswick and his native state of Massachusetts, Kennedy turns to the supposed “‘new chapter’ in the relations between the United States and Canada.” He upholds Diefenbaker’s right, by electoral mandate, to assert an independent foreign policy:

It does no service either, to suppose that Canada has a closed option between a "pro-British" and a "pro-American" approach to foreign policy and trade. Canada can neither be an extension of the Cornish coast-line nor is she a mere northern vestibule to the United States. Canada has achieved a national strength and prestige which simply does not allow any portrayal of the country as an appendage of either Great Britain or the United States. To be sure, Canada has some special links with each of these two English-speaking nations, but it possesses most certainly a national destiny of its own to which it is well and timely to give foremost recognition.<sup>107</sup>

Compared to Eisenhower’s address, Kennedy is certainly dense and heavy-handed on the history. However, his rhetoric speaks to that same vision of national destiny that Diefenbaker tapped into. Eisenhower is diplomatic and was applauded by the Liberal Opposition for laying down the harsh reality of economic integration, whereas Kennedy spoke to the moment. The Senator’s tolerance for Canadian nationalism is somewhat surprising, however, given that he would soon see it as an impediment once he assumed the presidency from Eisenhower.

### **The American Presidential Election of 1960**

Following Stevenson’s loss in the 1956 election, John F. Kennedy was the leading contender for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1960. In 1957, he received over 2,500 speaking invitations, ultimately choosing to give a 144, including his address at the University of New Brunswick. By the following year, hundreds of such requests were

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<sup>107</sup> “Remarks of Senator John F. Kennedy, University of New Brunswick Convocation, October 8, 1957,” in Box 898, Series 12.1, Senate Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKPL; Transcript: <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/fredericton-new-brunswick-canada-19571008>

coming in each week.<sup>108</sup> In the months before officially announcing his candidacy, Senator Kennedy had been relentlessly touring the nation. In a recurring stump speech, throughout October and November 1959, Kennedy warned Americans of a “slow corrosion of luxury” that was taking place in American society. He highlighted that half of young American men were rejected for military service, often because of their physical fitness. He set himself as the candidate who could deliver America from its masculine malaise. Covering his speech in LaCrosse, Wisconsin, the *Denver Post* headlined: “Senator Kennedy Wonders If We Want To Endure.” The problem, Kennedy diagnosed, was that America was “losing that Pilgrim and pioneer spirit of initiative.” “We don’t need spirit now,” he bemoaned, “...we have cars to drive and buttons to push and TV to watch.... We stick to the orthodox, to the easy way and the organization man.”<sup>109</sup>

He officially announced his intention to seek the Democratic nomination for president from the Senate Caucus Room on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1960. The speech was short and rather unremarkable; more of a declaration than a vision.<sup>110</sup> Speaking two weeks later to the National Press Club, Kennedy outlined a more detailed approach in a speech entitled: “The Presidency in 1960.” The coming decade, he told his audience, was an era that “demand[s] a vigorous proponent of the national interest” rather than a “passive broker.” Couching his rhetoric in masculinity politics, Kennedy spoke of the need for a vibrant, young leader to move the nation forward. Eisenhower was, he said, comparable to King

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<sup>108</sup> Robert Dallek, *An Unfinished Life* (Boston: Back Bay Books, 2013), 229.

<sup>109</sup> Clipping, “Senator Kennedy Wonders If We Want to Endure,” *Denver Post*, October 7, 1959, in “Speeches: Newspaper Clippings,” Box 1051, Series 15.06, Campaign Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKPL; For further speeches on this theme, see the Kennedy Library transcripts of JFK addressing the AI Smith Dinner (October 1959) and the Jefferson-Jackson dinner (November 1959), found here: <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches>

<sup>110</sup> “John F. Kennedy Statement Announcing Candidacy, 2 January, 1960,” in Box 905, Series 12, Senate Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKPL; Transcript: <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/presidential-candidacy-19600102>

Lear. His recent State of the Union, Kennedy noted, could be surmised in a single line from the Shakespearean play: “I will do such things - what they are I know not... but they shall be the wonders of the Earth.” The Sixties, Kennedy stated, demanded “more than ringing manifestoes issued from the rear of battle.” America needed a president who would “place himself in the very thick of the fight.”<sup>111</sup>

It is no surprise that Theodore Roosevelt also features heavily in this speech. Kennedy observed that, similar to the first President Roosevelt, he wanted to use the “bully pulpit” of the presidency to provide “moral leadership.”<sup>112</sup> Kennedy’s speech also warned of an impending “missile gap.” America needed to reverse course, he said, to protect itself during what the *Washington Post* referred to as the “fateful decade.” Concerned by the fact that the Soviet Union appeared to be surpassing the United States in issues of defence and prestige, the *Post* continued: “What is our purpose?” In line with Kennedy’s speech, it criticized the materialism of the American people and focus on the feminine domestic sphere: “Two cars in every garage... [and] more leisure time to watch more ball games and television.” Meanwhile, the United States lagged on what was truly important in Kennedy’s view: military preparation and space exploration.<sup>113</sup> These pursuits, firmly in the masculine sphere, were how America would win the Cold War in Kennedy’s opinion.

By 1960, the concept of a “missile gap” had fully permeated the national consciousness. The best representation of the “missile gap” issue is perhaps found in a cartoon accompanying an article by Hanson Baldwin in the *New York Times* in February

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<sup>111</sup> Address by John F. Kennedy on “The Presidency in 1960,” as printed in the Congressional Record for Monday January 18, 1960, in “The Presidency, July 1956 - May 1960), Box 995, Series 14.2, Campaign Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKPL; Transcript: <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/presidency-in-1960-19600114>

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> John T. Shaw, *Rising Star, Setting Sun: The Departure of Ike, the Arrival of J.F.K., and the Continuing Battle For America’s Future* (New York: Pegasus, 2018), 24.

1960. As Baldwin observes, “the President’s ‘poppa-knows-best’ attitude” has failed to calm concern on this issue. The cartoon shows an anthropomorphized nuclear ICBM, fangs bared and reaching for a voter, while Eisenhower stands in the way, arms crossed. The voter desperately points to the looming missile behind Eisenhower while the president assures him: “Nonsense! There ain’t no such animal.”<sup>114</sup> It is an interesting representation of one of the focal points that Kennedy was striving to utilize in his run for the presidency. Eisenhower’s reassuring, father-like leadership becomes linked to concerns about military stagnation. Americans had been lulled into a false sense of security, focused on materialism and modern life that eroded strength and vigour.

In planning a presidential run in 1960, there were several hurdles that Kennedy needed to overcome with the American people regarding his own masculinity. First, there were questions about his age and thus his experience. If elected president, he would only be forty-three years old when sworn into office. Furthermore, his Senate career was rather undistinguished when compared to other candidates for the nomination like Senate Majority Leader Lyndon Johnson.<sup>115</sup> A regular trope during the primaries was to refer to Kennedy as immature, even by those close in age. Hubert Humphrey, who was just six years older than Kennedy, took to referring to him as a “boy.” During a particularly heated moment between the two camps on the campaign trail, Humphrey publicly chastised JFK: “Politics is a serious business, not a boy’s game where you can pick up your ball and run home if things don’t go according to your idea of who should win.”<sup>116</sup> Lyndon Johnson

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<sup>114</sup> Hanson W. Baldwin, “Vital Questions Raised in Defence Debate,” *New York Times*, Feb 14, 1960, in “Nixon - 14 February 1960 – 23 July 1960,” Box 995, Series 14.2, Campaign Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKPL.

<sup>115</sup> Dallek, 219-20, 226.

<sup>116</sup> Richard J.H. Johnston, “Invective Traded In West Virginia,” *New York Times*, May 1, 1960; See also: “Humphrey, in Coal Fields Tour, Feels Like ‘Triumphant Caesar,’” *New York Times*, April 12, 1960.



was similarly fond of making jokes about Kennedy's youth. In one quip, which also alluded to Kennedy's then-rumoured Addison's disease, Johnson reassured audiences that Kennedy had been given a clean bill of health - by his pediatrician.<sup>117</sup>

More problematic from an electoral standpoint, however, was Kennedy's religion. There was an intense anti-Catholic sentiment within the American public, and concern that any Catholic president would take orders from the Pope. It became necessary for Kennedy to prove that he was his own man. A Gallup poll conducted in May 1959 concluded that while 62% of Americans would consider a Catholic for president, another 28% would not. That nearly a third of voters would not consider a person for high office because of their religion was a major handicap.<sup>118</sup> There are volumes of letters in Kennedy's Pre-Presidential Papers from Americans concerned about the candidate's religion. They provide a window into the misplaced concerns that many Americans had. For example, Richard L. Cupp of Muncie, Indiana wanted to know what Kennedy would do "when confronted by papal order?"<sup>119</sup> Similarly, Eldon McIntosh of Odessa, Texas, was concerned how Kennedy a "citizen of the US [could] hold allegiance to Pope John and the United State[s] at the same time?"<sup>120</sup> Finally, and more specifically, Mrs. Donald F. Carolo wanted to know if elected president, which bible Kennedy would choose to be sworn in on — the Protestant or Catholic one?<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Rorabaugh, 71-72; Martin W. Sandler, ed., *The Letters of John F. Kennedy* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 42.

<sup>118</sup> Shaun A. Casey, *The Making of a Catholic President: Nixon vs. Kennedy 1960* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 24-25.

<sup>119</sup> Letter from Richard L. Cupp, dated September 29, 1960, in "Correspondence C (2 of 10)," Box 1002, Series 14.5, Campaign Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKPL.

<sup>120</sup> Letter from Eldon McIntosh, dated October 15, 1960, in "Correspondence M (4 of 19)," Box 1007, Series 14.5, Campaign Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKPL.

<sup>121</sup> Letter from Mrs. Donald F. Carolo, dated September 15, 1960, in "Correspondence C (2 of 10)," Box 1002, Series 14.5, Campaign Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKPL.

It was decided by the team surrounding Kennedy that in order to make a serious bid for the nomination at the convention, it would be necessary for the Senator to run in a series of Democratic primaries. This would prove his ability to draw a wide base of voter support, especially from Protestants.<sup>122</sup> The two major focuses for the Kennedy campaign were Wisconsin and West Virginia, both heavily Protestant states. These states were also contested by Senator Hubert Humphrey, who was similarly using the primary process to gain traction. In two bitterly fought battles with Humphrey, Kennedy came out with 56% of the vote in Wisconsin, while in West Virginia his victory was even more decisive at 61%. Crucial to Kennedy's victories was his family's wealth. As Humphrey described the process, it was a bit like "an independent merchant competing against a chain store."<sup>123</sup>

Then, on May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1960, the Soviet Union shot down an American U2 reconnaissance plane, thirteen hundred miles into their airspace. Assuming the pilot had not survived, the Eisenhower administration released a bulletin about a "weather plane" experiencing difficulties. Several days later, this lie was exposed when Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev revealed that his military had shot down a spy plane and possessed the wreckage. The Soviet Union also had captured the pilot, Gary Francis Powers, as Khrushchev said, "alive and kicking."<sup>124</sup> The Soviet premier used the incident to upend the imminent Paris Summit between the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and France. Demanding an apology that Eisenhower was unwilling to give, Khrushchev stormed out of opening deliberations at the Elysée Palace on May 16<sup>th</sup>.<sup>125</sup> Senator Kennedy

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<sup>122</sup> Theodore Sorenson, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009), 127-28; Donaldson, *First Modern Campaign*, 45-46.

<sup>123</sup> Sorenson, 133-146; As Sorenson observes, while Kennedy won by 56% in Wisconsin, Humphrey was able to take four of the heavily Protestant districts in the state. A strong victory in West Virginia became crucial in proving Kennedy's vote getting ability among Protestant voters.

<sup>124</sup> Khrushchev as quoted in Hitchcock, 462-65; Malsberger, 174-75.

<sup>125</sup> Hitchcock, 468; Kenneth S. Davis, *The Politics of Honor: A Biography of Adlai E. Stevenson* (New

was campaigning in St. Helens, Oregon, when he was asked by a high school student how he would handle the U2 crisis as president. Kennedy replied, noting the Khrushchev had asked for an apology, that: “I think that might have been possible to do.”<sup>126</sup>

The fallout was instantaneous and provided an angle for primary opponents and the presumptive Republican nominee, Vice President Richard Nixon, to target Kennedy’s youth and inexperience. As supporters of Lyndon Johnson were known to assert, the Democratic Party needed a man “with a touch of grey in his hair.”<sup>127</sup> Nixon, meanwhile, would later note that “the President of the United States must never apologize or express regrets for trying to protect the security of this country.” It was, as one editorial remarked, “youthful naïveté” on the part of Kennedy.<sup>128</sup> While he attempted to apologize and clarify that he would merely “express regrets” for the U2 incident, the damage was done.<sup>129</sup> An internal Kennedy campaign memo from around that time observes that JFK was the hardest hit of the presidential candidates by the U2 incident. It points to polling in which Nixon led

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York: Putnam, 1967), 413-14

<sup>126</sup> G. Scott Thomas, *A New World To Be Won: John F. Kennedy, Richard Nixon, and the Tumultuous Year of 1960* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011), 130.

<sup>127</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 27.

<sup>128</sup> Booklet, “I Think It Is Time To Set The Record Straight,” in “Position Papers, Defence and Security,” Box 1, Pre-Presidential Series (PPS) 74, Richard M. Nixon Presidential Library (RMNPL), Yorba Linda, CA; Clipping, “Keep Foreign Policy in Experienced Hands,” October 24, 1960, in Box 1, “Pre-Election Correspondence (Unarranged),” PPS 60, RMNPL; During the general election Kennedy advisors were trying to come up with a legal rationale under international law to justify the need for an apology. The opinion, prepared for Kennedy by Professor H. Berman of Harvard Law, observed that because the flight violated international law by breaching Soviet air space, an apology would have been appropriate. Furthermore, Berman noted that such apologies are “customary” under international law. He highlighted the Bering Strait issue, in which the Russians had to apologize. The Nixon campaign was aware of this opinion and developed a counter argument in anticipation that Kennedy would attempt to use it during the debates. Not surprisingly, the Nixon team pointed to the fact that an apology would be a massive “propaganda” win for the Soviet premier. The Republican team further argued that Khrushchev had been aware of these spying activities for years and chose this moment to torpedo the conference because he stood unable to gain from it. See memo from Rita E. Hauser, October 7, 1960, in “Relations - Communist,” Box 1, PPS 61, RMNPL.

<sup>129</sup> Thomas, 130.

Kennedy 57-43 when asked who would be more effective in dealing with Khrushchev.<sup>130</sup>

Nonetheless, the Kennedy campaign went into the Democratic National Convention in mid-July in a strong position, largely because of momentum gained from the primary process. The convention is perhaps most captivatingly remembered through Norman Mailer's piece for *Esquire*, "Superman Comes to the Supermarket." The up-and-coming novelist managed to summarize the events, quite skillfully, into several lines:

It was on the one hand a dull convention, one of the less interesting by general agreement, relieved by local bits of color, given two half hours of excitement by two demonstrations for [Adlai] Stevenson, buoyed up by the class of the Kennedy machine, turned by the surprise of [Lyndon] Johnson's nomination as vice-president, but, all the same, dull, depressed in its over-all tone.<sup>131</sup>

Kennedy, in Mailer's opinion, was "unlike any politician who had ever run for President," and in the days before the election, he observed that if elected, Kennedy would come to power in a moment when "America was in danger of drifting into a profound decline."<sup>132</sup>

Mailer theorizes that since the First World War, American politics has existed in a duality, with alternating dull and visionary phases. Following the Second World War, the Red Scare pushed the visionary form of politics underground in a "terror of the national self: free-loving, lust-looting, atheistic, implacable" and "Uncle Harry gave way to *Father*, and security, regularity, order, and the life of no imagination were the command of the day."<sup>133</sup> Mailer also raised concerns about the rise of the "organization man," civil rights, and Russian military advancements. By the end of the decade, "the fatherly calm of the General," he said, "began to seem like the uxorious mellifluousness of the undertaker."<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Untitled Memo on Impact of U-2 Incident on Kennedy Primary Campaign and Foreign Policy, in "Speech Materials, Undated," Box 996, Series 14.2, Campaign Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKPL.

<sup>131</sup> Norman Mailer, "Superman Comes to the Supermarket," *Esquire*, November 1960.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>133</sup> Emphasis added; *Ibid.*, 122

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

What is curious is just how close Mailer's argument mirrors that of psychoanalyst Robert Lifton in *The Broken Connection* (1979). As discussed in Chapter Two, Lifton argues that humankind has a multifaceted response when faced with extinction, such as the looming threat of nuclear war. First, there is a tendency to restraint and moderation, driven by a desire to protect oneself and loved ones. However, over time there is a rejection of such reservation that comes with a "nuclear numbing," leading to a more proactive approach.<sup>135</sup>

Mailer portrays Kennedy in the visage of a hero, a superman, though he wrestles with his portrayal of the young Senator. It is not *entirely* flattering. There is worry that Kennedy is too much like a movie star, too skilled at presenting himself to the public. At the same time, Mailer sees intelligence and cerebralism in Kennedy that is comparable to Stevenson but better encased and more decisive. As Joseph Alsop would put it, much less fluently than Mailer, Kennedy was "Stevenson with balls."<sup>136</sup> America's choice, as Mailer concluded, was now between "adventure or monotony." The question was, he stated, whether "in a terror of all the creativities (and some violences) that mass man might now have to dare again, the undetermined would go out in the morning to vote for the psychic security of Nixon the way a middle-aged man past adventure holds to the stale bread of his marriage."<sup>137</sup> Would the "organization man" reject Kennedy's call to action and seek comfort in the familiarity of Nixon's "other-directed" leadership?

It is a fantastical summary of the convention and analysis of the election to come. Mailer's prose manages to encompass much of what this chapter, indeed what this dissertation is working to demonstrate. There is a movement from a desire for paternalistic

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<sup>135</sup> Robert Jay Lifton, *The Broken Connection: On Death and the Continuity of Life* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 337, 341-45.

<sup>136</sup> Mailer, 122-25; Cuordileone, 190.

<sup>137</sup> Mailer, 127.

reassurance to concerns about the impact of modernity and complacency. The solution is presented in terms of a need to return to a sense of purpose and national destiny. In his acceptance speech at the Democratic National Convention, which took place at the outdoor Los Angeles Memorial Colosseum, Kennedy hit on these themes:

I stand tonight facing west on what was once the last frontier. From the lands that stretch three thousand miles behind me, the pioneers of old gave up their safety, their comfort and sometimes their lives to build a new world here in the West. They were not the captives of their own doubts, the prisoners of their own price tags. Their motto was not 'every man for himself' - but 'all for the common cause.'... We stand today on the edge of a New Frontier - the frontier of the 1960s - a frontier of unknown opportunities and perils - a frontier of unfulfilled hopes and threats.<sup>138</sup>

Interestingly, this speech is not viewed as one of Kennedy's better addresses. It articulated his campaign strategy to the American people, but the delivery by an exhausted candidate was seen as rather lacklustre. It was this speech that emboldened Nixon to take on Kennedy in a series of presidential debates.<sup>139</sup>

Richard Nixon had easily secured the Republican nomination as the sitting vice president. The image of the man, whom Mailer described as "Mickey Mantle-cum-Lindbergh in office," was dualistic. Though capable of being warm and affable, his cold and calculating side often won out, which made him seem disingenuous to the public. Furthermore, he possessed a questionable affinity for the right-wing of the Republican Party. When compared to Kennedy, Nixon was a known quantity to Americans. Thus, in the election of 1960, Richard Nixon faced the challenge of remaking his image into someone more accessible and non-confrontational; to bring him closer to the evolving

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<sup>138</sup> Dallek, 276

<sup>139</sup> Edmund F. Kallina, Jr., *Kennedy v. Nixon* (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2010), 79-80; Christopher Matthews, *Kennedy and Nixon: The Rivalry That Shaped Postwar America* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 134-35; Theodore White, *The Making of the President, 1960* (1961; New York: Barnes and Noble, 2004), 219.

hegemonic masculine norm that his role as Eisenhower's hatchet-man had divorced him from.

This image, which is largely limited to the 1960 campaign, is often derided as an attempt at a "new Nixon." As the vice president put it, he needed to "erase the Herblock image first."<sup>140</sup> He is referencing cartoonist Herbert Block, who was responsible for many unflattering portrayals of Vice President Nixon.<sup>141</sup> The one that stuck with Nixon dates to the 1954 midterms. The cartoon shows a Republican welcoming committee greeting the vice president as he arrives to campaign for a local candidate. Carrying a suitcase, he heaves his baggage ahead of him, *out of a sewer grate*. In his typical characterization of Nixon, Block has drawn him with heavy set jowls, an unshaven face, and a dark, menacing complexion.<sup>142</sup> In his memoirs, Richard Nixon stated that 1954 was a year he strongly debated quitting politics. He wrote that he "resented being portrayed as a demagogue or a liar or as the sewer dwelling denizen of Herblock cartoons." "I sometimes wondered," he questioned, "where party loyalty left off and masochism began."<sup>143</sup>

The approach towards crafting a "new" image for Nixon was born out of an attempt to coalesce the Eisenhower coalition around the vice president. Nixon needed to hold onto Ike's moderate base in the Republican Party while attracting enough Independents and

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<sup>140</sup> White, 326.

<sup>141</sup> "Herblock" or Herbert Block cartoons, received national syndication from their original publication in the *Washington Post-Times Herald*. Block was known for originating a cartoon image of Nixon, during his time as vice president, as a jowled villain. Nixon was frequently portrayed as a shifty character, with a five o'clock shadow, and dark eyes. Nixon proved deeply affected by the portrayal and cancelled his home subscription to the *Post* so that his daughters would not see the cartoons. Herbert Block's portrayal, in part, thought to have contributed to Nixon's attempts at crafting a more accessible image. This came to be styled as "new Nixon." For more information see White's *The Making of the President* (1960), Chapter Ten, as well as Stephen J. Whitfield, "Richard Nixon as a Comic Figure," *American Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (1985): 114-132.

<sup>142</sup> White, 326; See also "Herblock's History: Political Cartoons From The Crash to the Millennium," Digital Exhibition, Library of Congress, accessed April 27, 2020, <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/herblocks-history/index.html>

<sup>143</sup> Richard Nixon, *The Memoirs of Richard Nixon* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1978), 163.

Democrats to form a governing coalition.<sup>144</sup> There was a perception among his team that this would be relatively easy to do. Up until that point, Nixon was seen as a man who understood how to operate and project himself to the American people in a growing television age. In fact, the early foundations for a “new Nixon” had been laid by the vice president himself. In what has come to be known as the “Checkers Speech,” Nixon addressed the American people on September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1952. It was a last-ditch effort to save his spot on the ticket, following a relatively contrived ‘scandal’ that began in the *New York Post* on September 18<sup>th</sup>. Nixon had an expense fund that ran around \$18,000. It was contributed to by private donors, with a donation cap of \$500. The fund was used to pay for California-based office expenses that were not covered by his Senate budget. By modern standards, it is not scandalous. However, as Eisenhower was running a campaign that was focused on his status as a political outsider who could “clean up the mess in Washington,” there was an optics problem.<sup>145</sup>

With editorial opinion running 2-1 in favour of Eisenhower dropping him from the ticket, Nixon took his case to the people. Although accounts differ, it appears that this address was intended to be a resignation speech. Nixon instead utilized the airtime as an opportunity to clear his name.<sup>146</sup> The first half of the speech is rather unremarkable, as Nixon lays out the nature of the fund and auditor’s results. He then turns to his financial history. It is an extremely forthcoming address in which he stresses “every dime that we’ve

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<sup>144</sup> Donaldson, 6.

<sup>145</sup> Malsberger, 1-4; Jeffrey Frank, *Ike and Dick: Portrait of a Strange Political Marriage* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2013), 39-40; John Robert Greene, *I Like Ike: The Presidential Election of 1952* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas), 152

<sup>146</sup> Frank, 44-49; Greene, 151-56; See also Malsberger, 16-17, for more information on the attempt by Eisenhower advisors to get Nixon’s resignation from the ticket. For his part, President Eisenhower in his memoirs asserts that the phone call from Dewey to Nixon, urging him to resign, did not come on his order (Eisenhower, *Mandate For Change*, 68).



got, is honestly ours.” Nixon admits only to one political gift: a cocker spaniel puppy from a supporter in Texas. He stresses that his daughters have fallen in love with the dog, whom they named “Checkers,” and that “regardless of what they say about it, we’re gonna keep [him].”<sup>147</sup> The Checkers speech tends to be viewed by historians as one of the first savvy political uses of the medium of television.<sup>148</sup> The speech offered a duality to Nixon that challenged the Herblock image across the next eight years. The Checkers speech showed a more affable side of Nixon, in the guise of a husband and a father. The hope was he could return to that portrayal eight years later.

In his acceptance speech to the Republican National Convention, Nixon struck a reasoned and measured tone. It is generally concluded that his delivery was better than Kennedy’s.<sup>149</sup> At the same time, when Nixon’s text is contrasted with JFK’s, it comes across as lacking vision. It is an appeal to continue. Nixon invokes the need to build on the steady leadership of the past eight years and points to Kennedy’s U2 remarks as proof of his inexperience and immaturity. Foreshadowing the coming debates, Nixon alludes to the fact that while his goals are the same as Kennedy’s, they differ in implementing them. Asking Americans to continue, Nixon does not rise to the uncertainty of the moment or diverge his path from Eisenhower.<sup>150</sup> Nor are there any remarkable moments in his speech. His mollification stands in stark contrast to Kennedy’s assertion: “The old era is ending[,] the old ways will not do.”<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> “Checkers Speech,” September 23, 1952, Richard Nixon Foundation, accessed August 2020, <https://www.nixonfoundation.org/1952/09/checkers-speech/>

<sup>148</sup> Thomas Doherty, *Cold War, Cool Medium: Television, McCarthyism, and American Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 90-91; Malsberger, 21-22; Dallek, 284-85.

<sup>149</sup> Kallina, 95; Matthews, 136

<sup>150</sup> “Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican Convention in Chicago,” July 28, 1960, Richard Nixon, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed August 2020, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/256651>

<sup>151</sup> “Acceptance of the Democratic Nomination for President,” July 15, 1960, Historic Speeches, John F.

However, Nixon had reason to play it safe. He began the general election at an advantage, polling 50-44 against JFK.<sup>152</sup> Unfortunately, early into the campaign, while in North Carolina, the vice president banged his knee on a car door. It became severely infected with hemolytic staphylococcus, and he was hospitalized for nearly two weeks. This provided Kennedy with an opportunity to close the polling gap. By the first debate, Nixon led by 47-46. The Kennedy campaign felt that the turning point came on September 12<sup>th</sup>, when the Senator spoke to the Greater Houston Ministerial Association.<sup>153</sup> He lectured the assembled Protestant ministers: “I am not the Catholic candidate for President. I am the Democratic Party’s candidate for President who happens also to be a Catholic.” He told those present that while he did not foresee a situation where the national interest would be at odds with his conscience, and reassured them that he would resign the office of president if that ever were the case. It was a bold declaration. Then, in keeping with his frontier theme, he invoked the Alamo. Men named McCafferty, Bailey, and Carey fought alongside James Bowie and Davy Crockett, Kennedy told the Texas-based audience. No one asked if they were Catholic. “There was no religious test at the Alamo,” he concluded.<sup>154</sup>

Throughout these early days of the campaign, Kennedy hit hard on the “New Frontier.” In San Francisco, he drew on the comparison between the nation and the family, observing that there were times to get away from it all, to relax and forget about your problems. Eisenhower’s tenure had offered such a reassurance. The Sixties, Kennedy

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Kennedy Presidential Library, accessed August 2020, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/historic-speeches/acceptance-of-democratic-nomination-for-president>

<sup>152</sup> Sorenson, 168; Rorabaugh, 140

<sup>153</sup> “Memorandum on the Last Nine Days of Campaigning,” Box 1076, Series 14.2, Campaign Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKPL; Rorabaugh, 144-45.

<sup>154</sup> Transcript of Senator Kennedy’s Address, in “Speeches: Houston Ministerial Association, 13 September, 1960,” Box 1016, Series 14.5, Campaign Files, Pre-Presidential Files, JFKPL; “Nixon Off On West Tour; Kennedy Meets Ministers,” *Hartford Courant*, September 13, 1960.

stressed, were “not going to be that kind of time.” At a rally a week later, he told an audience that the challenges and burdens currently facing America were comparable to those of the late nineteenth century.<sup>155</sup> He was aided by the fact, that alongside concerns about societal decline, America was facing an economic recession.<sup>156</sup> Kennedy summarized his program for the nation in two words: renewed progress. The “New Frontier” offered an opportunity to restore American prestige at home and abroad. He touted increases in teacher’s salaries, investment in schools, a minimum wage increase, expansion of unemployment coverage, and improved medical coverage for seniors as ways to get America moving. On foreign policy, he pushed for a more flexible response to the spread of communism, including economic reliance and a movement away from massive retaliation. When a house is on fire, he told audiences, the fire department doesn’t put it out by blowing up the house.<sup>157</sup>

Once he was released from the hospital on September 9<sup>th</sup>, Nixon moved swiftly to cover 15,000 miles and 25 states before the first debate. He developed a 103-degree fever in the midst of this campaign swing but continued to push heavily.<sup>158</sup> Nixon’s major stump speech focused on selling himself as the candidate of continuity, on building up the peace and prosperity Eisenhower had achieved. He argued that he was the tested quantity on the world stage, having stood up to Khrushchev in the “kitchen debate” in 1959. He understood what it took to keep the nation from succumbing to war.<sup>159</sup> Kennedy, by comparison, was

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<sup>155</sup> George Bain, “Mr. Kennedy and the New Frontier,” *Globe and Mail*, September 13, 1960.

<sup>156</sup> Dallek, 229.

<sup>157</sup> Robert T. Hartmann, “Kennedy Predicts Victory in State,” *Los Angeles Times*, September 9, 1960; Edward T. Filliard, “Kennedy Offers Five-Point Plan to ‘Rebuild’ Confidence in U.S.,” *Washington Post*, September 8, 1960.

<sup>158</sup> Nixon, *Memoirs*, 218.

<sup>159</sup> In the summer of 1959, Richard Nixon visited Moscow, to attend the American National Exhibition, held at Sokolniki Park. The event was part of a cultural exchange. Touring the exhibits with Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev, the pair stopped in front of a model of a typical American kitchen. There they got into a

rash, inexperienced, and out of touch in Nixon's view. In contrast, he pitched himself as a common man, often stating: "I know what it means to be poor" and pointing to his childhood as the son of a grocer. While not in opposition to the social safety net, Nixon believed in empowering the people and the states to support themselves. The Democrats, he said, were going to rack up an expensive bill that Americans would have to pay for.<sup>160</sup>

A series of four debates took place between September 26<sup>th</sup> and October 21<sup>st</sup>. Much has been written about these events, which began a trend in modern presidential elections. The first debate, especially, has been covered extensively for its impact on the image and perception of John F. Kennedy in contrast to Richard Nixon. However, to look at decisions made before the debates through a lens of masculinity politics renders some new perspectives. Eisenhower had advised Nixon strongly against debating Kennedy, feeling that there was nothing to gain by appearing on the same platform.<sup>161</sup> Richard Nixon, up

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heated debate over the merits of science, technology, and consumerism in their respective nations. The Soviet premier criticized the quality of American construction, the superfluosity of American gadgets, and touted Soviet achievements in missile technology. Nixon, in rebutting the Soviet leader, asked if it was not better that they be arguing about the merits of washing machines compared to rockets, rather than life altering geopolitical conflict? He pointed out that the home on display was within the means of the average American, drastically improving living standards. Khrushchev refused to believe him. Interesting here, is the cultural disparity and the way in which it feeds into the masculine-feminine dichotomy that Connell and other gender scholars speak to. In the lead up to the 1960 campaign, Kennedy firmly placed himself as the antidote to the "organization man" and the conformity of consumer culture, touting concerns about military strength and technology. In contrast, Nixon in 1959, clearly positioned himself within the more feminine domestic sphere by arguing the benefits of a capitalistic, consumer-based society, at the very time that concerns were being raised about the erosion of masculinity due to this lifestyle. Still, the famous takeaway from that interaction was a photograph of Nixon wagging his finger at the Soviet premier, while explaining the merits of capitalism. It was interpreted as the vice president standing up to the Soviet premier and defending America's honour. James Reston of the *New York Times* referred to the moment as the "perfect way to launch a campaign for the U.S. presidency." However, with Kennedy's positioning of the race as a choice between continued masculine malaise and a forward-looking journey to new frontiers, Nixon came to appear as more of the same. For more information, see Thomas, 8-10; Malsberger, 165; Nixon, *Memoirs*, 208-09.

<sup>160</sup> White, 330-32; Robert S. Cathcart and Edward A. Schwarz, "The New Nixon or Poor Richard," *North American Review* 253, no. 5 (1968): 13; John A. Farrell, *Richard Nixon: The Life* (New York: Doubleday, 2017), Chapter One, eBook.

<sup>161</sup> John W. Self, "The First Debate over the Debates: How Kennedy and Nixon Negotiated the 1960 Presidential Debates," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (2005): 362.

until the convention, had sided with Eisenhower. However, as Nixon's press secretary Herbert Klein remembers, the candidate abruptly told reporters after his acceptance speech that he would commit to debates. "I almost fell over when I heard this," Klein said. "I could attribute the reversal only to the fact that [Nixon] did not want his manhood sullied by appearing as if he were afraid to debate his opponent," he guessed.<sup>162</sup> Historian Edmund Kallina agrees. In his exploration of the 1960 election, he observes that Nixon's decision was "psychological" and clearly driven by the desire to be seen standing up to Kennedy. He also wanted the chance to distinguish himself apart from Eisenhower, as his own man.<sup>163</sup>

Nixon would later state that he felt he could not refuse a series of debates that Americans overwhelmingly wanted to see. If he did, it would be alleged that he was afraid to debate Kennedy.<sup>164</sup> This is likely also why, despite facing a fever of 102 degrees, the first debate went ahead as scheduled on September 26<sup>th</sup>.<sup>165</sup> It is estimated that seventy million viewers tuned in to watch that evening, roughly two-thirds of America's population.<sup>166</sup> There was a certain novelty to the concept, though newspapers reminded Americans of the national tradition of debates dating back to when Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas went head to head during an U.S. Senate race in Illinois in 1858.<sup>167</sup> A draft of Kennedy's opening remarks for the first debate demonstrates intent to again appeal

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<sup>162</sup> Self, 363-64.

<sup>163</sup> Kallina, 118-119.

<sup>164</sup> Richard Nixon, *Six Crises*, (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1962), 323.

<sup>165</sup> Self, 368.

<sup>166</sup> Donaldson, 110; Self, 362; Donaldson's figure of seventy million comes from Sorenson's *Kennedy*. The official numbers, as estimated by the Commission on Presidential Debates are as follows: First Debate (September 26, 1960) - 66.4 million, Second Debate (October 7, 1960) - 61.9 million, Third Debate (October 13, 1960) - 63.7 million, Fourth Debate (October 21, 1960) - 60.4 million. For more information, please see: <https://www.debates.org/debate-history/1960-debates/>

<sup>167</sup> "Lincoln-Douglas vs. Nixon-Kennedy," *Wall Street Journal*, September 26, 1960; "That Great Debate," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 27, 1960.

to concerns about national decline. It suggested he state that “too much of our national life is pervaded by an ethic of materialism and mediocrity,” that it has “beclouded our direction and dissipated our purpose.”<sup>168</sup> Ultimately, Kennedy was not that direct in his opening remarks, but those words represent his overall tone and intent that night. Nixon, who spoke second, started by agreeing with much of what his opponent has said and defined his differences with Kennedy again as a matter of means rather than goals.<sup>169</sup>

It is well known that Nixon did not fare well on television during the first debate. The hot lights and an ongoing fever caused him to perspire excessively. He had lost weight from his hospitalization and subsequent slowed recovery, making his shirt collar too big. His skin appeared sallow, and the black and white television cameras only magnified his ill complexion.<sup>170</sup> It led to the infamous comment from Chicago mayor Richard Daley: “My God! They’ve embalmed him before he even died!” Nixon observed that after the debate, many friends and family members, including his mother, indeed called to inquire about the state of his health.<sup>171</sup> Part of the problem was that the vice president had refused makeup on the premise that Kennedy had also refused to use the services of CBS makeup artist Frances Arvold. As Herbert Klein stated, Nixon was concerned that his use of makeup would “look like he lacked macho.” Instead, Nixon sent an aide out to get a socially acceptable Lazy Shave beard stick, in hopes of hiding the darkness of his stubble.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Draft Remarks, “Debate Opening,” in “Debates,” Box 991, Series 14.1, Campaign Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKPL.

<sup>169</sup> Transcript of the First Kennedy-Nixon Debate, in Box 912, Series 12.1, Senate Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKPL.

<sup>170</sup> White, 354-55.

<sup>171</sup> Donaldson, 118; Nixon, *Memoirs*, 219.

<sup>172</sup> Thomas, 210, Matthews, 149; Stephen J. Whitfield observes that the motivation behind Nixon’s use of Lazy Shave was likely related to his sensitivity towards Herbert Block’s depiction of him. Lazy Shave, as a product, was meant to dampen the darkness of a man’s stubble, yet because of Nixon’s fever and perspiration under the hot debate-stage lights the tactic betrayed him and only further accentuated his sweating (Whitfield, “Nixon as a Comic Figure,” 116).

In reality, behind closed doors, Kennedy gave into his television advisor Bill Wilson. A light coat of Max Factor makeup was applied. This fact was not revealed until forty-years later when Ted Sorenson, towards the end of his life, admitted that Kennedy secretly had a light coat of makeup applied.<sup>173</sup> The entire narrative is convoluted to the point of absurdity. Yet, it is entirely possible to reduce the ultimate outcome of the first debate down to the masculine insecurities of these two powerful men. Had both simply yielded to the advice of television producers, the experts on the matter, it is possible Nixon could have gone a long way in erasing the negative image that surrounded him. Instead, as Stephen Watts observes, “Nixon came off as the shifty, sweating, weak symbol of masculine decline, the organization man wilting when pulled from behind his desk and thrust into the bright lights.”<sup>174</sup>

Further working against Nixon was his approach to the debate. Shortly before the encounter, running-mate Henry Cabot Lodge called Nixon and urged him to “erase the assassin image.” Attorney General William Rogers had similarly told him to play the “good guy” on stage. This aim again stemmed from the desire to continue to push the “new Nixon” image, while at the same time urging Nixon to not go too hard on Kennedy and thus elicit sympathy. It was mistakenly assumed by the Nixon camp that given his past success in debates and Kennedy’s lacklustre acceptance speech, their candidate would wipe the floor with the young senator.<sup>175</sup> Not only were they mistaken, but as Theodore White observes the first debate projected Kennedy to the status of Nixon’s equal. Following the debate, the Nixon headquarters had a flurry of phone calls from supporters demanding that the “old

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<sup>173</sup> Oliphant and Wilkie, 297-98; Self, 368.

<sup>174</sup> Steven Watts, *JFK and the Masculine Mystique* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2016), 67.

<sup>175</sup> Matthews, 18, 147; Thomas, 209-211; Malsberger, 184.

Nixon” be brought back.<sup>176</sup> Letters to the campaign similarly reflected this desire. J.A. Singiser wrote that Nixon was “too much of a gentleman,” and that he acted like a follower rather than a leader. Emily Cole similarly wanted to know: “Where is the Nixon I knew and admired when he annihilated Helen Gahagan Douglas and Jerry Voorhees[?]” The concern was that in trying to project a more affable image, Nixon had now become too passive. Both authors wrote that Nixon needed to avoid Dewey’s fatal “me-too” mistake by agreeing with Truman too often in 1948.<sup>177</sup> By agreeing with Kennedy in the debates, Nixon ran the risk of looking too compliant, too feminine.

Much has been written on the impact of the debates on the final result. This is the nature of a close presidential election. The victory or defeat of a candidate can be attributed to any number of small decisions. For this exploration, what it is worth knowing is that the Nixon campaign felt that following the fourth debate: “Kennedy [had] succeeded in creating a victory psychology... [and that] the debates have enabled him to overcome the image of immaturity, particularly with his own partisans.”<sup>178</sup> It is also true that Gallup polling following the final debate showed Kennedy with a lead of 51-45, in contrast to the neck-in-neck race on the eve of the debates.<sup>179</sup> At the same time, internal Nixon campaign polling across all four debates does show that in terms of the electoral college, despite polling fluctuations, there is little actual shift in the Republican’s projected result. Modelling continued to show an incredibly close and volatile race, with one estimate

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<sup>176</sup> White, 354, 357.

<sup>177</sup> Letter from J.A. Singiser, dated September 28, 1960, in “Correspondence,” Box 1, PPS 61, RMNPL; Letter from Emily Cole, n.d., in Box 1, “Pre-Election Correspondence (Unarranged),” PPS 60, RMNPL; Please note that the letter from Ms. Cole appears to be a form letter, there are many in this box of the same makeup.

<sup>178</sup> Memorandum from Claude Robinson, dated October 28, 1960, in “Polls, Opinion Research (2), Box 1, PPS 61, RMNPL.

<sup>179</sup> Donaldson, 132; White, 391.



leaning towards a razor-thin Nixon victory in the electoral college by 269-268.<sup>180</sup>

Thus, in the final weeks of the campaign, there was desperation on the part of the Nixon team. It is worth noting, given the events that would transpire a decade later at the Watergate complex, that there was a break-in at Kennedy's endocrinologist's office, as well as an attempted break-in at his personal physician's office.<sup>181</sup> The Republican campaign also finally turned to President Eisenhower for help. There had been a hesitancy to use the president, under the assumption that the Kennedy campaign would charge that Nixon was not his own man. Kennedy advisor Kenneth O'Donnell later confirmed this would have been the strategy had Nixon relied more heavily on the president.<sup>182</sup> Eisenhower similarly recognized the need for Nixon to distance himself. As he later stated: "We... did not want to make it look, neither did he nor I... that I had pushed him out in front and that... he was just a papa's boy."<sup>183</sup>

Speaking to large, adoring crowds in key cities like Pittsburgh, Cleveland, and New York, Eisenhower hit on Kennedy's age and experience, condemning the fact that "this young genius" felt he could run military policy better than the Joint Chiefs.<sup>184</sup> He touted Nixon's preparation for the presidency and warned voters against Kennedy's "glittering promises" and "glib oratory." He condemned Kennedy for "bemoaning" America's weakness and referred to his vision of a New Frontier as "immature" and incomplete.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Electoral Vote Estimations After First Second, Third, and Fourth Debates, found in "Polls, Opinion Research," in Box 1, PPS 61, RMNPL.

<sup>181</sup> Thomas, 226; While it is not possible to attribute these actions to the Nixon campaign, or the orders of the candidate, the similarity of the events to those twelve years later at the Watergate building make the two break-ins worthy of mention.

<sup>182</sup> Matthews, 175.

<sup>183</sup> Eisenhower as quoted in Malsberger, 186-87; White, 308; Hitchcock, 491-92.

<sup>184</sup> Hitchcock, 492.

<sup>185</sup> See "Remarks at a Rally in Garden City, New York," November 2, 1960, as well as "Address at a Republican Rally in the New York Coliseum, November 2, 1960, and "Address in Cleveland," November 4, 1963, all found in *The American Presidency Project*, accessed August 2020,

As Kennedy described it at the time: “With every word he utters, I can feel the votes leaving me. It’s like standing on a mound of sand with the tide running out.... If the election was tomorrow, I’d win easily, but six days from now it’s up for grabs.”<sup>186</sup> While the debates had put to rest much of the question about Kennedy’s age and inexperience, the trope remained, and it proved useful to the Republicans in the closing days. One cartoon, published shortly before the election, depicted Kennedy as a young boy in a news cap, yelling over the fence at the White House: “I can lick both of you!”<sup>187</sup>

The last days of the campaign turned personal. Nixon told crowds, “You know, it’s not *Jack’s* money they’re going to be spending!” Meanwhile, Kennedy fired back at Nixon’s charge that he was a “barefaced liar.” “Having seen [Nixon] in close-up - and makeup - for television debates,” Kennedy said, “I would never accuse Nixon of being barefaced.”<sup>188</sup> Here was the anticipated attack on the use of makeup, which Nixon did rely on for subsequent debates.<sup>189</sup> It also hit at the “Tricky Dick” moniker that followed Nixon from his congressional campaigns. Another cartoon in the final days of the campaign pokes fun at the makeup issue. Nixon is shown with a shelf of face masks behind him labelled “Experience,” “I’m Like Ike,” “Quemoy-Matsu.” He is currently trying on one labelled the “Cuban Issue,” and exclaims: “By Golly! I think I’ve found the right makeup!” Not “mask” or “visage,” but “makeup.” Just to belabour the point a little.<sup>190</sup>

In his closing appeal to the American people, Kennedy defined the race as between

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<https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/people/president/dwight-d-eisenhower>

<sup>186</sup> Shaw, xii

<sup>187</sup> Cartoon, “I Can Lick Both Of You,” *Chicago Daily News*, November 2, 1960, in “Election Predictions,” Box 22, PPS 77, RMNPL.

<sup>188</sup> Emphasis in original; Matthews, 177.

<sup>189</sup> Nixon, *Six Crises*, 345.

<sup>190</sup> Cartoon, “I Think I’ve Found The Right Makeup,” *Courier Journal*, October 25, 1960, in “Nixon Campaign, Tone,” Box 4, PPS 77, RMNPL.

“the comfortable and the concerned.” It was between “those who are willing to sit and lie at anchor and those who want to go forward.” America, he said, needed to build towards a portion of strength, not only in international security but also in social investment and renewal.<sup>191</sup> Richard Nixon, meanwhile, struck a more ominous tone. He spoke about the great responsibilities of the presidency and the decisions Eisenhower had made to ensure peace and security without war. He warned that the “next President of the United States will have in his hands the future not only of America but of the whole world.” He asked Americans not to vote for personality but rather experience.<sup>192</sup> The final Gallup poll was 49-48 for Kennedy, with 3% of Americans undecided.<sup>193</sup>

As the American people went to the polls on November 8<sup>th</sup>, 1960, Richard Nixon drove to Tijuana with friends and a security escort, while John F. Kennedy spent that day at home at his family compound in Hyannis Port. Election night was tense. The Democrats did better than expected in the East but were underperforming in the Midwest. It was a tight race, but most news stations were projecting a Kennedy victory by the time the polls closed in the West. Still, late into the night and early into the next morning, the contest remained undecided as results from California, Illinois, Michigan, and Minnesota trickled in. By the time the candidates awoke the next morning, Kennedy had tentatively won three of the four. Nixon won his home state of California.<sup>194</sup> When all the votes were tallied, Kennedy came away with a 303 to 219 win in the Electoral College and a narrow popular vote win of 34,221,463 votes to Nixon’s 34,108,582. A razor-thin margin decided many states. For

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<sup>191</sup> “Speech of Senator John F. Kennedy, Boston, MA, Faneuil Hall,” November 7, 1960, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed August 2020, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/274193>

<sup>192</sup> “Speech of Vice President Richard M. Nixon at CBS-TV, Chicago, IL,” November 7, 1960, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed August 2020, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/273792>

<sup>193</sup> Clipping, George Gallup, “Kennedy Holds Slim Edge, 2,000,000 Still Undecided,” *Chicago Sun-Times*, November 7, 1960, in “Election Predictions,” Box 7, PPS 77, RMNPL.

<sup>194</sup> Donaldson, 143-45.

example, had 4,500 votes shifted in Illinois and 28,000 in Texas, Nixon would have been sworn in as president. As journalist and campaign biographer Theodore White would say, the margin was “so thin as to be, in all reality non-existent.”<sup>195</sup>

Compared to John Diefenbaker’s new frontier Canadian blowout two years prior, the Kennedy-Nixon race remains one of the closest in American history. Thus, it is not possible to ascribe John F. Kennedy the two mandates of his predecessor, nor the mandates of Louis St. Laurent and Diefenbaker. Nonetheless, it is possible to examine Kennedy’s rhetoric and ascribe part of his appeal with voters to the tropes he played into. His language about a national decline, about renewing the nation’s strength (and the citizenry), about reaching towards a new frontier of self-fulfillment certainly spoke to many voters. The *New York Herald Tribune* stated that he gave the nation a “sense of the moment in history that can best be compared to Theodore Roosevelt’s.”<sup>196</sup> As the *Baltimore Sun* put it the day after the election:

The election means that the voters of the United States, in substantial majority, have heard and accept Mr. Kennedy’s challenge to adventure, domestic and in the world, and that they have rejected Mr. Nixon’s more cautious policies. It might be too much to say at this moment that they have heard in Mr. Kennedy’s voice the accents of destiny.<sup>197</sup>

*Time* magazine observed something similar. Kennedy had won, it said, not because of a specific program or because Richard Nixon had overwhelming faults, but because he hammered home a “message of unease, of things left undone in a world where a slip could be disastrous.”<sup>198</sup>

There is a certain fascination among masculinity scholars with the 1960 campaign,

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<sup>195</sup> Donaldson, 152.

<sup>196</sup> “Joseph Alsop, A Starting Estimate,” *New York Herald Tribune*, November 11, 1960

<sup>197</sup> “Kennedy Wins,” *The Baltimore Sun*, November 9, 1960, in “Untitled Folder,” Box 9, PPS 77, RMNPL.

<sup>198</sup> “A New Leader,” *Time*, November 16, 1960, in “Untitled Folder,” Box 9, PPS 77, RMNPL.

and also the presidency of John F. Kennedy. Steven Watt's *JFK and the Masculine Mystique* (2016) argues that the titular phrase pervades not only the election but the Kennedy presidency in totality. Watts borrows "masculine mystique" from Betty Friedan. It was Friedan who ascribed the so-called "crisis" of masculinity in the late fifties and early sixties to an "outmoded masculine mystique that made [men] feel unnecessarily inadequate when there were no bears to kill." For Watts, Kennedy becomes the literal embodiment of this renewed masculine mystique.<sup>199</sup> This is comparable to Diefenbaker's embodiment of Dummitt's "manly modern," which Cara Spittal points to in Canada. If there was any doubt that Kennedy's rhetoric about national and physical decline was purely performative for the election, his article in the December 1960 *Sports Illustrated* should put it to rest. Entitled "The Soft American: Sport on the New Frontier," in it President-Elect Kennedy bemoans that 50% of military recruits are rejected because of their fitness level. "Our growing softness," he stated, "our increasing lack of physical fitness, is a menace to society."<sup>200</sup> Here again, Kennedy is expressing concern about the growing physical and mental weakness of male bodies, and their ability to withstand the ultimate test of manly resolve should war come with the Soviet Union.

Kennedy went further and expanded upon these themes in his Inaugural Address to the nation as President of the United States. While it is often known for outlining Kennedy's vision for a "New Frontier," that phrase specifically is surprisingly not mentioned. Nonetheless, it is a clarion call to action, best known for Kennedy's edict: "Ask not what your country can do for you — ask what you can do for your country." He speaks

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<sup>199</sup> Watts, xi, 361-64; Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963; New York: W.W Norton, 2001), 386.

<sup>200</sup> John F. Kennedy, "The Soft American: Sport on the New Frontier," *Sports Illustrated*, December 26, 1960.

to a changing world that has “the power to abolish all forms of human poverty and all forms of human life.” At its core, the looming nuclear threat is what brought Kennedy to power: growing hydrogen weapon and rocket-based power by the Soviet Union, coupled with concerns about American societal weakness. Speaking to not only the United States but the world, Kennedy issues a challenge of exploration: “Together let us explore the stars, conquer the deserts, eradicate disease, tap the ocean depths and encourage the arts and commerce.”<sup>201</sup> There may have been no bears to kill, as Betty Friedan observed, but whereas Nixon spoke to a complacency, Kennedy’s focus on the “new frontier” challenged Americans to find new purpose in what was yet undone.

## **Conclusion**

John English speaks of the late 1950s as a transitory political period in Canada and the United States, where “a new generation of politicians [emerged, who] would not be ashamed of ambition.” He points to men like John F. Kennedy, as well as John Diefenbaker.<sup>202</sup> The disquiet that began to emerge mid-decade regarding the “organization man” and the impact of modernity on society ultimately ushered in a new type of hegemonic masculinity. The hegemony of the paternalistic father-figure gave way to the man who spoke of destiny. Leaders like Diefenbaker and Kennedy were able to harness their populations’ concern about social decline and point to complacency as the problem. They mirrored late nineteenth century tropes about the wilderness and the frontier, which were then seen as the solution to the debilitating effects of industrial production on the male body and the social fabric of the nation.

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<sup>201</sup> “Inaugural Address of President John F. Kennedy,” in Box 34, Series 3, President’s Office Files, JFKPL

<sup>202</sup> English, 161.

John Diefenbaker actively presented himself to Canadians as a prairie populist, a man who grew up on the frontier, in a log cabin built by his father on the family homestead in Saskatchewan. To take himself from a minority prime minister, elected on a wave of opposition to the incumbent Liberal government, to a majority prime minister, he focused on giving Canada a concept of the Sixties on a “new frontier.” More commonly known as his “Northern Vision” or “Northern Development Policy,” Diefenbaker presented Canadians with a set of policies that harkened back to the origins of the nation. He drew on themes from Canada’s first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald and the nation-building settling of the West. Seeking to renew this spirit among a populous suffering a recession, he spoke of new resource development and processing efforts, infrastructure development, and settlement. The Canadian people gave John Diefenbaker an overwhelming mandate in 1958, driven by the sense of renewal that he brought. As Diefenbaker’s Associate Defence Minister, Pierre Sévigny, later wrote of the 1958 campaign: “I saw people kneel and kiss his coat. Not one, but many. People were in tears. People were delirious. And this happened many a time after.”<sup>203</sup>

John F. Kennedy, whether his team stole the phrase “New Frontier” from Diefenbaker or not, sought to harness something similar in his campaign for the American presidency. Focusing on the concept of a “missile gap,” he tied the nation’s supposed reduced strength to the growing complacency and softness of the population in an age of materialism. He drew inspiration from President Theodore Roosevelt when speaking of the need for an activist presidency, one able to get America moving again. Roosevelt, who ascended to the White House in 1901 upon President McKinley’s assassination, frequently

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<sup>203</sup> Bliss, 191.

invoked the frontier as foundational to his masculine character. He pushed American exceptionalism and expansionism as the solution to the decline of the physical frontier. An avid hunter, Roosevelt similarly touted the wilderness as a way to restore waning masculinity, and thus national strength. Kennedy looked to Roosevelt's rhetoric as a way to reinvigorate what he saw as a stagnant nation. In speaking of his proposed frontier, he pushed foreign service, poverty reduction, education, and space exploration (as well as physical fitness) as the ticket to restore America's sense of purpose and to overcome the plague that was the "crisis" of masculinity." As *Look* magazine observed a little over a year into the Kennedy presidency: "The strenuous life is being promoted with a vigor not seen since Teddy Roosevelt.... Be lean, muscular, walk with a bounce.... If you are near a mountain, climb it."<sup>204</sup>

In his 1961 preface to the reissued edition of *The Lonely Crowd* (1950), author David Riesman looks back at the decade in which his work had existed. The original was written before the advent of the Eisenhower administration, growing consumerism, and the worst excesses of McCarthyism. The book became somewhat of a prophetic document. Through the "inner-directed" and "other-directed" man, Riesman foresaw the "consequences for individual character in the loss or attenuation of the older social functions on the frontiers of production and exploration." This created a tension between the societal demands on the individual and the desire for self-fulfillment. Ultimately striking at the appeal of the frontier narrative in Western culture at the end of the 1950s, Riesman observes: "The great majority of readers in the last ten years have decided that it was better to be an inner-directed cowboy than an other-directed advertising man," even

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<sup>204</sup> Watts, 190.



though they were not “faced with the problems of the cowboy, but rather those of the advertising man.”<sup>205</sup> Riesman’s invocation of the “cowboy” is no coincidence, and it is no surprise that the Western genre saw a rebirth in the early Cold War, similar to its early popularity at the turn-of-the-century.<sup>206</sup>

To return to *The Manly Modern* (2008), Christopher Dummitt observes that Canadian fear of modernity brought an increasing level of anti-Americanism.<sup>207</sup> Following the formal ratification of NORAD in 1958 and the Diefenbaker government’s decision to scrap the Avro Arrow in favour of a contingent of Bomarc missiles in early 1959, anti-American feeling grew in Canada. Not only were the Bomarc missiles American-made, but they also required nuclear tips to be effective. Diefenbaker had stoked anti-American sentiment to come to power; however, growing need for defence integration in a post-Sputnik world carried the prime minister down a narrow tight rope of public opinion.<sup>208</sup> He was a man highly sensitive to this facet of governance, often taking his mailbag as the final arbiter of the feeling of Canadians. Around this time, in a meeting with Canadian Ambassador to the United States, Arnold Heeney, Diefenbaker expressed concern about an “avalanche of anti-Americanism in Canada.” His source? He produced a number of letters for the ambassador to read.<sup>209</sup>

In the final years of the Eisenhower administration, conversations began with the Canadians regarding the chain of custody for nuclear weapons on Canadian soil.

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<sup>205</sup> David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd*, 1969 Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), xxviii-xxx.

<sup>206</sup> Stanley Corkin, *Cowboys as Cold Warriors: The Western and U.S. History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2004), 2; Kimmel, 165.

<sup>207</sup> Dummitt, 14.

<sup>208</sup> Michael D. Stevenson, "A Very Careful Balance: The 1961 Triangular Agreement and the Conduct of Canadian-American Relations," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 24 (2013): 294; Nicholson 205-209; Nash, 75-76.

<sup>209</sup> McMahon, 33, 94; Nash, 58.

Diefenbaker's concern about public opinion, Eisenhower's hesitancy to commit to joint control, and the impact of the looming U.S. election stalled negotiations into 1960.<sup>210</sup> Thus, the situation when John F. Kennedy took office was somewhat of a tinder box on the front of continental defence and Canadian-American relations. The Eisenhower administration had sold Bomarc nuclear interceptors to the Canadians, set to be functional in the spring of 1962. Though Diefenbaker remained hesitant to commit to nuclear arms north of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel. Eisenhower, meanwhile, had provided Diefenbaker assurance in May 1958 that when it came to NORAD, there would be the "fullest possible consultation."<sup>211</sup> While these words were in the formalized agreement, they left a lot open to interpretation.

In the 1960 election, Diefenbaker strongly favoured Richard Nixon over John F. Kennedy. He felt that the vice president was a "predictable quantity" who would continue a stable relationship, open to listen to Canadian concerns about sovereignty. In contrast, he worried about Kennedy as a more hawkish cold warrior on defence. In addition, he felt that the young senator was "too rash."<sup>212</sup> It is somewhat ironic that two men who came to power by playing on similar frontier-based themes and promising restoration to national greatness would come to clash bitterly. In part, it is understandable. Part of Diefenbaker's vision was based on renewed Canadian sovereignty, while Kennedy's pushed a more proactive approach towards continental defence and the Cold War. Quickly the Diefenbaker frontier and the Kennedy frontier would be at odds, and it is this conflict that the final chapter explores to round out this investigation. The battle between these two men became deeply

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<sup>210</sup> McMahon, 43-47, 82-85; Stursberg, 23-25.

<sup>211</sup> Nash, 73-74; McMahon, 75; For a discussion of the uncertainty surrounding the issue of implementation of consultation by NORAD during an emergency see Chapter One of John Clearwater's *U.S. Nuclear Weapons in Canada* (1999).

<sup>212</sup> Nash, 60; Diefenbaker, *Years of Achievement*, 165-66.

personal, and Canadian fascination with the young American president quickly revealed that they preferred his leadership to that of John Diefenbaker. Kennedy only enhances a growing perspective of Diefenbaker as a weak, indecisive leader. His downfall, partially orchestrated by the United States, came through a marked deterioration of his image. Diefenbaker moved from the prairie populist, champion of the common man over monied interests, towards the image of a high-strung, self-absorbed, paranoid fool. The very anti-thesis of the solution he promised to the problem of the “organization man.”

## Chapter Five

### CLASH OF THE FRONTIERS

*“Canada is not part of the ‘New Frontier’”*<sup>1</sup>

*~ John Diefenbaker to reporters, February 1<sup>st</sup>, 1963*

#### **Introduction**

In February 1961, just a month after John F. Kennedy became president, Prime Minister John Diefenbaker flew to Washington to meet with him at the White House. Following a policy discussion in the Oval Office, the two men moved to the presidential dining room to continue negotiations over lunch. On the way, President Kennedy pointed out a stuffed sailfish that he had caught in Acapulco. A love of fishing was an interest that the two men shared; it could have bonded them. Instead, Diefenbaker and Kennedy ended up in a Freudian contest where the “size” of the fish stood as a metaphor for their manhood. Kennedy asked Diefenbaker if he had “ever caught anything better,” to which the prime minister replied that he had recently reeled-in a 140-pound marlin on a trip to Jamaica. Kennedy scoffed disbelievingly. Angry at the president’s incredulousness, when Diefenbaker returned to Ottawa he had the marlin stuffed and mounted in his office. When Kennedy repaid the visit that May, Diefenbaker proudly showed off his catch. For good measure, he also had his office adorned with a painting of a British naval victory over the United States during the War of 1812.<sup>2</sup>

In truth, John Diefenbaker had been hoping for Richard Nixon to win in the 1960

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<sup>1</sup> Asa McKercher, *Camelot in Canada: Canadian-American Relations in the Kennedy Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 192.

<sup>2</sup> Knowlton Nash, *Kennedy & Diefenbaker: The Feud That Helped Topple A Government* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), 91-97; Denis Smith, *Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker* (Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter, and Ross, 1995), 386.

election. He felt that the vice president was a “predictable quantity” and worried that Kennedy was “courageously rash.” The Democratic nominee, Diefenbaker felt, would pursue a much more activist foreign policy agenda that would heighten Cold War tensions and increase pressure on the Canadian government to align with the U.S.<sup>3</sup> The Eisenhower administration had been cautious about pushing the Canadian government, and while a bilateral agreement was reached regarding Bomarc missiles, the matter of arming them remained under discussion. Diefenbaker worried that Kennedy’s focus on a more flexible response to the Soviet Union was likely to increase pressure regarding Canadian warhead acquisition. In contrast, Eisenhower’s cautiousness about Canadian sovereignty had allowed Diefenbaker the latitude to waver.<sup>4</sup>

Diefenbaker’s trepidation about Kennedy, however, went beyond a looming nuclear deal. Biographer Denis Smith points out that Diefenbaker’s preference for Nixon was more about image and less about policy. One only has to look back to the first presidential debate between the two men to realize that the less-charismatic Richard Nixon was a much preferable occupant of the White House in the eyes of many world leaders. Diefenbaker’s sliding popularity only compounded concern about the charismatic new president. In November 1960, Lester Pearson’s Liberal Party pulled ahead of the Progressive Conservatives in national polling for the first time. They now led 44-39. As Smith notes: “Kennedy... offered a focus for those young, urban, educated voters who were losing faith in the prairie evangelist.”<sup>5</sup> For the Liberals, it became a matter of trying

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<sup>3</sup> Nash, 60; John G. Diefenbaker, *One Canada: The Years of Achievement, 1956-62* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1976), 165-66.

<sup>4</sup> For more information on negotiations between the Diefenbaker and Eisenhower administrations over continental defence, please see Chapters Six and Nine in Sean M. Maloney’s *Learning to Love the Bomb* (Washington: Potomac Books, 2007), and Chapters Two and Three in Patricia I. McMahon’s *Essence of Indecision: Diefenbaker’s Nuclear Policy, 1957-63* (Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2009).

<sup>5</sup> Smith, 378; John English, *The Worldly Years: The Life of Lester Pearson*. Volume Two (New York:

to figure out how to capitalize on the new American president's popularity. After all, Lester B. Pearson was no Jack Kennedy.

A relationship that would quickly devolve from sparring about fish to an outright feud, the Diefenbaker-Kennedy era is a flashpoint in the history of Canadian-American relations. The two contentious years that these men spent glowering at each other from their respective capitals has been the focus of extensive study. Knowlton Nash's foundational *Kennedy & Diefenbaker* (1990) provides perhaps the most descriptive look into the relationship between the two men. In addition to extensive archival work, Nash based his conclusions on personal experience and interaction with the two leaders, as well as interviews with those close to them. He notes that the conflict between Kennedy and Diefenbaker caused the Canadian government's downfall in early 1963, but stops short of implicating the White House for direct political intervention. Diefenbaker, instead, in Nash's view, was a man defeated by his hubris.<sup>6</sup>

More recently, Asa McKercher's *Camelot in Canada* (2016) returns to the bilateral relationship from the realm of diplomacy and international relations. His work takes a fairly nuanced view of the time-period, digging beneath Diefenbaker and Kennedy's personal animosity to demonstrate the quiet American diplomacy that sought to bring a cautious Canadian government alongside.<sup>7</sup> McKercher's scholarly approach runs parallel to John Boyko's *Cold Fire* (2016), published the same year. Boyko provides a biographical overview of the Canadian-American relationship in the early 1960s, alongside an updated examination of the rapport between Diefenbaker, Kennedy, and Lester B. Pearson. Like

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Knopf, 1992), 234.

<sup>6</sup> Nash, Chapters 7-9.

<sup>7</sup> McKercher, *Camelot*, 3-5, 9-10.

McKercher, Boyko alludes to election interference on the Kennedy administration's part, though he is seemingly more sympathetic to Diefenbaker's nationalistic aims. McKercher, meanwhile, takes a dimmer view of the Canadian prime minister's approach to governance, which was arguably far from quiet *or* diplomatic. To an extent, McKercher sympathizes with the Kennedy administration's frustrations in dealing with Diefenbaker's piques of furor.<sup>8</sup>

Still, for all the scholarly fascination with these two men — more so than any other two figures in this study — the Diefenbaker-Kennedy relationship has yet to be analyzed through the lens of masculinity politics. More specifically, given the conclusions that Chapter Four makes about the reliance of the Diefenbaker and Kennedy campaigns on frontier imagery, it is curious how openly hostile their overlapping tenure becomes. What is unusual about the Canadian general elections of 1962 and 1963 is that they do not truly occur between John Diefenbaker and Lester Pearson. Instead, they become a battle between John Diefenbaker and John F. Kennedy. For all his political experience, Pearson comes dangerously close to serving as an electoral stand-in for the American president as the White House does its best to tip the scales in favour of the Liberals. The Kennedy administration works to aid the growing perception among Canadians of Diefenbaker as irrational, insecure, and ineffective. Such active involvement subsequently complicates matters for the Liberal team, who hoped to present a more decisive, masculine image of their candidate, not that of an American lackey.

This study has frequently talked about the concept of a “crisis” of masculinity and how it has been utilized in electoral contests to the benefit of one man and to the hinderance

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<sup>8</sup> John Boyko, *Cold Fire: Kennedy's Northern Front* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2016), 219-23, 234, 287-90; McKercher, *Camelot*, 198, 218-220.

of another. What this final chapter outlines can be more aptly described as a “clash” of masculinity, as John Diefenbaker and John F. Kennedy pin their political identities on a similar hegemonic expression. To return to the work of Raewyn Connell, she speaks of the ability of masculinity to be “disrupted.” A key facet that Connell, later James Messerschmidt, highlights is that a portion of this disruptive process comes from competition between masculinity itself.<sup>9</sup> As Michael Kimmel observes, John F. Kennedy tended to treat much of his political agenda as “tests of manly resolve.”<sup>10</sup> This was a strategy that placed him in sharp contrast with Diefenbaker. While Kennedy was able to harness and present the image of vigorous leadership, Diefenbaker was often unsure how to wield the power given to him. Kennedy’s embodiment of a bold new masculine ideal only accentuated Diefenbaker’s failure to live up to his promise of national reinvigoration. As biographer Peter Stursberg observes, early on, Diefenbaker was seen as “vital, decisive, a man of destiny.” However, a majority government made him seem effete. He was “cautious to the point of always searching for a consensus.” Cabinet member Davie Fulton would later say that the government decision-making process was “endless discussion and debate” without resolution.<sup>11</sup>

Diefenbaker’s indecision returns the discussion to David Riesman’s conceptualization of the “inner-directed” versus “other-directed” interpretations of postwar manhood. In their respective elections, Diefenbaker and Kennedy’s use of frontier imagery harkened back to late nineteenth century stereotypes that Riesman viewed as the ideal

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<sup>9</sup> R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 37, 77; R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,” *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (2005): 846-848.

<sup>10</sup> Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History*. Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 178.

<sup>11</sup> Peter Stursberg, *Diefenbaker: Leadership Gained, 1956-62* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 175-78.



representation of the “inner-directed” male. Both politicians promised a renewal of the self-confidence and a sense of purpose that embodied the archetype of the nineteenth-century “self-made man.” Unfortunately, Diefenbaker, once elected, quickly became “other-directed,” and disappointingly so for many Canadians.<sup>12</sup> He was concerned too much with public opinion. As Riesman defines it, “repeated failures destroy [the other-directed man’s] hope of future accomplishment... his internal strengths can no longer hold the fort against external evidence.”<sup>13</sup> Controversy over the Avro Arrow cancellation, an economy in recession, the fallout from a struggle with the Bank of Canada, and fear of public opinion over nuclear weapons all made Diefenbaker less and less resolute during his majority term.<sup>14</sup> Instead, he became an “indecisive populist.”<sup>15</sup>

The interplay between Diefenbaker and Kennedy’s masculine posturing is central to the coming pages, and their conflict plays out against the backdrop of Canada’s 1962 and 1963 elections. Previous scholarship has established that the Kennedy administration’s

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<sup>12</sup> David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd*, Abridged Ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 8, 15, 21.

<sup>13</sup> Riesman, 125.

<sup>14</sup> The years between the 1958 and 1962 elections were perilous for the Diefenbaker administration, and the government seemingly stumbled from one crisis to the next. First, shortly after gaining a majority government, Diefenbaker found he could no longer delay in pulling the plug on the production of the Avro Arrow. The question facing Diefenbaker involved \$400 million in ballooning defence expenditures for already outdated equipment against 25,000 jobs in the Greater Toronto Area. After initially delaying production in the fall of 1958, Diefenbaker cancelled the project in February 1959. The geopolitical reality, beyond the spiralling cost, was that as ICBMs were developed the nature of the nuclear threat was changing. Plus, other weapons systems could protect against any ongoing bomber threat for a cheaper cost. Second, the Diefenbaker government subsequently struggled to get unemployment under control, and despite numerous federal assistance programs, the percentage of those out of work continued to hover around 8%. Diefenbaker blamed the struggling economy on the tight money policy of the Bank of Canada, whose interest rate had reached 5.98% by August 1959. The Governor of the Bank of Canada, James Coyne, between 1959 and 1961, was forceful in his defence of monetary policy, which ran counter to the aims of the Diefenbaker government. Though technically an independent body, the Canadian Parliament appoints to Governor of the Bank of Canada. This led to the third scandal, when in early 1961 Diefenbaker moved to dismiss Coyne from his position. The result was a high-profile battle with the Liberal dominated Canadian Senate that dragged on for months, and ultimately saw Coyne resign his position. The entire affair, coupled with a weak economy, severely damaged Diefenbaker’s image and bolstered Liberal fortunes headed into 1962 (Smith, *Rogue Tory*, 307-22, 390-413).

<sup>15</sup> Patricia I. McMahon, *Essence of Indecision: Diefenbaker’s Nuclear Policy, 1957-63* (Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2009), ix.

actions certainly played a role in the Diefenbaker government's downfall, however all stop short of accusing the United States of direct electoral interference. While this chapter strongly alludes to malicious intent, it is tough to prove. Nor is such a conclusion particularly relevant to this exploration. Instead, at hand is the juxtaposition between the changing image of Diefenbaker and how the masculine contrast of John F. Kennedy worked against both himself *and* Pearson. Added to this result is the fact that American actions only serve to further weaken Diefenbaker's image, both directly and indirectly. In late 1962 Canadians chose John F. Kennedy as their most admired person. He garnered 21% of the vote. Diefenbaker, by contrast, was the choice of 3% of Canadians. Pearson was barely worthy of ranking.<sup>16</sup>

### **Ottawa and Washington, 1961**

Returning to the meetings between Diefenbaker and Kennedy in 1961, it is worth exploring these first interactions more closely. Each man's initial impression of the other provides the context in understanding how the relationship deteriorated so quickly. On February 20<sup>th</sup>, 1961, the prime minister flew to Washington, DC, to meet with the new president at the White House. Top of mind for Diefenbaker was the issue of defensive nuclear warheads for the Bomarc anti-aircraft missiles. Howard Green, the Minister of External Affairs, warned against committing to their installation out of fear of endangering ongoing disarmament talks at the UN. However, the matter became hard to avoid when Kennedy expressed a willingness to provide Canadians with a two-key system (similar to one in the United Kingdom). The proposal removed existing concerns about sovereignty

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<sup>16</sup> "Kennedy Canada's Choice As Most Admired Man," *Ottawa Citizen*, January 2, 1963, in Scrapbook #71, John G. Diefenbaker Papers (MG 01), Diefenbaker Centre, Saskatoon, SK.

and gave Canada a measure of control regarding how nuclear weapons were deployed on its soil. Nonetheless, Diefenbaker hedged and expressed a desire for more time to bring the Canadian people alongside. According to an aide, this “confused the hell out of Kennedy.”<sup>17</sup>

Diefenbaker walked out of the White House that afternoon with a generally good impression of the visit. He would say of the meeting that it was “a revealing and exhilarating experience.”<sup>18</sup> In his memoirs, with the benefit of hindsight, he still described it as a “short, and a pleasant occasion.” However, Diefenbaker continued to insist that he walked away with an agreement from Kennedy allowing Canada to acquire warheads “when conditions made it necessary.”<sup>19</sup> As Patricia McMahon points out, this perception contrasts sharply with the impression the of the White House, which felt that the agreement was a matter of “when,” not “if.” The dual-key issue disposed of, the Kennedy team thought that it would be easy enough to bring the prime minister alongside on defence production and nuclear arms.<sup>20</sup> This, in part, may have been because Diefenbaker had projected a far more willing attitude than Kennedy’s briefing profile of the prime minister had outlined. Diefenbaker, according to the State Department, was said to possess an “indecisiveness

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<sup>17</sup> Nash, 61, 90-94; McMahon, 99-100; The “two-key” or “dual-key” system was a major sticking point for the Diefenbaker government, which aimed to ensure that Canadian sovereignty was respected under any circumstance where nuclear weapons were launched from Canadian territory. American chain-of-custody laws required that U.S. officers, based in Canada, control and maintain day-to-day operations with all nuclear weaponry. Furthermore, the final decision to utilize nuclear weapons remained with the American government. However, a joint system ensured that Canadian authorization would be given prior to their use (McMahon 59, 115, McKercher, *Camleot*, 108). When the Pearson government came to power in mid-1963, it aimed to finally formalize a nuclear agreement with the United States, and while some in the Canadian military leadership found a dual-key system “ridiculous” and cumbersome for defensive weaponry, ultimately the Cabinet concluded that “for political reasons... it was important that the principle of dual control be embodied in the agreement... [We] must be able to give assurances that the right of the Canadian government to authorize use had been protected...” (Maloney, 306).

<sup>18</sup> Boyko, 88.

<sup>19</sup> Diefenbaker, *Years of Achievement*, 168-69.

<sup>20</sup> McMahon, 100-101.

and failure to take the initiative [on continental defence] by developing a clear and concise policy and rallying public support.”<sup>21</sup>

JFK’s personal view of the meeting was not enthusiastic. Robert Kennedy would later say that his brother hoped never to “see that boring son of a bitch ever again.” Part of Kennedy’s frustration, in John Boyko’s opinion, was his inability to charm Diefenbaker into immediately going along with the American position.<sup>22</sup> This was partially a reflection of the general ignorance that the new American president had about Canada. Kennedy once described the country to the north as a “child nation, sometimes to be chided and sometimes to be patted on the head, but who would agree, willingly or not, that Father knows best.”<sup>23</sup> It is worth taking a moment to unpack this statement. Kennedy’s view of Canada does not diverge sharply from that of his predecessors, though he was certainly less familiar with the nation than Eisenhower. The reference to a paternalistic view towards Canada confirms a fear that many north of the border had about the United States around the turn of the decade. This disconcert is why Diefenbaker’s appeals to Canadian nationalism and independence meshed well with his calls for masculine self-fulfillment in 1957-58. At the same time, what Diefenbaker had not anticipated was a similar call-to-arms in the United States, nor Kennedy’s youthful, dynamic persona, which overshadowed continued American paternalism and improved Canadians’ negative perceptions of the United States.

Kennedy’s appeal was evident as Air Force One touched down in Ottawa on May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1961. Screaming crowds of densely packed Canadians lined the streets of the capital in hopes of catching a glimpse of Jack and Jackie. Attendance was later estimated to be

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<sup>21</sup> “Memorandum For Meeting With Prime Minister Diefenbaker,” in “Canada: Security, 1961,” Box 113, Series 9, President’s Office Files, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library (JFKPL), Boston, MA.

<sup>22</sup> Boyko, 89.

<sup>23</sup> McKercher, *Camelot*, 7.

upwards of fifty-thousand people, easily exceeding the number that recently turned out to greet Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip.<sup>24</sup> The Americans, who were aware of Canadians' enthusiasm for the new president, sought to press their advantage. A telegram from U.S. Ambassador Livingston Merchant to the State Department observed that Kennedy had "fired the imagination of many Canadians," and that it would be useful to use that goodwill to make an "impact on [Canadian] public opinion [that] will consolidate [the] US position... [and] win stronger adherence to our global policies on part of [the] PM and his Cabinet colleagues." Priority number one, as outlined in the president's briefing materials, was coming to a continental defence solution that had evaded them in February.<sup>25</sup>

The Canadian and American delegations gathered in the Prime Minister's office the next day. After Diefenbaker pointed out his stuffed marlin and the War of 1812 painting, the group settled down to business. According to a memorandum written by the American Deputy National Security Advisor, Walt Rostow, the discussion covered the U.S. desire for increased contributions by Canada to the Alliance for Progress and for the nation to join the Organization of American States (OAS). Furthermore, the Americans wanted more significant investment in foreign aid and to bring the Canadians into border monitoring in Laos and Vietnam. Finally, the conversation concluded with continental defence. Diefenbaker informed Kennedy that it remained "politically impossible... in Canada to have nuclear warheads on Bomarc...." Again, he insisted he would "speak [all] over Canada this summer and fall to try and change public opinion."<sup>26</sup> At that point, when

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<sup>24</sup> McKercher, *Camelot*, 73-76.

<sup>25</sup> Livingston Merchant as quoted in Boyko, 102-103; McMahon, 105; Similar sentiments are expressed, almost word for word, in "Scope Paper," dated May 2, 1961, in preparation for the President's Trip To Ottawa. It can be found in "Canada: Security, JFK Trip To Ottawa, 1961," Box 113, President's Office Files, JFKPL.

<sup>26</sup> Diefenbaker as quoted in Nash, 113-117; Diefenbaker, *Years of Achievement*, 183.

Kennedy asked for clarification about exactly which groups in Canada were in opposition, Diefenbaker pulled a folder from his desk filled with letters from wives and mothers, which he insisted were representative of the onslaught of correspondence he received on the issue. Though Kennedy reminded Diefenbaker that Canadian public opinion was 45% to 21% in favour of nuclear warheads, the prime minister continued to hedge. He did not trust Gallup polls, he said.<sup>27</sup>

Patricia McMahon provides an interesting assessment of the psychology surrounding John Diefenbaker's hesitancy to commit Canada to the use of defensive nuclear weapons. Guiding Diefenbaker's view was his reliance on his mailbag, which contained many letters from Canadians opposing nuclear weapons acquisition.<sup>28</sup> This is a theme that other scholars have raised while pointing out that it was not an accurate assessment of Canadian public opinion.<sup>29</sup> Though it is clear from surveying Diefenbaker's prime ministerial files that much of this correspondence is from organized groups, its volume is nonetheless impressive. McMahon argues that by delaying a decision and focusing on disarmament talks, Diefenbaker felt that *these* Canadians could be convinced if it appeared their government had exhausted all other options. She points to Diefenbaker's reverence for Mackenzie King and suggests that he may have been hoping to emulate King's deft handling of the divisive conscription crisis during World War Two.<sup>30</sup> It is also possible that Diefenbaker was concerned about the viewpoint of the 34% of undecided Canadians who had not yet formed a position on the issue. This point tends to go

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<sup>27</sup> Interview by Philander P. Claxton, Jr. with Livingston T. Merchant, conducted May 28, 1965, John F. Kennedy Oral History Collection, JFKPL; McMahon, 102-103, 106-08.

<sup>28</sup> McMahon, 28-29, 33.

<sup>29</sup> Peter Stursberg, *Diefenbaker: Leadership Lost, 1962-67* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 25-26; Peter C. Newman, *Renegade in Power: The Diefenbaker Years* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 342; Nash, 58.

<sup>30</sup> McMahon, 28, 52.

unmentioned in the existing historiography.

As Diefenbaker placed great importance on these letters in his meetings with Kennedy, it is worth taking a moment to give voice to Canadians who wrote the prime minister and highlight some of the significant themes that emerge from a review of this correspondence. A group of 350 Ukrainian Canadian mothers, for example, wrote to Diefenbaker about their concerns over the impact of Strontium 90 (a by-product of nuclear testing). Specifically, they were worried about the milk and bread they fed their children showing increasing strontium levels as testing fallout entered the supply chain.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, fourteen-year-old Linda Strand wrote Diefenbaker in August 1960, after watching the post-apocalyptic thriller *On The Beach* (1959). She urged the prime minister to stand against nuclear weapons.<sup>32</sup> Her letter mirrors that of fifteen-year-old Danny Propp, who was worried Diefenbaker would dismiss him as a “maniac,” but nonetheless raised his concerns about the effects of nuclear radiation on Canada’s youth.<sup>33</sup>

The anti-nuclear movement certainly influenced these sentiments among Canadians, publishing advertisements and pamphlets like the one mailed to the prime minister’s office by the “Campaign to Stop H-Bomb Tests.” It depicted a mushroom cloud raining down cancer and death on pictures of fish, bottles of milk, as well as bread and

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<sup>31</sup> Letter from Mary Damianoff, dated May 13, 1959, in “Defence Research, Complains Dec. 1958 - Nov. 1959,” Box 51, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>32</sup> Letter from Linda Strand, dated April 2, 1960, in “Defence Research - Complaints, April 1960-61,” Box 51, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre; In 1957, Nevil Shute published *On The Beach*, a post-apocalyptic novel of a world that had been ravaged by nuclear war in the Northern Hemisphere. Shute tells the story of residents in Melbourne, Australia, as they await a lethal cloud of radiation to make its way southwards, extinguishing all remaining life on Earth. The book was turned into a movie two years later, which arguably became one of the most impactful films of the 1950s. It accentuated the public fears about radioactivity and caused such concern that the Eisenhower Cabinet discussed measures on how to mitigate and educate against the film’s impact. For more information, see *David Seed, Under the Shadow: The Atomic Bomb and Cold War Narratives* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2013), 46-47.

<sup>33</sup> Letter from Danny Propp, dated March 18, 1960, in “Defence Research - Complaints, December 1959 - April 1960,” Box 51, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

vegetables.<sup>34</sup> Carry Wilson perhaps put it most succinctly in an April 1961 letter: “If you imagine,” she said, “women are going to allow you to cause our children to be blown to pieces, or mutilated or disease ridden... then you are much mistaken.”<sup>35</sup> That same day, Mary McDermott wrote to Diefenbaker that Canadian mothers would not allow “our children to be blown to pieces, crippled or left dying of horrible ‘fall out’ sores.” She felt that Kennedy was “liable to start war over Cuba or Laos,” hinting not-so-subtly at the president’s recent failure at the Bay of Pigs.<sup>36</sup> Diefenbaker was also likely highly sensitive to criticisms like that of Jane Matthews. She felt that the prime minister was an “office boy to the Pentagon” who could not “deal imaginatively, constructively, and forcefully with the problems of atomic testing and nuclear disarmament.”<sup>37</sup>

This is not to say that all letters to the prime minister were against nuclear weaponry, even though many were. Diefenbaker himself had identified them as running heavily against acquisition and a cursory survey of the archival material backs up this claim.<sup>38</sup> Letters from those anxious to arm Canadian defences are harder to find, but they are there. Margurite Beare [sic] was concerned, quite correctly, that the anti-nuclear movement was leading Diefenbaker “down the garden path.” She felt the West was in a “life and death struggle” for its existence against the communist world.<sup>39</sup> Meanwhile, Mrs. V. McFaul felt that Canada was “naive” for trusting that the Soviet Union would fail to

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<sup>34</sup> Flyer from “Campagne Pour L’Arret Des Essais Nucléaires,” in “Defence Research - Complaints, December 1959 - April 1960,” Box 51, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>35</sup> Letter from Carry Wilson, dated April 30, 1961, in “Canada and the United States, 1961,” Box 556, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>36</sup> Letter from Mary McDermott, dated April 30, 1961, in “Canada and the United States, 1961,” Box 556, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>37</sup> Letter from Jane Matthews, dated February 18, 1959, in “Defence Research - Complaints, December 1959 - April 1960,” Box 51, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>38</sup> Newman, *Renegade*, 342.

<sup>39</sup> Letter from Margurite Beare [sic], dated April 19, 1960, in “Defence Research - Complaints, April 1960-61,” Box 51, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.



live up to any promises it made on disarmament.<sup>40</sup>

The heavy concentration of letters from women, especially those identifying themselves as wives and mothers, raises a notable point worthy of discussion. Part of the problem with the early anti-nuclear movement was that it was perceived as dominated by pacifists and communist sympathizers. This is why, as historian Nicole Marion observes, the prominent Canadian anti-nuclear organization Voice of Women (VOW) actively sought to use the mantle of middle-class motherhood to avoid being dismissed as radicals. The movement made it clear that it was not their intention to challenge the male dominated political sphere, but rather to simply speak for the health of their children and future generations. In this regard, Marion's conclusions mirror the work of Tarah Brookfield, who also points to the VOW's need to a focus on "maternal responsibility" to avoid being seen as radical.<sup>41</sup>

Both Marion and Brookfield observe that this approach, which sought to frame opposition to nuclear weapons within existing gender constructs, is what helped the VOW gain access to the highest levels of the Canadian government – including both the Prime Minister's Office and the Office of the Minister of External Affairs.<sup>42</sup> Patricia McMahon notes that Diefenbaker found their maternal approach "highly credible," even though he wasn't personally anti-nuclear, but rather Amersceptic. Furthermore, the volume of mail that the movement was able to generate certainly was able to give the prime minister pause. Did he want be seen as going against wives and mothers?<sup>43</sup> As Diefenbaker would tell the

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<sup>40</sup> Letter from Mrs. V. McFaul, dated March 8, 1960, in "Defence Research – Complaints, December 1959 – April 1960," Box 51, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>41</sup> Nicole Marion, "Canada's Disarmers: The Complicated Struggle Against Nuclear Weapons, 1959-1963" (Ph.D, Dissertation, Carleton University, 2017) 59-60, 75; Tarah Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), 91-93.

<sup>42</sup> Marion, 62; Brookfield, 87-88.

<sup>43</sup> McMahon, 33, 80.

American ambassador, it could hardly be said that the bulk of anti-nuclear correspondence came from “communists and bums.”<sup>44</sup>

Part of the problem was that Diefenbaker neither went against the VOW, nor sided with them. Rather, their campaign simply contributed to creating another issue on which Diefenbaker was rendered indecisive and uncertain how to act. This was the very opposite of his promise of a “new frontier” for Canada. The exact reason why he never took a firm position on the issue of nuclear weapons on Canadian soil remains somewhat of an enigma. However, it is worthy of consideration that Diefenbaker had never had children of his own and was likely sensitive to this fact politically. Especially because his predecessor had secured two political mandates from his paternalism, and the new Liberal leader was a family man with a brood of photogenic grandchildren.<sup>45</sup> Although the hegemonic ideal had shifted away from benevolent paternalism, children served as one of the markers of adherence to the gender order. At the same time, as Marion outlines, the VOW for all its rhetoric, nonetheless continued to be challenged by the fact that “womanhood and motherhood... [carried an] innate link to passivism.”<sup>46</sup> Thus, Diefenbaker either risked being perceived as uncaring to mothers and children, or giving into a passivist, female-led movement. It’s easy to see how either would pose a problem for a leader made popular by his appeals to a renewed sense of manhood.

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<sup>44</sup> Smith, 384

<sup>45</sup> His status as a grandfather, no doubt given St. Laurent’s “Uncle Louis” success and Diefenbaker’s lack of grandchildren, was an aspect that the Liberal campaign tried to press. In 1963, the Liberal Party ran a periodical advert that showed Pearson holding his grandson, under the caption: “This Man Cares.” The accompanying text observed that he was concerned about “the kind of world his grandchildren will grow up in. While it was not an overwhelming focus, the fact that it was present indicates that his team felt that there remained merit – understandably – in enhancing Person’s masculine image through paternalistic linkages; Clipping, “This Man Cares,” *Weekly Prairie Farmer*, March [sic], 1963,” in “GE – March 11-25, 1963, Box 99, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>46</sup> Marion, 41.

## Image Politics

Though Lester Pearson managed to pull ahead of Diefenbaker in November 1960, polling throughout 1961 shows that he failed to maintain this momentum. To regain the lead heading into the 1962 election, the Liberals brought in pollster Lou Harris. Critical to Kennedy's 1960 win, Harris was one of the pioneers of the use of public opinion polling in campaign strategy.<sup>47</sup> Interestingly, Kennedy's State Department issued Harris a fake passport to prevent his involvement with Pearson from being discovered by Diefenbaker.<sup>48</sup> Part of Harris' job was to help the campaign understand why Canadians were lukewarm regarding Pearson. Diefenbaker, by this point, had become a controversial figure, but the Liberal leader continued to struggle to present a viable alternative. While polling showed that Pearson was an "honest, sincere, straight-forward man," the diplomat label weighed heavy with voters. A major problem seemed to be the effeminate intellectual trope. The most obvious example of this was the fact that voters were not fond of Pearson's trademark bow-tie. His favourability immediately improved when he wore a regular tie.<sup>49</sup> As Walter Gordon, who was then serving as a Liberal policy advisor, stated: "[Canadians] thought [the bow-tie] was effeminate or they thought it reminded them he had been a diplomat or some damn thing.... They don't like people who are too sophisticated."<sup>50</sup>

Another issue with voters was the name "Lester." During World War One, his squadron commander in the Royal Flying Corps had given Pearson the nickname "Mike,"

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<sup>47</sup> Robert D. McFadden, "Louis Harris, Pollster at Forefront of American Trends, Dies at 95," *New York Times*, December 19, 2016, <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/12/19/us/louis-harris-pollster-at-forefront-of-american-trends-dies-at-95.html>

<sup>48</sup> Boyko, 161

<sup>49</sup> English, *Worldly Years*, 235.

<sup>50</sup> Nash, 277.

purely because it sounded less “sissified,” according to biographer John English.<sup>51</sup> A “Pre-Campaign Strategy” memorandum for 1962 highlights the benefit of using this nickname for its everyman appeal: “He is ‘Mike’... we should all talk about him as Mike; the advantages of the name far outweigh [sic] the disadvantages.” Nonetheless, the Liberal leader continued to insist that he would sign all correspondence: “L.B. Pearson.”<sup>52</sup> A second memo from mid-1961 addressed that the way Pearson spoke was “a bit too abstract.” The concern here was that he “discuss[ed] issues in a way that’s right for the House of Commons but seems impersonal on television.”<sup>53</sup> Of further distress was the fact that Pearson spoke with a lisp. The party hired a vocal coach to work with him, and his speeches were written in straightforward dialogue. Long sentences and complicated words were removed so as to not emphasize the lisp, which had long been an impediment associated with homosexuality.<sup>54</sup>

A late 1961 study of Pearson and Diefenbaker’s images found in the papers of Liberal policy director, Tom Kent, reveals an interesting contrast in perception and voter preference between the two men. It is worth noting that it is highly probable Lou Harris had a hand in the study. Those surveyed responded most favourably to images of the prime minister that showed him in a friendly or folksy manner. The two photos that stood out to respondents were of Diefenbaker smiling and waving to a crowd and of him at his former elementary school, surrounded by a large group of children. In contrast, favourable photographs for Pearson focused on his experience. The two most popular images among

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<sup>51</sup> John English, *Shadow of Heaven: The Life of Lester Pearson*, Volume One (Toronto: Lester and Orpen, 1989), 43.

<sup>52</sup> Memorandum, “Pre-Campaign Strategy,” in “Elections, Part Two,” Volume 82, Series N2, Lester B. Pearson Fonds (MG26-N), Library Archives Canada (LAC), Ottawa, ON.

<sup>53</sup> Memorandum, “Notes for Discussion,” dated July 25, 1961, in “Elections, Part Two,” Volume 82, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC.

<sup>54</sup> English, *Worldly Years*, 235-236.

those surveyed were of him with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and of Pearson giving a speech in the House of Commons. What is curious is that comparable photographs of the prime minister in a statesman-like repose were not similarly well received.<sup>55</sup>

On the surface, this indicates that the strengths of each man with the Canadian electorate differed drastically. Diefenbaker appealed in his accessibility and Pearson through his experience. When asked to rate each men's qualities, Pearson was seen as better informed than Mr. Diefenbaker and more broad-minded, but the prime minister was perceived as more of a natural *leader* by Canadians. Furthermore, respondents remained unsure whether party policy came from Pearson, a collaborative process, or whether he simply acted as a spokesman for the Liberals.<sup>56</sup> Probing deeper into study's conclusions, however, the prime minister's negatives do show an emerging problem. There is the growing view that he was indecisive and out of touch. Voters responded to his emphasis on himself as a common man in 1957 and 1958, but he had lost that lustre during his time in office. The popularity of images showing his folksiness and accessibility certainly stem from a longing for his original appeal to voters. Meanwhile, the Canadian people remain unsure about Lester Pearson. They respond well when reminded of his experience, but need to see more conviction and strength befitting a leader, rather than relying on a party brand.

Biographer John English argues that much of this drive to remake Pearson came because "the creation of Camelot on the Potomac quickly captured Canada's eye." As will be seen, there is no doubt that Kennedy's presence looms large over the upcoming elections. However, focusing solely on this ignores Pearson's failures in 1958. Regardless

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<sup>55</sup> "Section V: Opinions of Leaders," in "Opinion Survey, September - October 1961," Box 7, Tom Kent Papers, Queen's University Archives, Kingston, Ontario.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

of who occupied the White House in 1962-63, it would have been necessary to remake Pearson's image.<sup>57</sup> Lester Pearson would later express his regret towards the degree to which he let campaign operatives control this. "I placed too much confidence in their wisdom and judgement," he laments in his memoirs.<sup>58</sup> At the same time, his advisors' efforts are understandable. The Liberal leader did not have the public appeal that Diefenbaker had. A study by Peter Regenstreif into the 1962 election found that only 3% of Liberal voters cast their ballot because of the Liberal leader. This result compares to 32% of Progressive Conservative supporters who voted for the party because of the prime minister.<sup>59</sup>

### **The Canadian General Election of 1962**

Meeting with Diefenbaker in early 1962, party organizers warned the prime minister that Pearson and the Liberals were within striking distance of a majority victory. April polling had the Liberals ahead again by six points, a margin of 40-34. At the same time, the Progressive Conservatives were confident that when regional factors and their overwhelming majority were considered, the government could hold on — at best, with a slim majority.<sup>60</sup> Under Canadian law, Diefenbaker was not required to call an election for another year, but he decided to go to the polls that June. While the nation's economic situation was bleak, with a high of 12% unemployment the previous winter, the government's recent economic stimulus had proven to be somewhat of a stabilizing influence. With much of Canada's unemployment centred around a lack of seasonal work

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<sup>57</sup> English, *Worldly Years*, 236-38.

<sup>58</sup> Lester B. Pearson, *Mike*, Volume Three (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 77.

<sup>59</sup> Peter Regenstreif, *Diefenbaker Interlude: Parties and Voting in Canada* (Don Mills, TO: Longmans, 1965), 74.

<sup>60</sup> Smith, 430; Stursberg, *Leadership Gained*, 251; English, *Worldly Years*, 237.

in the winter, the aim was to go to the polls in the spring in case things got worse in early 1963. A renewed mandate would then allow the government to take long-term economic action.<sup>61</sup>

Campaign strategy aimed to present the Progressive Conservative Party as the representative of a “broad Canadianism.” A memorandum prepared for the prime minister stressed the need to highlight the diversity of the caucus. Diefenbaker had appointed an “Indian” to the Senate, and he was the first prime minister to include a woman as a member of the Cabinet.<sup>62</sup> Beyond this, the key to victory would be to continue to raise doubts about Liberal leadership. “We should make the issues of leadership paramount,” the memo stresses. The problem with the Liberal “team,” it observes, is that it is full of the same experts who failed to provide solutions to Canada’s economic problems when last in government. To return the Liberals to government would be to “return to the ‘Board of Directors’ concept of leadership where *academic* considerations out-weigh human and national considerations.” The approach, which focuses on the egghead trope, hit hard at Pearson’s weaknesses. The memorandum also acknowledged the need to undercut Liberal attempts to reshape their leader’s image in the eyes of Canadians before they established an image as effective as “Uncle Louis.”<sup>63</sup>

The Diefenbaker campaign attempted to do this, somewhat curiously for the early 1960s, by painting Lester Pearson as a communist sympathizer; the very tactic he had dismissed in 1958. The PCs hoped this would be specifically impactful in Quebec, where

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<sup>61</sup> Regenstreif, 34; Smith, 393-97, 412-13.

<sup>62</sup> James Gladstone was appointed to the Senate by the Diefenbaker government in January 1958 to sit as a senator from Alberta; meanwhile Ellen Fairclough, the Progressive Conservative MP from Hamilton West served several positions within the Diefenbaker Cabinet. Most notably, she was Canada’s Minister of Citizenship and Immigration from 1958-1962. (Newman, *Renegade*, 99-101).

<sup>63</sup> Memorandum, “The Campaign Themes,” in “Elections, 1962,” Box 35, Series XII, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

there was a fervent Catholic intolerance for anything resembling communism. This instance shows just how fused the concept of effeminate weakness, statecraft, and communism had become in Canadian and American minds. Diefenbaker harnessed on to two specific points from the Liberal leader's past. First, Pearson had sided with the Soviet Union over the British and French during the Suez Crisis. Regardless of his peace prize, the Progressive Conservatives framed this as a betrayal of Canada's allied governments. This approach was particularly effective at shoring up the party's base who strongly condemned the St. Laurent-Pearson approach in 1956. Second, and more importantly, Diefenbaker attacked an interview Pearson gave to Pierre Berton. When pressed on whether he would rather face a nuclear war or communist-rule, Pearson chose the latter but qualified his choice on the premise that he would prefer to remain alive to fight against the system. Diefenbaker and his surrogates hammered home the idea that Pearson had claimed it was better to be "Red than dead," and the Liberal leader's caveat got lost in the narrative. Pearson was depicted by the PCs as a weak man who would give into Soviet domination rather than risk his life for the good of the country.<sup>64</sup>

The concept disseminated amongst the Canadian public enough that it generated a number of disconcerted letters to the Pearson campaign. Miss E. DeFerrari wrote to the Liberal leader in March 1962 to express concerns about Pearson's supposed pacifism. She attached an article from *The Pilot*, an American periodical, that asserts that such a position results from "moral cowardice." Interestingly, the article also invokes the era of Theodore Roosevelt as the ideal for masculine virility while pointing to concerns about modernity and increased prosperity on manhood in recent decades. For Miss DeFerrari, Pearson was

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<sup>64</sup> Newman, *Renegade*, 325; English, *Worldly Years*, 239; Dale C. Thomson, *Louis St. Laurent: Canadian* (Toronto: Macmillian, 1967), 483-84.



representative of the article's argument that modernity has made men timid and "self-indulgent to the point of abandoning our responsibility."<sup>65</sup> Another letter from Rev. S.J. Slezak worried that Pearson was "too 'soft'" and did not "have the guts to publicly proclaim that [he] would rather die than lose freedom."<sup>66</sup> Pearson, who already carried concerns of being an effeminate intellectual, now had to contend with supposed communist sympathies and moral weakness. As such, comparisons in letters and the press to Adlai Stevenson, who was now serving as Kennedy's Ambassador to the United Nations, were not infrequent, nor overly surprising.<sup>67</sup>

Doubt about Pearson's fortitude, however, did not change the fact that the Diefenbaker campaign struggled from the outset. Almost immediately after the writ dropped, a run on the Canadian economy began. The government quickly devalued the dollar quite drastically, pegging it to 92.5 cents USD.<sup>68</sup> As Diefenbaker campaign biographer Dick Spencer observes, the spectre of continued unemployment and a struggling economic situation raised "phantom images of swirls of hot, dry, drift under Bennett buggies" for the Canadian people.<sup>69</sup> The Liberals were quick to capitalize on this,

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<sup>65</sup> Letter from Miss E. DeFerrari, dated March 17, 1962, in "International Communism, Part Two," Volume 49, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC.

<sup>66</sup> Letter from Rev. S.J. Slezak, dated April 26, 1961, in "International Communism, Part Two," Volume 49, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC.

<sup>67</sup> Letter from Mrs. M. Alice Engel, dated February 4, 1963, in "Nuclear Policy, Part One," Volume 49, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC; For Stevenson comparisons, see also Toronto Telegram quote in Liberal Action Bulletin No. 14," in "Election 1963, Part One," Volume 81, Series N2, MG-26N, LAC, and "Canadians Are In For Hot Campaign," Miami Herald, in "U.S. Press Coverage," Box 290, Series VII, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>68</sup> Stursburg, *Leadership Gained*, 251-54; Smith, 437-48.

<sup>69</sup> Dick Spencer, *Trumpets and Drums: John Diefenbaker on the Campaign Trail* (Toronto: Greystone Books, 1995), 64-65; The "Bennett Buggy" was the nickname for a car that was pulled by a horse during the height of the Great Depression. Automotive vehicles had become a sign of economic prosperity during the 1920s, however, during the economic upheaval of the 1930s people found cars too expensive to operate and repair. As a result, many turned to the carriage for inspiration, and gutted the mechanics of the car, choosing instead to pull it via horse. See "Bennett Buggy," Canada150@USASK Exhibit, University of Saskatchewan, <https://canada150.usask.ca/our-evolving-campus/bennett-buggy.php>

printing “Diefendollars” for distribution at campaign events. They were novelty 92.5 cent fake currency, often bearing the face of the prime minister or the Minister of Finance, Donald Fleming.<sup>70</sup> With a sustained unemployment rate of around 7% and a rising cost of living, Diefenbaker struggled to adequately explain why the devaluation was necessary. Voters cared less that it helped tourism and the import-export trade balance, and more that the price of bread was increasing. While the government tried to spin it as a positive measure, its sudden introduction in the middle of the election only added to the confusion and the perception that the prime minister was indecisive.<sup>71</sup>

More importantly, the sudden run on the Canadian dollar, which had begun on the New York Exchange, touched off a wave of paranoia for Diefenbaker. It was his impression that the Kennedy administration was trying to influence the election.<sup>72</sup> This paranoia was also representative of the deterioration in the Diefenbaker-Kennedy relationship that had taken place since their 1961 meetings. That fall, the Bomarc anti-aircraft missiles were installed and the Voodoo interceptors were operational, yet the prime minister had failed to arm them with nuclear warheads.<sup>73</sup> An agreement had been close at hand until Harold Morrison of the *Montreal Gazette* published an article on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1961. Entitled

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<sup>70</sup> Diefendollar examples are shown in article clipping from *The Journal* (Nipawin, SK) in June 1962, found in Scrapbook #68, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>71</sup> Frank Feigert, *Canada Votes: 1935-1988* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 14-15; Peter C. Newman, “Why Diefenbaker Lost Canada,” *Maclean's*, July 28, 1962.

<sup>72</sup> John G. Diefenbaker, *One Canada: The Tumultuous Years, 1962-1967*, Volume Three (Toronto: MacMillan, 1977), 124.

<sup>73</sup> McKercher, *Camelot*, 103; It is important to note that the Bomarc could not be armed with conventional warheads. Even if they could, a nuclear warhead was necessary to disable/destroy the armaments in a Soviet bomber. To shoot down a plane carrying a nuclear payload, with a conventional warhead, still risked detonation of the bomb if it hit the ground. Meanwhile the Voodoo interceptors ordered by Canada had been specifically configured for nuclear warheads and were at far-less than peak effectiveness when armed with conventional warheads. Furthermore, they carried the same risk when confronting a bomber armed with nuclear warheads. Conventional weapons were incapable of ensuring the destruction of the warhead. For more information, please see Air Marshall W.A. Curtis' letter to Pearson, March 29, 1962 in “Nuclear Policy, P1,” Volume 49, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC. See also Pearson, *Mike*, Vol. 3, 70, and McMahon, 74.

“JFK Presses Canada on Nuclear Weapons,” it sourced the story from an upcoming *Newsweek* article, a magazine with close ties to Kennedy. Diefenbaker interpreted the leak of details about the agreement, which was in express violation of the negotiation, as open pressure from the White House for a swift resolution of the matter. The prime minister feared that his government could no longer accept the warheads without looking like it was bowing to American pressure. Again, he delayed a decision.<sup>74</sup>

What seems like a paranoid over-reaction about the falling dollar and a negotiations leak becomes marginally more understandable when one considers that Diefenbaker had been smarting since the Ottawa meetings in May 1961. Following a meeting with Kennedy, Diefenbaker received a memorandum left behind in his office. It was the briefing paper for the president written by Deputy National Security Advisor Walt Rostow, entitled: “What We Want From Ottawa.” The wording emphasized that the president should “push” Diefenbaker on matters like the Organization of American States (OAS), increased foreign aid, and the growing conflict in Southeast Asia. To Diefenbaker, it was emblematic of the arrogance he saw in Kennedy and served as concrete proof that Kennedy intended to “push” Canada around. Diefenbaker filed the memorandum away and the Americans did not realize that it was left behind. That is, not until Lester Pearson visited the White House in the middle of the 1962 election.<sup>75</sup>

In late April, the Liberal leader attended the Nobel Prize winners’ dinner at the White House. It was a long-scheduled event, so the fact that it took place during an election call was not Pearson’s fault. He later expressed surprise in his memoirs that his motives

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<sup>74</sup> McMahon, 122-23; Allan Levine, *Scrum Wars: The Prime Ministers and the Media* (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1993), 243; See also Harold Morrison, “JFK Presses Canada on Nuclear Warheads,” *Montreal Gazette*, September 20, 1961.

<sup>75</sup> Nash, 120-22; Diefenbaker, *Years of Achievement*, 182-83.

would ever be considered sinister. The issue at hand, however, was less about his attendance at the dinner itself and more so that he accepted an invitation by Kennedy to come to the White House early. For roughly a half-hour the two men held a private discussion on international affairs in the president's study before proceeding to the dinner and entering the room *together*.<sup>76</sup> It was, most certainly, was a breach of diplomatic protocol. When a modern lens is applied, one can see the issue of Canada's Leader of the Opposition attending a private meeting with the President of the United States, especially in the middle of an election.

It is not surprising then that the visit and the unusual private audience received play in the Canadian media. Tim Creery in the *Ottawa Citizen* referred to the meeting as a "coup" for Pearson, insisting that the meeting proved to be a beneficial "campaign stop."<sup>77</sup> While Creery was quick to stress the non-partisan nature of the visit, it is apparent from his article how beneficial this was for Pearson. A similar column by Creery in the *Calgary Herald* categorized the meeting as "private, personal, and social," and observed that the two leaders talked about the European Common Market and nuclear testing.<sup>78</sup> Harold Morrison, the Canadian Press' Washington Bureau Chief, stressed that the meeting was "very correct" and that the Liberal leader was placed at Jackie Kennedy's table for dinner to avoid the semblance of impropriety. However, it is a little hard to see how the dinner was ever a concern, following the private audience. Morrison also notes that before departing the following morning, Pearson had breakfast with Walt Rostow (the author of

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<sup>76</sup> Nash, 157; Boyko, 156-57; Pearson, *Mike*, Volume Three, 63-64.

<sup>77</sup> Tim Creery, "Political Benefits in Visit to Kennedy," *Ottawa Citizen*, April 30, 1962, in "Canada: General, 1962," Box 113, Series 9, President's Office Files, JFKPL.

<sup>78</sup> Tim Creery, "Pearson, Kennedy Hold 'Personal' Discussions," *Calgary Herald*, April 30, 1962.

the “push” memo).<sup>79</sup>

In the aftermath of the Nobel dinner, Diefenbaker met with the departing U.S. Ambassador to Canada, Livingston Merchant. The farewell meeting at 24 Sussex Drive, the prime ministerial residence, saw Diefenbaker fly into a “vehement and violent and highly emotional criticism of the president,” according to Merchant. The issue at hand seems not to have been the Nobel dinner itself but rather the political capital that Pearson gained from a private meeting with Kennedy. Diefenbaker revealed that he possessed the Rostow memorandum and threatened to use it as evidence that the United States was seeking to pressure the Canadian government.<sup>80</sup> Writing to Washington, Merchant reported that Diefenbaker was “excited to a degree disturbing in a leader of an important country” and recommended that the president needed to have a meeting with the prime minister. Kennedy refused, unleashing a series of expletives. Diefenbaker was “a prick, a fucker, [and] a shit.”<sup>81</sup> Instead, Merchant was dispatched to revisit the prime minister and explain the serious diplomatic repercussions that would result from the release of the memorandum. Diefenbaker demurred but held onto the memo.<sup>82</sup>

Back on the campaign trail, Pearson frequently referred to the Diefenbaker government as one of “delay, indecision, confusion and fumbling... of never making a decision today if it can be put off until tomorrow.” There were also frequent references to Diefenbaker’s “trembling voice” and “crocodile tears” when he felt slighted.<sup>83</sup> There is no

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<sup>79</sup> Clipping, Harold Morrison, “We Were Very Correct Says Pearson of Talk,” in “Canada: General, 1962,” Box 113, Series 9, President’s Office Files, JFKPL.

<sup>80</sup> Livingston Merchant Oral History, JFKPL.

<sup>81</sup> Livingston Merchant, as quoted in Sean Maloney, *Learning to Love the Bomb: Canada’s Nuclear Weapons During The Cold War* (Washington, DC: Potomac Booms, 2007), 264.

<sup>82</sup> McMahon, 137

<sup>83</sup> Memorandum, “Notes For Mr. Pearson’s Campaign Speeches,” April 5, 1962, in “Campaign Material,” Volume 29, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC.

doubt that these attacks on the prime minister were designed to emphasize a growing perception of weakness. Interesting here is the fact that while one could scarcely accuse Diefenbaker of being an intellectual, he became vulnerable to the same gendered criticisms that were levelled against Pearson. Diefenbaker's tendency to brood also received gendered treatment. Ambassador Merchant remembers a dinner at the American embassy during Kennedy's visit to Ottawa when the president spent a disproportionate amount of time focused on Lester Pearson. Diefenbaker's displeasure was evident to all in attendance. Merchant quipped that the prime minister brought "the feminine atmosphere in the room... several degrees below zero" that night.<sup>84</sup>

Meanwhile, in an attempt to counter similarly gendered attacks by the Progressive Conservatives on Pearson, the Liberal campaign worked to highlight their leader's past as a sportsman and athlete. It proves to be a recurring theme in campaign stops in 1962, especially in the seat-rich Ontario. Given that the campaign had studied public concerns over Pearson's masculine perception among voters (bow-tie, intellectual, lisp), it is hard not to frame this reliance on athletics as an electoral tactic that aimed to highlight his manhood. Pearson made repeat appearances in the Greater Toronto Area with Leonard "Red" Kelly of the Toronto Maple Leafs, a Liberal "star" candidate. At an Etobicoke rally on April 30<sup>th</sup>, which journalist Stanley Westall styled as "more like hockey night in Canada," Pearson joked with the crowd: "We've taken the puck from the face-off and we're headed for the enemy goal."<sup>85</sup> Several days later, in Sault Ste. Marie, Pearson had a photo opportunity with a Peewee Hockey Team, where his past as a coach conveniently came

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<sup>84</sup> Livingston Merchant Oral History, JFKPL.

<sup>85</sup> Stanley Westall, "PCs Confused, Undecided on Defence Policy, Pearson Says," *Globe and Mail*, May 1, 1962.

up.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, Pearson's time playing semi-professional baseball was hinted at when he appeared again with Red Kelly on May 9<sup>th</sup> for a photo opportunity in Oakville. He went to bat during a youth baseball game; Kelly served as catcher.<sup>87</sup> Pearson also took to the mound in late May, during a baseball game in Barry's Bay. While he struck out on the first pitch, he hit the second clear out of the park, launching the ball across centre field and striking the back window of a nearby car.<sup>88</sup>

Given the high level of unemployment, the dollar's devaluation, and a struggling economic situation, it was ultimately domestic issues that pulled focus during the campaign. Nuclear weapons did not receive much play (in contrast to a year later). Part of this lack of focus may have been because there was not much daylight in 1962 between Diefenbaker and Pearson's positions on the matter. Both parties were cautious about accepting nuclear warheads, but maintained the right to deploy them.<sup>89</sup> Nor could the Progressive Conservatives distract from the faltering economy by leaning into the issue of resource development, which Peter Newman describes as a "vision that became a mirage." Despite securing roughly four thousand new miles of highways during his time in office, including twenty-two hundred in the North, the resource focus promised for economic development had lagged. No new mines were developed during the Diefenbaker years, and oil and natural gas discoveries were not as plentiful or as frequent as expected. Part of the problem, Newman observes, is that while it proved to be a great election slogan, the difficulties of developing large-scale projects in the North were all but ignored by

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<sup>86</sup> "Members of the Sault Ste. Marie Young Liberals Pee wee Hockey Team Meet Liberal Leader Lester Pearson," *Globe and Mail*, May 7, 1962.

<sup>87</sup> Stanley Westall, "Kelly Outdraws Fastest Liberal Gun," *Globe and Mail*, May 10, 1962.

<sup>88</sup> Walter Gray, "Hundreds Cheer Pearson in PC Stronghold," *Globe and Mail*, May 26, 1962.

<sup>89</sup> McMahon, 139.

Diefenbaker, the Minister of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources, Alvin Hamilton, and policy advisor Merrill Menzies.<sup>90</sup> As observed in Chapter Four, Eric Blanchard points out that the use of masculinity in the political sphere is inherently performative. Once Diefenbaker gained a historic majority, he seemingly stopped trying to appeal to this masculine ideal.<sup>91</sup>

Ultimately, the 1962 Canadian election is defined by a lacklustre response from the Canadian public for both Diefenbaker and Pearson. It is not surprising that the general tone of the contest trended against all the major party leaders (including Tommy Douglas of the newly formed New Democratic Party). Should a contrary candidate emerge, Peter Newman wrote for *Maclean's* at the time, it would be pretty easy for him to do well with the Canadian people.<sup>92</sup> It is not hard to see how, in the minds of many Canadians, that man was John F. Kennedy. Writing for the *Globe and Mail*, Clark Davey spent some time in Southeastern Ontario, which went solidly Tory in the 1958 election but was now looking competitive. Talking to voters, he noted an “undercurrent of dissatisfaction with the Diefenbaker Administration.” There seems to be a disappointment in the change in image from the “larger than life” projection four years prior. Candidates now seemed to be running more on their own merits than as local “Diefenbaker candidates.” That said, Davey observes that a common complaint from those same voters regarding the Liberal leader was: “If only you had someone else....”<sup>93</sup>

A tight race reflected the public’s uncertainty, and in the run up to election day the

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<sup>90</sup> Newman, *Renegade*, 217-222.

<sup>91</sup> Eric M. Blanchard, “Rethinking International Security: Masculinity in World Politics,” *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 21, no. 1 (2014): 66-67.

<sup>92</sup> Peter C. Newman, “How To Win The ’62 Election,” *Maclean's*, n.d., in “Elections 1962, Feb-May,” Box 96, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>93</sup> Clark Davey, “No Election Excitement Along the Unhurried Ontario Shore,” *Globe and Mail*, May 30, 1962.



Liberal lead narrowed to 38-36 against the PCs.<sup>94</sup> Speaking with voters during the campaign, Peter Regenstreif found similar concerns as Clark Davey about Pearson's image. To quote a Vancouver car-rental agent: "I'd like a Liberal government, but I don't like Mr. Pearson. Another man, a Saskatchewan-based farmer, felt that the Liberal leader was a "cry-baby." Finally, a gentleman who worked for the Canadian Pacific Railroad felt that Pearson just "hasn't got what it takes." "He isn't a *man* to start with," he continued. Though Regenstreif is quick to point out that the voting public is similarly critical of Diefenbaker, what is crucial to his study is the fact that Pearson and his image-makers were unable to move the needle on Pearson's image. Pearson continued to struggle against the mantle of the effeminate diplomat, which the Progressive Conservatives had been all too happy to help push.<sup>95</sup>

The result was a confused and divided outcome, described by one scholar as "everybody's Waterloo."<sup>96</sup> The government lost eighty-seven seats, the second-biggest collapse in Canadian history, after Prime Minister R.B. Bennett's unceremonious dumping at the height of the Great Depression. Compared to 1958, the Progressive Conservatives saw a popular support drop by seventeen percent. To put these numbers into perspective, Louis St. Laurent lost sixty-four seats and nine percent of his popular vote in 1957.<sup>97</sup> Of course, there is an argument to be made that when a party holds 208 of 265 seats there is nowhere to go but down. However, his overwhelming majority is the only reason Diefenbaker remained prime minister after such a precipitous drop. When the votes were counted, the Progressive Conservative Party walked away with 116 seats, compared to 99

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<sup>94</sup> Smith, 441.

<sup>95</sup> Regenstreif, 78-80.

<sup>96</sup> N. Caiden, "The Canadian General Election of 1962," *Australian Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (1962): 72.

<sup>97</sup> Peter C. Newman, "Why Diefenbaker Lost Canada," *Maclean's*, July 28, 1962.

for the Liberals. The NDP scored 19 seats, while Social Credit resurged with Quebec's help, gaining 30 seats in Canada's twenty-fifth parliament. Quebeckers had abandoned John Diefenbaker but were not still not sold on Lester Pearson. Though the Progressive Conservatives carried a commanding popular vote lead, with 37.3% of the vote to 33.6% for the Liberals, it was nonetheless a severe drop from their 53.6% high in 1958.<sup>98</sup>

That the Liberals lost the 1962 election, observes Patricia McMahon, was both an indictment of Pearson's weakness as a candidate and evidence that there was still some strength in Diefenbaker as a campaigner.<sup>99</sup> Liberal Senator, David A. Croll, writing to Pearson several months after the election, attached a PR assessment from an associate. The view was that the party needed "more blood-and-thunder campaigning," that Pearson was too dignified and "too much of a gentleman." He was too hesitant to tap into and play into the public frustration of the era.<sup>100</sup> Canadians wanted someone who understood their anxieties, someone with the strength to challenge the disconcert of the age. Diefenbaker was elected to a majority in 1958 promising to do just that. However, instead of the decisive masculine action and leadership he promised, his government was plagued by economic downturn and scandal that only weakened the prime minister's resolve.

The weeks after his routing in the 1962 election, seemingly brought one onslaught after another for Diefenbaker, which only worsened the prime minister's sense of defeat. In the days after the election, he had been forced by a continued economic deterioration to implement harsh austerity measures that were overwhelmingly unpopular. Then, two weeks later a close personal friend and advisor, Bill Brunt, was killed in a car accident.

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<sup>98</sup> Feigert, 14-15.

<sup>99</sup> McMahon, 144.

<sup>100</sup> Letter from Eddie Gould to Senator David A. Croll, dated August 7, 1962, in "Suggestions Regarding Election," Volume 9, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC..

Diefenbaker had been planning to appoint Brunt as the next Speaker in the Canadian Senate. Finally, while on holiday at Harrington Lake in late July, Diefenbaker broke his ankle by stepping in a gopher hole on the property. Laid up for several weeks, the outgoing Minister of Finance, Donald Fleming, remembers the prime minister as “a sorely troubled, almost beaten, man.” He was basically paralyzed emotionally, and failed to continue governing. Diefenbaker’s secretary, Bunny Pound, mused that the ankle injury was “sort of psychological.” “He just wanted,” she said, “to sit there in his bed, and grumble and growl and think about things.”<sup>101</sup>

It took a remarkable fifty-one days following the election for Diefenbaker to recall parliament and test the House’s confidence.<sup>102</sup> In an interesting historical footnote, Lester Pearson sought consultation on government’s constitutional obligations. Beyond Pearson’s frustration that Diefenbaker would not recall the House, his concern appears to have been rooted in the fact that the prime minister had not confirmed majority support. Although he was likely assured temporary support from the NDP and Social Credit parties, Diefenbaker was making decisions and appointments as prime minister without verifying the will of parliament. Obviously, in a continued majority situation, it would have been a non-issue; however, he no longer had a majority. Pearson was publicly critical of Diefenbaker’s delay, but the scholarly and legal consensus seemed to be that there was no requirement to recall the House until a year from its last sitting. Nonetheless, Diefenbaker was breaking precedent by failing to quickly return to the House and test its confidence because of the minority situation.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> Smith, 443-448.

<sup>102</sup> Newman, *Renegade*, 334-35.

<sup>103</sup> For more information please see letters from C.A. Curtis, dated July 10, 1962, and August 9, 1962, as well as a memorandum from T.W. Kent, dated July 23, 1962, and finally a memorandum from Pauline

## The Cuban Missile Crisis

By the fall of 1962, the newly constituted minority government had offered to accept nuclear warheads from the Kennedy administration, as long as they were stored at the border and brought across in an emergency. The government hoped it would prove a launching point for renewed negotiations with the Americans. The White House, no doubt, found such a proposal baffling. Nor were they in the mood to cooperate and help Diefenbaker save face following his recent support for an unverified weapons-testing moratorium at the United Nations.<sup>104</sup> Writing to Diefenbaker on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1962, Kennedy informed the prime minister that “should Canada cast its vote in favour of a moratorium this year... [it] will be seen by the Soviet Union as a successful breach of the Western position.”<sup>105</sup> The United States had resumed atmospheric tests earlier that year, after Soviet advancements had halted negotiations at Geneva.<sup>106</sup> As Kennedy told the American people in an address in early March, the United States had no choice but to interpret such tests as Khrushchev’s attempt to reignite the arms race and resume its own series of nuclear weapons tests.<sup>107</sup>

Even as Kennedy was writing to Diefenbaker on October 19<sup>th</sup>, a much more serious

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Jewett, all of which are found in “Canadian Constitution,” Volume 8, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC; See also “Notes for Mr. Pearson’s Address in Toronto,” September 18, 1962, in “Forms of Government, Volume 8, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC.

<sup>104</sup> McMahon, 147; While External Affairs promised Diefenbaker that it would take no more than “a matter of minutes, at most perhaps an hour,” to arm Canadian defences in the event of a crisis, the Pentagon demurred. The U.S. Defence Department observed that it would take roughly fifteen hours to get warheads across the border and established onto the Bomarc missiles and Voodoo interceptors. Such a delay proved untenable in the face of a looming nuclear war, especially following the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962 (Nash, 152-53).

<sup>105</sup> Letter from JFK to Diefenbaker, October 19, 1962, in “Canada: Security, 1962,” Box 113, Series 9, President’s Office Files, JFKPL.

<sup>106</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 495-97.

<sup>107</sup> “Radio and Television Address to the American People: ‘Nuclear Testing and Disarmament,’” March 2, 1962, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed November 2020, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/236929>

chapter of the arms race unfolded behind the scenes. Three days earlier, National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy had walked into Kennedy's bedroom and informed him that the Soviet Union was in the process of constructing Medium-range Ballistic Missile (MRBM) installations in Cuba.<sup>108</sup> The history of the Cuban Missile Crisis has been covered extensively in other volumes and needs no repeating here. However, what is relevant is the further strain that these events placed on the Diefenbaker-Kennedy relationship, as well as the Canadian-American relationship. The repercussions reverberated over the coming months leading to Diefenbaker's fall from power. The Cuban Missile Crisis also brought into sharp relief the danger in the prime minister's wavering on the issue of nuclear warheads for the Canadian people. Especially regarding the idea that nuclear warheads could be stored on American soil and trucked across the border in the event of a crisis. There simply would not be the time. For the Kennedy administration, the coming thirteen days made one thing clear: Diefenbaker's lack of resolve and his continued indecision meant he had to go.

In the afternoon of October 22<sup>nd</sup>, former ambassador Livingston Merchant visited Diefenbaker on behalf of President Kennedy to deliver aerial photographs of the Cuban missile sites, along with a draft of the president's remarks announcing a naval blockade. The prime minister was already aware, via Canadian intelligence, of the American discovery. Bristling at the lack of consultation and the fact that the United States appeared to assume the Canadian government would follow orders, Diefenbaker exploded: "That young man has got to learn that he is not running the Canadian government." This frustration is likely part of the reason why, when Diefenbaker addressed the House of

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<sup>108</sup> Schlesinger, 801-02; Theodore Sorenson, *Kennedy* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009), 672-73.

Commons after the president's speech, he pledged his unequivocal support for Kennedy — with equivocations. He suggested that the neutral members of the UN disarmament committee ask to carry out an on-site inspection in Cuba to verify the American claims. Speaking later with Bobby Kennedy, Diefenbaker advisor Dalton Camp remembers the president's brother telling him that the Canadians were the *only* allies briefed that evening who demanded further verification.<sup>109</sup>

That same night the American military was put on DEFCON III (increased readiness), which brought Canadian Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff into Defence Minister Harkness's office. He wanted to place Canada's forces on comparable alert. Protocol confusion saw Douglas Harkness seek verification from Diefenbaker, who promptly refused it. Harkness then went ahead and authorized the move anyways. While the NORAD agreement required consultation, effectively Canada's NORAD-tied forces were already at DEFCON III the moment Kennedy raised the alert level. Yet, it took two days for Diefenbaker to agree to full authorization, as well as what the NORAD agreement already put in place. Even then, he only consented once the Americans had moved to DEFCON II (ready to deploy).<sup>110</sup> The problem, as Michael Bliss elaborates, had things escalated more quickly with Kennedy's quarantine of Soviet ships, there was a distinct possibility that Canadian forces "might have been involved without authorization from the civilian power."<sup>111</sup> Combined with Diefenbaker's reluctance to authorize readiness and Harkness's unilateral decision to place all Canadian forces on alert, the confusion and chaos of these

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<sup>109</sup> Boyko, 174-80; Stursburg, *Leadership Lost*, 14,19.

<sup>110</sup> Nash, 190-92; McKercher, *Camelot*, 166-67; Boyko, 181-85; NORAD would later claim that Diefenbaker fifty-three hour delay in making a decision did not prevent the RCAF F-101s under continental command from being placed on alert. See also: "Norad Refutes Diefenbaker Claim," *Vancouver Sun*, January 2, 1963, in Scrapbook #71, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>111</sup> Michael Bliss, *Right Honourable Men: The Descent of Canadian Politics from Macdonald to Chretien* (Toronto: Harper Perennial, 2004), 210.

days underscore one thing: the NORAD agreement requires civilian powers to come to a quick decision, meaning that any delay could prove fatal to continental defence.

For Kennedy, Harkness, and many others, this was another example of Diefenbaker's lack of resolve. As Kennedy told the Associated Press shortly after that, he was committed to strengthening Western leadership, "even at the risk of offending *sensitive* allies."<sup>112</sup> A clear swipe at Diefenbaker and his masculinity. It is worth noting that the Americans had requested permission to move nuclear warheads across the border to arm the Bomarc missiles and Voodoo interceptors; the very procedure Diefenbaker was currently proposing to the United States. He refused. The American military also requested permission for access to Canadian airspace with armed planes. Of the 640 flyovers the Americans wanted to conduct during the crisis, Diefenbaker allowed a total of 8.<sup>113</sup> While it is true that neither the Bomarcs nor Voodoos would have protected Canada from a missile attack, they were nonetheless meant to be part of the continent's defence from Soviet bombers. "If there is one thing that is more useless than an armed Bomarc," Liberal defence critic Paul Hellyer stated, "it is an unarmed Bomarc." Indeed, as the former Chief of the Air Staff, W.A. Curtis wrote to Lester Pearson earlier in the year, nuclear-tipped missiles were needed to deactivate and neutralize a nuclear bomb delivered by plane.<sup>114</sup>

By this time, Canadian public opinion had largely fallen in line with American nuclear policy, even before the Cuban Missile Crisis. Towards the end of 1961, roughly 61% of Canadians supported nuclear warheads, with 31% opposed.<sup>115</sup> A November 1962

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<sup>112</sup> Emphasis added; Nash, 222.

<sup>113</sup> Newman, *Renegade*, 339-40; Patrick Nicholson, *Vision and Indecision* (Don Mills, ON: Longmans, 1968), 172-73.

<sup>114</sup> Paul Hellyer as quoted in McMahon, 157; Letter from Air Marshal W.A. Curtis, dated March 29, 1962, in "Nuclear Policy, Part One," Volume 49, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC.

<sup>115</sup> McMahon, 130.

Gallup poll, following the Cuban Missile Crisis, showed comparable numbers. The crisis essentially baked in the support by a margin of roughly 2-1. It is also worth noting that in that same poll, around 50% of Canadians reported a worse impression of Diefenbaker than six months prior. Still, Pearson did not have a corresponding rise. Nearly 65% of Canadians reported an unchanged position on the Liberal leader.<sup>116</sup> To get an idea on favourability, a March 1963 Gallup poll found Diefenbaker with an approval rate of only 45%, while Pearson was at 41%.<sup>117</sup> These numbers all return to an idea previously mentioned: Canadians were looking for someone else.

### **To Bring Down A Government**

In the aftermath of the missile crisis, a shift in Liberal policy emerged behind the scenes. Pearson later stated in his memoirs, somewhat cryptically, that it was “changing circumstances” that were behind his about-face on nuclear warheads.<sup>118</sup> Whether this was driven purely by defence concerns, as he claimed, or by shifting Canadian public opinion in favour of nuclear warheads, is somewhat more unclear. As he would later tell Diefenbaker biographer Denis Smith, this was when he “really became a politician.”<sup>119</sup> Patricia McMahon references a visit by Paul Hellyer to a November 1962 NATO conference as the likely origin of the transition in Pearson’s thinking. At the conference, while speaking with Supreme Allied Commander General Lauris Norstad, Hellyer was shown battle plans illustrating that a non-nuclear Canada was a weak link. Speaking with

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<sup>116</sup> “Canada Military Have Nuclear Weapons” and “Politicians,” November 1962, Poll #299, Gallup Canada, Inc., Public Opinion Polls, ODESI, <http://odesi2.scholarsportal.info/webview/>

<sup>117</sup> “Politicians,” March, 1963, Poll #301, Gallup Canada, Inc., Public Opinion Polls, ODESI, <http://odesi2.scholarsportal.info/webview/>

<sup>118</sup> Pearson, *Mike*, Volume Three, 71.

<sup>119</sup> Nash, 227.



Pearson on his return, Hellyer relayed Norstad's concerns.<sup>120</sup>

Then, on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1963, on a farewell tour of NATO countries, Norstad brought his reservations directly to the Canadian people via a news conference. To quote Liberal MP Judy LaMarsh, that was when "all hell broke loose." Journalist Charles Lynch asked Norstad if he felt Canada was failing to meet its obligations to NATO by not arming its forces with nuclear warheads. Norstad replied, "I believe that's right."<sup>121</sup> It was nine days later, at a meeting of the York-Scarborough Liberal Association, that Pearson called on the government to "end at once its evasion of responsibility, by discarding the commitments it has already accepted for Canada." "We can only do this," he said, "by accepting nuclear warheads for those defensive tactical weapons which cannot effectively be used without them."<sup>122</sup>

When he addressed the House of Commons two weeks later, on January 25<sup>th</sup>, Diefenbaker attempted to clear up some of the confusion surrounding his nuclear policy. He spoke for over an hour-and-a-half and insisted that negotiations with the United States were proceeding "quite forcibly." At the same time, he attempted to use the changing

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<sup>120</sup> McMahan, 157-59.

<sup>121</sup> Maloney, 296; "Transcript of Press Conference By General Lauris Norstad," January 3, 1963, in "National Defence (1)," Volume 110, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC, Ottawa, ON.

<sup>122</sup> Boyko, 212; It is worth noting that Lester Pearson's "Scarborough Speech" was a reversal in policy that had been under consideration for several months. Liberal thinking appears to have been spurred by a memorandum from John Gellner, a journalist and former RCAF commander. In his December 1962 letter, Gellner argued for the acceptance of nuclear weapons followed by a renegotiation. It was a combination of the Cuban Missile Crisis, Kennedy, and General Norstad that brought "this whole picture into a shaky kind of focus," writes Pearson advisor Richard O'Hagen. He cautioned that if a decision was to be made to change the Liberal position, it had to be: "A model of simplicity and decisiveness." J.W. Pickersgill, concurred, as he was concerned about ability of the public to process a complex argument. Ultimately, Pearson's final speech runs almost lockstep with yet another memorandum from Major General A. Bruce Matthews, the former president of the Liberal Party, dated January 7<sup>th</sup>, 1962. Matthews stressed that Canada had made commitments to NATO and NORAD requiring nuclear arms, and had invested hundreds of millions in such technology (nearly \$700 million), thus a Liberal government should honour its commitments and then reassess Canada's nuclear role after parliamentary investigation and debate. For more information on this debate and the letters in question see McMahan, 157-59 and the folder "Nuclear Policy, Part One," Volume 49, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC, Ottawa, ON.

geopolitical circumstances to provide himself cover. The advent of Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles (ICBMs) posed an increasing danger, Diefenbaker said, and Bomarc missiles and Voodoo interceptors were unable to shoot them down. It was a position that he came to grow more and more reliant on, though it ignored the fact that the threat of nuclear bombers remained a genuine reality. Diefenbaker mused to parliament about the possibility of scrapping the weapons systems, which cost nearly \$700 million, and placing “greater and greater emphasis... on conventional arms and conventional forces.”<sup>123</sup> It was a bumbling, confusing performance that simultaneously stressed that the government was still working on acquiring nuclear warheads for hundreds of millions in defensive weaponry that was now obsolete and could be scrapped.

The Kennedy State Department finally reached its breaking point. On January 30<sup>th</sup> the following statement was given to the press:

A flexible and balanced defence requires increased conventional forces, but conventional forces are not an alternative to effective NATO or NORAD defence arrangements using nuclear-capable weapons systems. NORAD is designed to defend the North American continent against air attack. The Soviet bomber fleet will remain at least throughout this decade a significant element in the Soviet strike force. An effective continental defence against this common threat is necessary.<sup>124</sup>

The provision of nuclear weapons to Canadian forces would not involve expanding independent nuclear capability or increasing the ‘nuclear club,’ the memo further stressed. As in the case of other allies, custody of U.S. nuclear weapons would remain with the United States, with joint-control authorization over launch. The memorandum also pointed out that while negotiations were still ongoing, “the Canadian Government has not as yet

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<sup>123</sup> Newman, *Renegade*, 361-62; Clipping, Bruce MacDonald, “PM Leaves Nuclear Issue in Mid-Air, Stresses Need for Conventional Arms,” *Globe and Mail*, January 26, 1963, in Scrapbook #71, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>124</sup> “Statement by the U.S. Department of State,” January 30, 1963, in “External Affairs and Election Issues,” Box 9, Series XIV, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

proposed any arrangement sufficiently practical to contribute effectively to North American defence.”<sup>125</sup> This release was the diplomatic equivalent of the United States government calling the prime minister of Canada a liar.

It remains unclear how much the president knew about the memorandum before its release. Officially, the State Department drafted the memo and acting Secretary of State George Ball approved it in the absence of Dean Rusk. Ball’s intentions were run by National Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy, who told them to move cautiously.<sup>126</sup> Asa McKercher identifies discussions between Ball and aides that show a desire to “clarify the record and sweep away the confusion.” It is curious, however, that they also discuss the fact that “Liberal victory in the next election is by no means certain.”<sup>127</sup> Still, Kennedy appears to have been largely unaware of the memorandum, later berating Ball and Bundy: “What the fuck have you done?”<sup>128</sup> Despite Kennedy’s displeasure, a White House post-mortem of the controversy concluded that had the State Department chosen *not* to respond to Diefenbaker’s speech to parliament, it “would have cleared the way for Diefenbaker to insinuate that our silence implied guilt.” As a result, he would have been allowed to “[pursue] a crooked course in his own self-interest right through to re-election.”<sup>129</sup>

More damning evidence of an attempt at interference comes from the fact that the White House reached out to Lester Pearson through journalist Max Freedman, after the

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> Nash, 240-42; Teleconference Transcript between McGeorge Bundy and George Ball, January 30, 1963 at 4:55 pm, in “Canada, April 1961 - November 1963,” Box 2, Series 1, George W. Ball Personal Papers, JFKPL.

<sup>127</sup> McKercher, *Camelot*, 188-90.

<sup>128</sup> JFK as quoted in Nash, 249; Sorenson 576; See also a transcript of a call between JFK and George Ball, January 31, 1963 at 7:30 PM, in “Canada, 26 April 1961 - 8 November 1963,” Box 2, Series 1, George Ball Papers, JFKPL.

<sup>129</sup> Memorandum for the President, “Canadian Chronology,” February 13, 1963, in Box 113, “Canada: Security, 1963,” Series 9, President’s Office Files, JFKPL.

memorandum's release. While the specifics of the president's offer to the Liberal leader remain unclear, there is a record of Pearson's response. He makes clear to Freedman that he "did not feel that anything would be gained by stressing the [matter] at this time." It is possible the White House offered to apologize, thus taking the anti-American issue away from Diefenbaker. However, Pearson informed Freedman that the fallout in Canada had proven to be minimal.<sup>130</sup> A U.S. Embassy cable supports this conclusion. It observes that while there was condemnation in the media, there was also a realization that the government needed to be held accountable. The *Toronto Telegram* felt that while it was "tactless," it was not unwarranted. The *Montreal Star* touted the right of the Kennedy administration to speak its mind. Both the *St. John Times Globe* and the *Winnipeg Free Press* felt the press release was "justified," while the *Windsor Star* condemned the intrusion but understood the impatience of the Kennedy administration with Diefenbaker.<sup>131</sup>

Less resigned by the incident than emboldened, Diefenbaker argued that the Progressive Conservatives could now openly fight an election from an anti-nuclear standpoint. He again pointed to the volume of letters coming to his office, which still ran 3-1 or 2-1 against warhead acquisition.<sup>132</sup> He told the press that Kennedy needed to understand that "Canada is not part of the New Frontier." Summoning the Cabinet on the morning of February 3<sup>rd</sup>, he pushed for a consensus on going to the polls. His proposed anti-nuclear, anti-American theme, he felt, would inflame passions and return the Progressive Conservatives to a majority government.<sup>133</sup> Instead of backing him,

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<sup>130</sup> Telephone message from Max Freedman, n.d., in "Canada: General, 1963," Box 113, Series 9, President's Office Files, JFKPL.

<sup>131</sup> Embassy Cable from Ottawa to State Department from Ambassador Butterworth, in "Canada: General, 1963," Box 113, Series 9, President's Office Files, JFKPL.

<sup>132</sup> Boyko; 214; Newman, *Renegade*, 342.

<sup>133</sup> Diefenbaker as quoted in McKercher, *Camelot*, 192; Smith, 475; Nash, 246-247; Nicholson, 230.

Diefenbaker's Cabinet faltered and cracked. As Douglas Harkness told the prime minister before offering his resignation: "Prime Minister, it is time you went. The Canadian people demand you go." The following morning, Pearson introduced a confidence motion in the House of Commons. A final scramble occurred as dissident Cabinet ministers tried to get Diefenbaker to resign and take the recently opened position of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. The prime minister's resignation was to be the price of Social Credit support for the government. They did not get it. The government fell on the evening of January 5<sup>th</sup> by a vote of 142-111.<sup>134</sup>

### **The Canadian General Election of 1963**

The 1963 campaign, more than the one the previous year, was based in image politics. In many senses, it *was* Lester Pearson's election to lose. He had delivered a decisive blow to the Progressive Conservatives the previous summer by reducing them to a minority government. Now, he needed to build on that momentum, even as many Canadians remained tentative about his resolve. This fact became more prevalent as the second campaign wore along. Pearson would later call the contest "the most degrading experience of [his] life."<sup>135</sup> The differences between the two elections were slight. Diefenbaker and Pearson's public identities had solidified and neither party was offering anything new. The most significant change was, of course, the Liberal pledge to accept nuclear warheads. Thus, rather than policy, what defines the 1963 campaign is the public desire for some kind of stability.<sup>136</sup>

The Liberals again started the campaign in a strong position, likely bolstered by the

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<sup>134</sup> Stursberg, *Leadership Lost*, 55-56; Newman, *Renegade*, 369-74.

<sup>135</sup> Donaldson, 211.

<sup>136</sup> Regenstreif, 51.

fallout from the State Department press release. Polling showed them leading the PCs by 47-32, and early projections estimated a Liberal majority of roughly 175 seats.<sup>137</sup> Meanwhile, Diefenbaker harboured hopes that a whistle-stop tour of Canada by train would save his government. He partially blamed the 1962 results on his travel by airplane. He found inspiration in the 1948 campaign of Harry Truman, who faced similarly great odds. Diefenbaker even borrowed the former president's turn of phrase: "Everybody is against me but the people."<sup>138</sup> More than ever, the Progressive Conservative campaign leaned into themes that were anti-Bay Street, anti-intellectual, anti-American and heavily populist. When the prime minister referred to the "people," what he increasingly meant was rural and Western Canadians.<sup>139</sup> Interesting here is the return to the theme of the common man by the Progressive Conservative Party – at election time. Unfortunately, his rhetoric in the coming campaign diverged sharply from earlier promises of new frontiers and self-agency. Rather, Diefenbaker delivered a tired litany of paranoid falsehoods about the United States and continental defence that could be easily rebutted.

Officially opening his campaign in Winnipeg on March 4<sup>th</sup>, a crowd of nine thousand turned up to hear him exclaim that his government would not be pushed around: "Our view is that Canadians have the right to decide what is best for Canada." Diefenbaker then hammered home the theme he had been pushing since his government fell: the Voodoo interceptors and Bomarc missiles were reaching obsolescence.<sup>140</sup> Despite the State Department's insistence the bomber threat would continue through the decade,

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<sup>137</sup> Nash, 273; "Liberals Hope to Take 175 Seats; Party in High Gear, Pearson Says," *Globe and Mail*, February 6, 1963.

<sup>138</sup> Bruce Macdonald, "A Disciple of Harry Truman," *Globe and Mail*, March 11, 1963; Diefenbaker, *Tumultuous Years*, 183-84.

<sup>139</sup> English, *Worldly Years*, 254; Smith, 442.

<sup>140</sup> "Bruce Phillips, "The Crashed Doors At PM's Appeal For A Majority," *Winnipeg Tribune*, March 5, 1963, in "Election 1963 Clippings," Box 290, Series VII, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

Diefenbaker pointed to the United States and the United Kingdom's recent decision to shift towards submarine-based Polaris missiles as proof-positive of his position.<sup>141</sup> An important distinction that Diefenbaker did not make to Canadians was that the Polaris was an offensive weapon crucial to "long-range strategic forces." The Bomarc missiles and Voodoo interceptors, by comparison, remained "local air defence weapons" to prevent attacks by incoming bombers.<sup>142</sup>

The Tory caucus *had* managed to gain assertions from the prime minister, following the government's collapse, that he would not make anti-Americanism a significant issue in the campaign.<sup>143</sup> However, the release of a cover story in *Newsweek* on February 18<sup>th</sup> solidified Diefenbaker's assumptions about a Kennedy-Pearson plot. All bets were off. Entitled: "Diefenbaker Falls: Did He Jump or Was He Pushed?" the story was accompanied by a highly unflattering cover photo of the prime minister. He was photographed from below. The angle and shadowing accentuated Diefenbaker's quivering jowls. His brow was wrinkled in disdain, and his bottom lip juts out into a feminine pout. He looks upset, defeated, and a ridiculous caricature of himself; to be frank, he looks like Grandpa Munster.<sup>144</sup> In Diefenbaker's view, it was a "Kennedy conceived" attack. Returning to the discussion of the White House's connections to *Newsweek*, close Kennedy confidant and friend, Ben Bradlee, served as magazine's Washington Bureau Chief.<sup>145</sup> While there is no concrete proof of Diefenbaker's fears, it should be noted that Kennedy *did* leak a story to

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<sup>141</sup> "Address By The Prime Minister... To A Joint Meeting Of The Canadian Club, The Empire Club, And The Toronto Board of Trade," Toronto, Ontario, February 11, 1963, in "Elections 1963," Box 293, Series VII, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre; "Changing Circumstances Bar Final Decision on A-Arms, PM States," *Globe and Mail*, February 12, 1963.

<sup>142</sup> "Canada's Election Issue," *New York Times*, February 15, 1963.

<sup>143</sup> Newman, *Renegade*, 377-78.

<sup>144</sup> Magazine Cover, "Canada's Diefenbaker, Decline and Fall," *Newsweek*, February 18, 1963, in "Elections Federal 1963," Box 59, Series XII, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>145</sup> Diefenbaker, *Tumultuous Years*, 107

Bradlee regarding the Rostow memo following Diefenbaker's election loss. If the White House willing to provide *Newsweek* one story, had it provided two others?<sup>146</sup>

Regardless of origin, the article itself cannot be described as anything else other than an attempt at character assassination and is a highly irregular piece for such a prominent publication to run during an allied nation's election. The story itself, with no author byline, outlines the history behind the conflict over nuclear warheads, observing that the main issue for the Kennedy administration has never been the armaments. Instead, the White House's frustrations stemmed from the prime minister's lack of a firm decision and frequent backtracking. It prevented North America from moving towards a multilateral nuclear deterrent. Diefenbaker is described as a "bumbling incompetent" who has "run the nation like a tantrum-prone county judge."<sup>147</sup>

To return to the 1961 Liberal Party study on the image of Diefenbaker and Pearson, electability and appeal seemed to carry two facets: strong leadership and a connection to the common man.<sup>148</sup> In contrast, the man depicted on the cover of *Newsweek* and in the authorless article, is emotional and indecisive – plus he scares children:

Diefenbaker in full oratorical flight is a sight not soon to be forgotten: then the India-rubber features twist and contort in grotesque and gargoyle-like grimaces; beneath the electric gray V of the hairline, the eyebrows beat up and down like bats' wings; the agate-blue eyes blaze forth in cold fire.... [H]is enemies insist that it is sufficient grounds for barring Tory rallies to children under 16.<sup>149</sup>

The only Canadians left who are drawn to the prime minister and his rhetoric are "elderly female Tory supporters," the article notes in a final dig. This was because they still "find

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<sup>146</sup> Benjamin C. Bradlee, *Conversations with Kennedy* (New York: Norton, 1975), 167, 182.

<sup>147</sup> "Diefenbaker Falls: Did He Jump or Was He Pushed?," *Newsweek*, February 18, 1963, in "Elections Federal 1963," Box 59, Series XII, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>148</sup> "Section V: Opinions of Leaders," in "Opinion Survey, September - October 1961," Box 7, Tom Kent Papers, Queen's University Archives, Kingston, Ontario.

<sup>149</sup> "Diefenbaker Falls: Did He Jump or Was He Pushed?," *Newsweek*, February 18, 1963, in "Elections Federal 1963," Box 59, Series XII, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.



Diefenbaker's face rugged, kind, pleasant, and even soothing."<sup>150</sup> In reducing the prime minister's appeal to older women, Diefenbaker's masculine, forward-thinking and frontier-based destiny is called into question. As discussed above, the political sphere remained overwhelmingly masculine in providence, and by reducing his support to old women, what *Newsweek* is alluding, is that he is no longer a man worth taking seriously.

Meanwhile, Kennedy administration, which was keeping a close eye on the Canadian election, remained concerned about Pearson's continued inability to generate a viable alternative to Diefenbaker. In a communiqué to the White House in April 1963, the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa expressed doubts that the Canadian public would choose Pearson by an overwhelming margin. He was, it observed, struggling "to generate much warmth."<sup>151</sup> "[Pearson] simply does not come across to the voter with an image of decisive leadership," wrote the new U.S. Ambassador W. Walton Butterworth. Plus, he carried with him the fact that he was "a two-time loser."<sup>152</sup> Douglas Fisher of the *Toronto Telegram* similarly noted in mid-March that the Liberal campaign was again struggling to connect with Canadians. He felt that the Liberals lacked enthusiasm and criticized the "organization man" approach of Pearson and his "brain trust" to politics. Indeed, Lou Harris worried that Pearson's image remained "very much like Adlai Stevenson," too intellectual and effeminate. He was, "too nice a guy... as noble a soul as you'll ever meet."<sup>153</sup>

The Liberal campaign hoped that Lester Pearson would focus on the economy and stay away from the issue of nuclear weaponry, but Diefenbaker's oratory kept the issue

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<sup>150</sup> "Diefenbaker Falls: Did He Jump or Was He Pushed?," *Newsweek*, February 18, 1963, in "Elections Federal 1963," Box 59, Series XII, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>151</sup> McKercher, *Camelot*, 198.

<sup>152</sup> Boyko, 234.

<sup>153</sup> Nash, 166.

front and centre. Try as they might, Liberal strategists struggled to keep Pearson from responding. His attempts to justify his change in position on nuclear weapons was a master class in obfuscation. As he told a Fredericton crowd in early March 1963, the Liberal Party was against nuclear warheads because they were “against the horrors of war,” like all Canadians. However, “until such weapons can be abolished by international disarmament agreement, these weapons are necessary to preserve the peace and prevent aggression.”<sup>154</sup> Biographer John English feels that the Liberal leader made the decision largely based on polling, especially in Quebec, where 59% thought that Canada should acquire nuclear warheads in late 1962. Unfortunately, the onslaught of condemnation from Quebec intellectuals in the aftermath of Pearson’s about-face quickly reduced that support decisively to 37% by March 1963.<sup>155</sup>

Pearson’s successor and future prime minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau refused to stand as a Liberal candidate and condemned Pearson’s attempt to bend the knee to “les hipsters” in Camelot. Pearson, he said, had become “unfrocked prince of peace.”<sup>156</sup> It is important to remember that Quebec was in the middle of the “Quiet Revolution,” a process of social modernization and secularization. Headed by Liberal Premier Jean Lesage, there was also a focus on increasing the province’s sovereign position in Canada to offset a concurrent rise in francophone nationalism. Pearson’s about-face on nuclear policy, to the benefit of the United States, was something that would have rankled many Quebecois on both sides of the emergent separatist divide. It was an offshoot of the same fears about American economic and cultural domination that Diefenbaker had earlier managed to tap

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<sup>154</sup> Clipping, Bruce Phillips, “Mr. Pearson’s Nuclear Arms Stand,” *Ottawa Citizen*, March 11, 1963, in “Elections 1962-63,” Box 103, Series VI, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>155</sup> English, *Worldly Years*, 262.

<sup>156</sup> English, *Worldly Years*, 251.

into in the province in 1958.

A cartoon of Lester B. Pearson, published in Montreal's *La Patrie*, perhaps makes the most devastating attack regarding his nuclear about-face. It portrays the Liberal leader holding a bomb as he walks away from the figure of a bloodied woman labelled: "Nobel Peace Prize." The caption? "Gentlemen Prefer Bombs." The title is a play on the 1953 film *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, which follows Dorothy (Marilyn Monroe) in her search for love, despite her engagement to wealthy but meek intellectual, Gus Esmond (Tommy Noonan). Pearson, who can also be described as a meek intellectual, has forgone the "blonde," a woman who represents the Nobel Prize, and has chosen instead a nuclear device. The allegories abound. The cause of peace, pushed by an increasingly vocal and female-dominated anti-nuclear movement, lays bleeding by Pearson's acceptance of nuclear bombs. He rejects the symbolic woman, itself a swipe at his masculinity, in favour of the calculated choice in pursuit of political power.<sup>157</sup> Meanwhile, the bomb itself has often stood as a representation of modernity – as this monograph has established – which itself has been viewed as antithetical to masculinity. Brought together, the subtext is that Pearson is representative of a danger to both peace and maybe even the gender order. This possibly explains why Quebec again fails to hand him the overwhelming support Liberals.

While Pearson's change in position moved the party to where most Canadians were, it did not negate the fact that it enhanced aspects of his political image that he had been working to combat. As one sifts through the volumes of letters written to the Liberal leader in the weeks following his January 1963 speech, it is impossible not to feel he may have

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<sup>157</sup> Cartoon as referenced by Thomas Sloan in "Painful Reading For Mr. Pearson," *Globe and Mail*, February 16, 1963; See also: *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, dir. Howard Hawks (1953; Beverly Hills: 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2012), DVD.

alienated as many people as he attracted. While previous chapters have established that the anti-nuclear movement was well organized and the volume of their correspondence was not reflective of public opinion, there are many self-professed Liberals who Pearson appears to have disaffected. Whether they were concerned about peace, American influence, or his about-face in position, many Canadians professed to be disillusioned.<sup>158</sup>

For example, Mrs. R.B. L'Estrange writes to Pearson to observe that while her family had voted Liberal for 92 years, "you will find it may well be a lot more than just the 'ban the bombers,' vote that will stray."<sup>159</sup> The concern of many, like Jacques Fortier, was that Pearson had dishonoured his status as a peacemaker: "Et la question est la suivante: par quel hasard 'calculé' avec-vous réussi à décrocher le prix Nobel de la paix?... Vous avez déshonoré la confiance mondaine que vous octroyait le prix Nobel."<sup>160</sup> It is important to remember that at this point, an element of Canadian pride and nationalism was integrated with Pearson's award five years prior. Meanwhile, others like Donald A. Cameron "grieve[d] for what [they] can only read as [Pearson's] replacement by a politician." He continues: "I would rather have a Nobel Prize-winning Leader of the Opposition than a temporizing Prime Minister."<sup>161</sup> It is Charlotte McEwen who perhaps hits the nail on the head, however. Her keen eye observes that Pearson's change in position may have been because he was "afraid of being called 'soft,' and that is why he tries to sound so 'strong.'" What Canada needed, she felt, was a leader "to sound SANE."<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> For a broad survey of the letters regarding Pearson's changing nuclear weapons position please see: "Nuclear Policy" [Multiple Folders], in Volume 51, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC.

<sup>159</sup> Letter from Mrs. R.B. L'Estrange, dated January 14, 1963, in "Nuclear Policy - Part Two," Volume 51, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC.

<sup>160</sup> Letter from Jacques Fortier, dated January 30, 1963, in "Nuclear Policy - Part One," Volume 49, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC.

<sup>161</sup> Letter from Donald A. Cameron, dated January 15, 1963, in "Nuclear Policy - Part One," Volume 49, Series N2, M6 26N, LAC.

<sup>162</sup> Letter from Mrs. Charlotte McEwen, dated January 14, 1963, in "Nuclear Policy - Part Three," Volume

Examining such letters, what becomes apparent in the long-term is that the issue of nuclear weaponry helped neither man's image, and middling positions from both campaigns continued to damage the perceptions of resolute masculinity on both sides. Pearson was seen as opportunistic and trying to sound "strong," whereas Diefenbaker was indecisive and weak. It is not surprising then, that Peter Regenstreif found that the sentiments of a Calgary caretaker quite common among the Canadian people. As the man told the political scientist: "We need some new blood," before suggesting that "what this country needs is someone like Jack Kennedy."<sup>163</sup>

Shortly before the election, the April 9<sup>th</sup> edition of *Look* magazine ran an article entitled "The Unknown Canadians," written by Ira Mothner. It observed that a divided Canadian public was skeptical of both major leaders, neither of whom had been able to capture the voting public's imagination in the run-up to the election. Diefenbaker's problem, Mothner noted, was that the prime minister's leadership style was "impotent." Meanwhile, Pearson, whose election it was to lose, is "high-minded... [but] strikes many as lacking the kind of toughness necessary for political effectiveness." Mothner's unstated implication appears to have been that neither man was just that, a *man*.<sup>164</sup> Seemingly recognizing such criticisms, Pearson at one point told reporters during the campaign that perhaps both he and Diefenbaker, respectively sixty-five and sixty-seven years old, should pass the torch to a younger generation of men.<sup>165</sup>

With two weeks remaining, the race had significantly narrowed — again.<sup>166</sup> The

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50, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC.

<sup>163</sup> Regenstreif, 81.

<sup>164</sup> Ira Mothner, "The Unknown Canadians," *Look*, April 9, 1963; See also: "Canada Disillusioned, Split on Key Issues, U.S. Magazine Says," *Globe and Mail*, March 23, 1963.

<sup>165</sup> English, *Worldly Years*, 263.

<sup>166</sup> An early April 1963 Gallup poll showed that while the Liberals retained the lead, they had dropped from 15 points to 9 points ahead of the PCs. The momentum was with Diefenbaker. See "Present Preferred

nation's newspapers, some begrudgingly, lined up behind Lester Pearson as the best of the options available.<sup>167</sup> Take, for example, this *endorsement* from the *Globe and Mail*:

Mr. Pearson is not a good speaker; he does not know how to indulge in dramatics or play the demagogue. But he is a sound, intelligent, honest man, who knows how to recruit good men and persuade them to work constructively together. His words from election podiums may not inspire Canadians; but his actions in world crises have inspired the world. They could well do the same in Canada's crisis. We have had a man of words who was not a man of action. He has brought Canada into one of the most troubled and dangerous periods of her history, left us awash in a sea of indecision. It is time for a change.<sup>168</sup>

Pearson offered the seemingly steadier hand. His promise of "Sixty Days of Decision" (which would turn out to be an unmitigated disaster), gave Canadians hope that stability would come quickly. Nuclear warheads would be accepted, relations with the United States improved, tax measures and economic adjustments brought in to deal with unemployment, along with a slate of social welfare adjustments, including health insurance.<sup>169</sup>

Canadians went to the polls on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 1963, to elect their fourth government in roughly five-and-a-half years. John Diefenbaker suffered a further rebuke from the Canadian public, his seat count cut from 116 to 95. In contrast, the Liberals rose to 129 seats with a 41.7% share of the popular vote. The Progressive Conservatives fell to just under a third of Canadians' support. The Social Credit and New Democrat parties scored 24 and 17 seats, respectively, each dropping slightly from their previous totals.<sup>170</sup> Important here is that Lester Pearson fell short of a majority government, although narrowly. Indeed, Pearson remains the first of only three elected prime ministers never to

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Political Party," April 1963, Poll #302, Gallup Canada, Inc., Public Opinion Polls, ODESI, <http://odesi2.scholarsportal.info/webview/>

<sup>167</sup> Smith 502; English, *Worldly Years*, 260.

<sup>168</sup> Bruce Thordarson, *Lester Pearson: Diplomat and Politician* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1974), 131; For full text, please see: "Man of Decision," *Globe and Mail*, March 30, 1963.

<sup>169</sup> Pearson, *Mike*, Volume Three, 81, 83-84. See also Chapter Four: "Sixty Days" in Pearson's memoir for coverage of attempting to fulfill these campaign promises.

<sup>170</sup> Feigert, 15, 40.

command their own majority in Canada's House of Commons.<sup>171</sup> Knowlton Nash concludes that the spectre of American interference throughout the election, especially regarding the State Department press release, was enough to cost the Liberals a majority government. There were concerns, stoked by Diefenbaker, that Pearson would be an American lackey, and thus would not be his own man. This caused pause in swing ridings, allowing the balance to tip in favour of Diefenbaker. Pearson advisor Richard O'Hagen mirrored this view.<sup>172</sup>

In the opinion of Robert Fulford, who penned a profile of Pearson for *Maclean's* just before to the election, the problem was that "he possesse[d] nothing that could be called an obsession." Rather, the Liberal leader had a "mirror like quality" to his mind and, as a result, "almost completely lacks ideology." Again, the criticism of Pearson's intellectual nature pops up as Fulford, sounding a lot like Louis Bromfield's criticism of the "egghead," notes that Pearson has a "nasty habit of seeing more than one side of an argument." The article highlights that this reputation was ironic, seeing how Pearson preferred to read the sports page (another nod to his past), instead of to current affairs. Additionally, his shy demeanour in public, friends and family say, is in stark contrast to the day-to-day man they know. As journalist Bruce Hutchison sums up, the problem was that while Pearson was

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<sup>171</sup> After Pearson, the second prime minister in Canadian history to be elected to head a government by the Canadian people, but never head a majority government, was Joe Clark. He became prime minister in June 1979, but his government was soon defeated and he lost the February 1980 election to Pierre Elliott Trudeau. The third, technically, is Paul Martin who did meet the House of Commons with a majority when he succeeded Jean Chretien in December 2003. However, in his first election as leader the following year he lost the majority, and then in January 2006 lost to Stephen Harper. Canada has also had several prime ministers who succeeded majority prime ministers, but who never met the House before going down in election defeat. Their ranks include Sir Charles Tupper, John Turner, and Kim Campbell. Prime Minister Arthur Meighen is a special case. He served as prime minister, at the head of a minority government from June - September 1926, but was appointed by Governor General Lord Julian Byng at the height of the King-Byng Affair. Meighen's government quickly went down in defeat, and King was re-elected to a majority term in the September 1926 election.

<sup>172</sup> Nash, 307.

admired on the world stage, he struggled to provide Canadians with a firm idea of who he was.<sup>173</sup>

In the companion profile in *Maclean's*, Peter C. Newman observed that “it’s not John Diefenbaker who has changed; it is the times.”<sup>174</sup> Newman’s is perhaps the most pertinent observation in terms of the trajectory of this exploration. When Diefenbaker came to power in 1957 and was subsequently handed an overwhelming majority in 1958, it was a response to the cultural malaise of the late 1950s. Three things then shifted for Diefenbaker. First, he was rendered indecisive by his 208-seat majority, worried more about holding onto power than exercising it. This was a far cry from the self-made frontiersman he marketed himself to Canadians as in 1957-58. Second, John F. Kennedy came to office in the United States. Beyond the youthful, vigorous, masculine image that the new president projected, his leadership style ran in sharp contrast to the Canadian prime minister. It was also more in line with what Diefenbaker had promised. This leads to the third point. Diefenbaker sought consensus while Kennedy streamlined government decision-making.<sup>175</sup> This decisiveness only magnified Diefenbaker’s faults, and Canadians did not get the decisive, self-made man they were promised on the campaign trail.

While there is ample evidence that the Kennedy administration actively sought to encourage conditions unfavourable to Diefenbaker’s political chances and had a line to Pearson through Max Freedman, it goes too far to say they rigged the election. If they did, they were exceedingly bad at it. Nonetheless, there was an active interest in the outcome

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<sup>173</sup> Robert Fulford, “The Puzzling — to Almost Everybody — Personality of Lester B. Pearson,” *Maclean's*, April 6, 1963; See also: Louis Bromfield, “The Triumph of the Egghead,” *The Freeman* 3, no. 5 (December 1952): 158.

<sup>174</sup> Peter C. Newman, “The powerful gifts and glaring flaws of John Diefenbaker,” *Maclean's*, March 23, 1963.

<sup>175</sup> For discussion on Kennedy’s governance style, please see: K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 210-212.



on the part of Kennedy. Lou Harris, who served as pollster for both Kennedy and Pearson, later observed: “[Kennedy] was all but shouting from the sidelines. He hated Diefenbaker.... He obviously couldn't say anything publicly. But every day or two he would want to know how the election was going.”<sup>176</sup> Willis Armstrong, a senior official at the State Department, also admitted that Kennedy actively sought to aide Pearson best he could. “He’s lucky he didn’t get caught,” he says.<sup>177</sup>

It is also worth asking why Lester Pearson never received a majority government. He was unsuccessful in 1963 and would falter again in 1965, despite Diefenbaker’s desperately weakened position as party leader. The *Manchester Guardian* described Pearson in 1957 as the man “most generally respected and trusted” at the United Nations. “No man,” the article continues, “could have done more than he has to make Canada’s moral reputation stand high in the world at large”<sup>178</sup> Yet, it never translated into electoral success. Patrick Brennan feels that “too many in the Liberal Party and too many Canadians wanted a Kennedy or the mythic Pearson of Nobel Prize Fame.” Part of the problem was that the “real” Pearson’s image was manufactured.<sup>179</sup> Gordon Donaldson expands upon this: “Like Dr. Frankenstein, [the party made their] monster out of parts taken from various graveyards - two left feet, two right arms, and a secondhand brain from Madison Avenue. Fired up with high voltage advertising, it lumbered forth with Theodore White’s [*Making of the President*] in its hand, not to destroy its creator but to embarrass him.”<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Boyko, 161.

<sup>177</sup> Nash, 15.

<sup>178</sup> Cable from London Embassy to External Affairs, June 12, 1957, in “Election Results - Parts III/IV (1957),” Volume 30, Series N1, MG26-N, LAC.

<sup>179</sup> Patrick H. Brennan, “‘A Good Man For The Middle Innings’: Lester Pearson and the Media, 1963-1968,” in *Pearson: The Unlikely Gladiator*, ed. Norman Hillmer (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1991), 130.

<sup>180</sup> Donaldson, 219.

## The Aftermath

The American media was rather jubilant about the news of Diefenbaker's downfall. *LIFE* magazine ran with the headline: "Good News In Canada," noting that "it was a defeat for the parochial escapism which has disturbed Canadian politics for several years."<sup>181</sup> The *Boston Globe*, meanwhile, observed: "Canada Looks Ahead." The *Globe* felt there was a lesson to be learned from Diefenbaker: "Tactless diplomacy and ineptitude butter few parsnips of policy, even when the point is properly made."<sup>182</sup> The *Washington Daily News* went even further, joking that while Kennedy had been unable to bring about regime change in Cuba or Laos, he had at least succeeded in toppling the "bumbling crypto anti-Yankee government" in Canada.<sup>183</sup> McGeorge Bundy remembers a moment of jubilation and some relieved laughter in the Oval Office when the news arrived.<sup>184</sup> Even Canada's ambassador to the United States, Charles Ritchie, whom Diefenbaker appointed, wrote in his diary: "I consider [Diefenbaker's disappearance a deliverance; there should be prayers of thanksgiving in the churches. And these sentiments do not come from a Liberal."<sup>185</sup>

Ritchie subsequently describes a similar sense of euphoria among Kennedy and his staff when Pearson's helicopter arrived at Hyannis Port on May 10<sup>th</sup>. It had been a little over two weeks since he became Canada's 14<sup>th</sup> prime minister. Pearson felt it necessary to move swiftly to repair the relationship between the two nations and gladly accepted Kennedy's invitation to his family's compound in Massachusetts. It is hard not to see the use of the family residence, to which Diefenbaker had never been invited, as a final slight

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<sup>181</sup> "Good News In Canada," *LIFE*, April 19, 1963.

<sup>182</sup> "Canada Looks Ahead," *Boston Globe*, April 10, 1963.

<sup>183</sup> Boyko, 242.

<sup>184</sup> Interview conducted by Richard Neustadt with McGeorge Bundy, March and May 1964, Interview #1, John F. Kennedy Oral History Collection, JFKPL.

<sup>185</sup> McKercher, *Camelot*, 203.

to the former Canadian prime minister. Over a lunch of clam chowder, the President jokingly asked if the United States had helped Pearson win the election. Pearson replied: “[You] probably cost me fifty seats.”<sup>186</sup> The media felt different. When Pearson disembarked at Hyannis Port, the CBS News coverage observed: “President Kennedy is now shaking hands with the man he helped make Prime Minister of Canada.”<sup>187</sup>

The talks lasted for roughly ten hours, more time than Diefenbaker had got from Kennedy in two years. They covered a wide range of issues that were sidelined by a deterioration in relations. They included discussions over the Columbia River Treaty, natural resource trade, Southeast Asia, and most importantly, the matter of defence production and the acquisition of nuclear warheads. Pearson readily accepted a nuclear role for Canada, under the two-key system, and Ottawa announced the formalized agreement in mid-August. Sensitive to the anti-nuclear movement, Pearson had the warheads quietly brought over the border on New Year’s Eve. The defensive weapons received their payloads without great fanfare. Despite promises to renegotiate with the United States, the warheads remained active on Canadian soil until 1984 when Pierre Elliott Trudeau’s government finally pulled the plug. By 1984, Trudeau had served roughly fifteen years as prime minister while retaining active nuclear armaments, the very ones he so vocally railed against in 1963.<sup>188</sup>

To an extent, the fact that the Bomarc and the Voodoos were armed and then faded into the background is a vindication of Diefenbaker’s rhetoric. Beyond the movement towards ICBMs, there was also a lessening of nuclear tensions came through talks between

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<sup>186</sup> Nash, 306-07; “Pearson to See President Today,” *New York Times*, May 10, 1963.

<sup>187</sup> Memorandum, No. 112271, July 1963, in “Pearson, 1953-64,” Box 181, Series VII, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>188</sup> Nash, 309-10.

the West and the Soviet Union. In June 1963, at a commencement speech at American University, President Kennedy spoke of the need to reach not an “absolute” peace, but a “more practical, more attainable peace” rooted in the “gradual evolution of human institutions.” In this speech, he similarly called for a re-examination of American attitudes towards the Soviet Union and the Cold War itself, warning against both sides’ tendency to depict each other in propaganda as barbarous. He then announced that the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union would begin discussions surrounding a test ban — a single but momentous step on the path to a reduction in Cold War tensions. As a sign of goodwill, the Soviet Union took the unusual action of allowing the entire speech to be rebroadcast to its people.<sup>189</sup>

Negotiations in Moscow ultimately saw a draft agreement emerge in late July. It resulted in the cessation of atmospheric, underwater, and outer space tests. A more comprehensive ban, including underground testing, proved out of reach because of continued Soviet concerns regarding international controls and inspection. Kennedy, addressing the nation on July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1963, referred to the agreement as a “shaft of light cut into the darkness.” It represented, he told the American people, a step towards further agreement and cooperation between the West and the Soviet Union. The treaty was signed on August 5<sup>th</sup> by the foreign ministers of the United States, United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union. It was then sent by Kennedy to the U.S. Senate for ratification, and the treaty became U.S. law on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 1963. Senior aide Kenneth O’Donnell remembers it to be the president’s moment of “deepest satisfaction.”<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Sorenson, 729-33; “Commencement Address At American University,” June 10, 1963, Speeches, JFKPL, accessed November, 2020, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/american-university-19630610>

<sup>190</sup> For more detail about the Limited Test Ban negotiation process, see Schlesinger, *A Thousand Days*, 893-

The announcement of a test ban was hailed in Canada's House of Commons by all parties. It was a rare moment where Pearson and Diefenbaker were in agreement.<sup>191</sup> Linus Pauling, accepting the Peace Prize in December 1963 for his anti-nuclear activism, referred to the treaty as "the most important action ever taken by the governments of nations, in that it is the first of a series of treaties that will lead to the new world from which war has been abolished forever." In concurrence, the *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, which had been keeping an infamous "nuclear clock" since 1947, rolled the prediction back to "12 Minutes to Midnight." It was the farthest, in its estimate, the world had been from nuclear war since the barometer's inception.<sup>192</sup>

## Conclusion

Peter Regenstreif notes that the period between 1957 and 1963 represented a moment of "unprecedented instability in Canadian political life."<sup>193</sup> Across roughly five-and-a-half years, the nation went through four elections and was governed by one majority and three minority parliaments. It is hard not to attribute much of this to John Diefenbaker, the "indecisive populist" who promised bold, decisive leadership only to falter once he was in office.<sup>194</sup> However, the turmoil in government is also representative of the uncertainty that Canadians faced about the men they had to choose from to lead them. In part, the Progressive Conservatives surged to power because they appealed to the idea of a "new

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918; Full transcript of the speech is found here: "Televised Address on Nuclear Test Ban Treaty," July 26, 1963, Historic Speeches, JFKPL, accessed November 2020, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/historic-speeches/televised-address-on-nuclear-test-ban-treaty>

<sup>191</sup> Walter Gray, "Canada Willing to Join Pact, Pearson States," *Globe and Mail*, July 26, 1963.

<sup>192</sup> Thurston Clarke, *JFK's Last Hundred Days* (New York: Penguin, 2013), 214-215; "Clock Timeline," *Bulletin of Atomic Scientists*, accessed November 2020, <https://thebulletin.org/doomsday-clock/current-time/#clock-timeline>; Linus Pauling, Nobel Lecture, December 11, 1963, accessed November 2020, <https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1962/pauling/lecture/>

<sup>193</sup> Regenstreif, *Diefenbaker Interlude*, 2

<sup>194</sup> McMahon, ix.

frontier” for Canadians. Against a renewed “crisis” of masculinity in the late-1950s, Diefenbaker touted himself as a self-made man who could restore the dream of agency and individualism for Canadians, especially Canadian men. After five years in office, he had failed to do this. However, by comparison, Lester B. Pearson similarly failed to offer a vibrant and resolute masculine alternative. Instead, Canadians were won over by another self-proclaimed frontiersman, the new American president: John F. Kennedy.

The clash between Diefenbaker and Kennedy extended far beyond the personal dislike that the two men had for each other. Their tenures represented a “clash” of frontiers, and indeed a “clash” of masculinity, which ultimately played out in the Canadian political arena. Kennedy’s government contributed to the growing perception of Diefenbaker was weak, indecisive, and ineffectual. The conflict over nuclear warheads on Canadian soil saw the public increasingly side with the American president, in spite of the fact that Diefenbaker rode a wave of anti-Americanist sentiment to power. Physically Kennedy represented a sharp break from the paternalism of the Eisenhower years, despite the fact that his tolerance for Canadian sovereignty was ironically less than that of his predecessor. By 1961, Kennedy’s call to a “new frontier” supplanted the faltering Diefenbaker who had failed to deliver on his promises of northern development, job creation, and renewed national pride.

To return to the work of David Riesman and William Whyte, Diefenbaker failed to represent a sharp break from the “other-directed” male or the “organization man.” Rather, he embodied a sense of undue public concern and a need to be popular, as born out most visibly through his fixation with his mailbag. The trappings of the office, which Peter Stursberg identifies as having overwhelmed Diefenbaker, saw him transition from self-

assurance to self-doubt. A fledgling economy, public anger over the cancellation of the bloated Avro Arrow project, and conflict with the Bank of Canada all took their toll. As Riesman defines it, “repeated failures destroy [the other-directed man’s] hope of future accomplishment... his internal strengths can no longer hold the fort against external evidence.”<sup>195</sup> Diefenbaker simply came to reflect the insecurities about masculinity and manhood that the public was already coping with in years past. Indeed, they elected him, in part, because he seemed to promise a way out.

Into the fray entered Lester B. Pearson, leader of the Liberal Party, and the only viable alternative to Diefenbaker within the Canadian government. He faltered badly in 1958, and party insiders expressed concern about taking his image in a more masculine and decisive direction. There was a need to pare back the image of the effete diplomat in the bow-tie. The result was “Mike,” whose past as a baseball player and hockey coach was emphasized as he railed against the indecision and inexperience of the Diefenbaker administration. Indeed, it may have been enough to bring him to a majority government in 1962 or 1963 had John F. Kennedy not been president of the United States. However, the same way the prime minister came to seem indecisive and irresolute against the vigorous Kennedy, Pearson was similarly negatively affected. Furthermore, efforts to embolden Pearson’s masculine image never really took with the voting public, especially given Kennedy’s embodiment of the hegemonic masculine ideal.

The result was a lack of satisfaction by Canadians with their choices, which was reflected in the indecision of the 1962 and 1963 elections. Kennedy’s cross-border appeal came, in part, from the fact that he represented the “inner-directed” version of manhood. It

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<sup>195</sup> Riesman, 125.

was appealing an era of concerns about modernity, growing cultural softness, and masculine weakness. Soviet achievements in the late 1950s had underscored this. However, unlike Diefenbaker's performative appeal to the frontier, Kennedy's was actionable, and his short-lived administration represented a sharp break in tone from the Eisenhower years.<sup>196</sup> There was a confidence to JFK's tenure that was self-important enough to actively interfere in the electoral process of one of America's closest allies. Thus, despite his meddling, he pervaded as Canada's "Most Admired" man, miles ahead of Diefenbaker *or* Pearson.

In the end, Kennedy also brought about the lessening of Cold War tensions. Although, this was only after bringing them to their peak. Still, he achieved something that had evaded Eisenhower — a test ban treaty. The importance of this event cannot be understated. It represented a significant reduction in nuclear fears, which had defined an era that began with the advent of a Soviet nuclear bomb in 1949. It also would mark the beginning of a new era for hegemonic masculinity. As past chapters have shown, nuclear fear had a strong influence on the development and shift in perceptions of manliness in the years between 1949 and 1963. The bomb came to represent not only potential annihilation but also became a metaphor for concerns about modernity in the "nuclear age." Initially

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<sup>196</sup> As both Gordon Donaldson and Peter Newman allude, and as referenced in Chapter Four, Diefenbaker's focus on the frontier appears to have been a performative tool. His 'Vision of the North' got little attention once the Progressive Conservatives won a majority in 1958. This is why Kennedy, in spouting his own brand of "New Frontier," became a problem for Diefenbaker. One of these components to Kennedy's vision of a strong America was his commitment to physical fitness. This was in spite of the president's personal, physical ailments that plagued him throughout his life and were largely downplayed to the public. He established a White House Committee on Health and Fitness and reconstituted Eisenhower's Council on Youth Fitness into the President's Council on Physical Fitness. One of its signature events was a challenge to Americans to take a fifty mile hike in 1963. His brother Robert and administration officials took part in this activity, alongside U.S. Marines. The call to action was based on an executive order that Kennedy discovered Theodore Roosevelt issued to U.S. Marines, challenging them to complete a fifty mile hike in twenty hours. For more information please see: "Let's Take an Old-Fashioned 50-Mile Walk," *LIFE*, February 22, 1963; "The Federal Government Takes on Physical Fitness," JFK in History, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/learn/about-jfk/jfk-in-history/physical-fitness>



seeking refuge in paternalistic reassurance, emergent concerns about masculine softness saw voters turn to figures like Diefenbaker and Kennedy who offered a promise of self-fulfillment. Though Diefenbaker faltered, Kennedy's "new frontier" had a transnational appeal because it looked forward as much as it looked back.

## CONCLUSION

*“War is too important to be left to politicians. They have neither the time, the training, nor the inclination for strategic thought. I can no longer sit back and allow Communist infiltration, Communist indoctrination, Communist subversion and the international Communist conspiracy to sap and impurify all of our precious bodily fluids.”*<sup>1</sup>

~ Brigadier-General Jack D. Ripper in *‘Dr. Strangelove’* (1964)

During the 1963 Canadian election, as John Diefenbaker and John F. Kennedy duked it out, filmmaker Stanley Kubrick was busy working on his newest project. Based on the novel *Red Alert* (1958) by Peter George, Kubrick’s *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) tells the story of a rogue military general and a hapless National Security Council (NSC) that proves unable to stop a fleet of warplanes dispatched against the Soviet Union.<sup>2</sup> The film satirizes the issue of mutually assured destruction, but more important to this exploration, the film plays with the margins of Cold War hegemonic masculinity.

The character of President Merkin Muffley, portrayed by Peter Sellers, was modelled by the actor on Governor Adlai Stevenson. Though Kubrick ultimately had Sellers tone down the performance, Muffley remains the stereotypical effete intellectual who struggles to maintain his authority against the hyper-masculinity of his military advisors.<sup>3</sup> There is a question as to whether this nuclear attack, launched by rogue Brigadier-General Jack Ripper, is a bad thing. Could this not be a chance to end the Soviet threat once and for all, some of Muffley’s military advisors argue. Ripper’s crazed motivation in launching the unauthorized nuclear came from a belief that his recent sexual

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<sup>1</sup> *Dr. Strangelove: Or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb*, directed by Stanley Kubrick (1964; Los Angeles, CA: Columbia Pictures, 2009), BluRay.

<sup>2</sup> Mick Broderick, *Reconstructing Strangelove: Inside Stanley Kubrick’s ‘Nightmare Comedy’* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2017), 15-17

<sup>3</sup> Broderick, 164-65; David Denby, “The Half-Century Anniversary of ‘Dr. Strangelove,’” *New Yorker*, May 13, 2014, accessed April 2021, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/the-half-century-anniversary-of-dr-strangelove>

impotence *must* result from communist influence in the government. He asserts that the drinking water is being laced with fluoride to weaken American men. Throughout the film, Ripper repeatedly speaks of the need to protect the “precious bodily fluids” of American manhood from the communist menace.<sup>4</sup>

Unable to recall the planes and facing the reality of the defensive Soviet “Doomsday Machine,” the president and the NSC turn to a nuclear expert, Dr. Strangelove. The character is an over-sexualized, ex-Nazi nuclear scientist, also portrayed by Peter Sellers. With annihilation looming, Dr. Strangelove suggests that the only solution is for the men to retreat to a mineshaft and make plans to repopulate Earth. He proposes a ratio of ten women to every man, with the women selected based on physical attractiveness given the *strain* multiple sexual partners would represent for each man. As the room eagerly considers this proposal, one American bomber gets through the Soviet defences and releases its warhead. This action triggers the Soviet “Doomsday” safeguard and a sequence of hydrogen bombs are launched that destroy all life on Earth. The film ends in a torrent of mushroom clouds, set to the music of Vera Lynn’s “We’ll Meet Again.”<sup>5</sup>

The entire plot is farcical to the point of absurdity, but at the same time, it is all too real. Kubrick’s film, which he referred to as a “nightmare comedy,” is a treatise against

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<sup>4</sup> *Dr. Strangelove*, 2009, BluRay; The character names, including Jack Ripper and Merkin Muffley, are largely the creation of Stanley Kubrick and diverge from the *Fail Safe* (1958) text. Jack Ripper is obviously an allusion to the prolific British serial killer “Jack the Ripper,” who was known for his brutal and surgical mutilation of female victims – largely prostitutes. Not only does the name underscore a psychotic nature to the character, but it also alludes to a violent expression of masculinity that lies far outside hegemonic norms. Merkin Muffley, on the other hand, is Kubrick mocking the character’s masculinity. A “merkin” is a pubic hair wig, while “muff” is slang for the female pubis. In naming the character after female genitalia, Kubrick is poking not so subtle fun at the character’s effeminacy and tying him to the perceived weakness of the female sex. For more information please see: George Case, *Calling Dr. Strangelove: The Anatomy and Influence of the Kubrick Masterpiece* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, 2014), 75; Nathan Abrams, *Stanley Kubrick: New York Jewish Intellectual* (Newark: Rutgers University Press, 2018), 104.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

nuclear war. At its core, the film's message is that men are fallible and that mushroom clouds are final. In this sense, it mirrors many other movies from the era. However, where it stands apart is the way it plays with the past decade's "crisis" of masculinity.<sup>6</sup> The nearly all-male cast is comprised of characters that represent the "negative poles" against which manhood has strained in the early Cold War period.<sup>7</sup> Brigadier-General Ripper is a character who transcends the hegemonic masculine norm. His hyper-masculine reactionary behaviour stands in for men like Drew and Nixon, who were portrayed as too dangerous to wield power. Ripper's motivations stem from concerns about his own impotence. He fears becoming as weak and ineffectual as men like President Muffley, who is the embodiment of the "organization man." Although prone to moments of strength, Muffley is meek, irresolute, and questions rather than acts. Based on Stevenson, he also stands in for the perceptions of intellectualism and diplomatic effeminacy that surrounded Lester Pearson. These men are the reason, Ripper says, "war is too important to be left to politicians."<sup>8</sup>

At its core, that is what this dissertation has been about — politicians. It has explored how masculine norms in the early postwar era have intersected with and influenced political discourse in Canada and the United States. In this sense, it is curious that Kubrick's film actively chose to place American leadership outside the bounds of hegemonic masculinity. The straightforward answer to these choices is that those who transgress the bounds of acceptable norms are easier to poke fun at. Think of the quips about Pearson's bow-tie and lisp, the way Stevenson 'trilled' as he spoke 'teacup words,' Richard Nixon climbing out of a sewer grate, and the sinister figure of George Drew as a

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<sup>6</sup> Broderick, 23.

<sup>7</sup> Michael Kimmel, *Manhood in America*, Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 155.

<sup>8</sup> *Dr. Strangelove*, 2009, BluRay.

venomous and hysterical partisan, all but spitting blood. However, to infer deeper, *Dr. Strangelove* is a warning. These characters, who hover on masculinity's margins, are a product of a society that lives in the throes of anti-communism and nuclear fear. Although it goes too far to assert that the film is an endorsement of any hegemonic ideal, Kubrick's work embodies concerns about the corrosive effect that nuclear culture has on society, and yes, on manhood itself.

This approach is not overly surprising. Kubrick is perhaps best described as a pragmatist.<sup>9</sup> *Dr. Strangelove* is a plea for sanity in an era where real and pervasive fear is driven by one terrifying reality — the looming presence of the bomb. Its shadow extended over everything. The nuclear bomb became, as Herbert Block's cartoons of the anthropomorphized "Mr. Atom" portrayed, a presence looking over everyone's shoulder, watching and waiting for the chance to kill humanity. As such, the years between 1949 and 1963 have been referred to as an "age of anxiety."<sup>10</sup> K.A. Cuordileone expands on this, noting that in reality the "possession of the atomic bomb, the subsequent loss of [a Western] atomic monopoly, and the possibility of imminent nuclear war brought previously unknown fears and uncertainties... ebbing and flowing [in] degrees of intensity for much of the remaining century."<sup>11</sup> In the early Cold War period, existing gender scholarship highlights a correlation between nuclear fears and concerns about eroding manhood. It also establishes that linkages between advancing modernity and fears about masculinity are far from unprecedented. Historians like K.A. Cuordileone, Michael Kimmel, and Christopher Dummitt examine the parallels between late nineteenth century alarm about masculine

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<sup>9</sup> Michael Herr, *Kubrick* (New York: Grove Press, 2000), 11-12.

<sup>10</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *The Vital Center* (1949; New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), 1.

<sup>11</sup> K.A. Cuordileone, *Manhood and American Political Culture in the Cold War* (New York: Routledge, 2005), xv-xvi.

decline and a similar anxiety that emerges in the postwar era. In both instances, concern about technological advancement and advancing modernity drove fears about weakening manhood. In the late nineteenth century, it was the industrial revolution and urbanization that was at the root of such disconcert. Whereas, in the early Cold War era, fears about manhood were tied to concern about suburbanization, modern conveniences, and the looming threat of nuclear annihilation.<sup>12</sup>

Crucial to this exploration has been the idea that masculinity is not a fixed construct but rather exists in various permeations. Sociologist Raewyn Connell speaks of the importance of “recogniz[ing] *relations* between different kinds of masculinity” and the fact that their interaction results in a process of “alliance, dominance, and subordination.” “Hegemonic masculinity” is the prevailing form that emerges at the top of this hierarchy, representing a “configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of the patriarchy.” The hegemonic variant faces a constant challenge of its supremacy, and as Connell notes: “When the conditions for the defence of the patriarchy change, the bases for dominance of a particular masculinity are eroded.”<sup>13</sup> Through the use of the political sphere, this exploration examined the impact of the hegemonic masculine ideal on electoral politics in Canada and the United States. It also charted a transition in hegemonic masculinity, as the appeal of the reassuring, paternalistic father-figure gave way to leaders who offered a renewed sense of masculine destiny. The solution to the erosion of manhood in the mid-to-late 1950s was said to be found in a renewed focus on strength, courage, and self-fulfillment.

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<sup>12</sup> Cuordileone, xx; Kimmel, 173; Christopher Dummitt, *The Manly Modern: Masculinity in Postwar Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008), 6-8, 19-20.

<sup>13</sup> Emphasis in original; R.W. Connell, *Masculinities* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 37, 77.

Importantly, hegemonic masculinity represents an ideal, a point that Connell stresses in conjunction with James Messerschmidt. Its representation does not always align “closely to the lives of any actual men.”<sup>14</sup> This is why electoral politics provided a fitting avenue to explore the concept, because if there is anything that doesn’t correspond to the lives of *actual* men — it’s politics. Still, as this exploration has shown, conformity and adaptation to shifting expressions of hegemonic masculinity represented an essential part of the electoral process. Though impossible to prove it was a *decisive* factor, the masculine attributes of candidates are referenced frequently in letters, newspaper columns, campaign strategy memorandum, and even by the politicians themselves. In Canada and the United States, electorally successful leaders utilized the hegemonic masculine ideal to appeal to voters while often alienating competitors as outside the bounds of these same norms. It was an effective way to discount opponents as serious contenders.

As mentioned, the early years of this exploration see hegemonic masculinity situated among the concepts of paternalism and fatherhood. Following World War Two, there was a drive towards marriage, family, and homeownership that certainly influenced the hegemonic ideal. At the same time, the early years of the Cold War see the rise of new fears about communist infiltration, latent homosexuality and effeminacy, alongside the Soviet acquisition of the bomb in 1949.<sup>15</sup> The solution, as Elaine Tyler May argues in her seminal *Homeward Bound* (1988), came from the stability and security of the nuclear family and suburban life. May points out that this return to heteronormativity and strict gender ideals after decades of global turmoil can be taken to represent a domestic version

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<sup>14</sup> R.W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt, “Hegemonic Masculinity: Rethinking the Concept,” *Gender and Society* 19, no. 6 (2005): 838.

<sup>15</sup> Cuordileone, 37-38; Kimmel, 150, 155-56.

of American containment policy. The family formed a “psychological fortress” that offered stability and security in an unstable world. It also offered protection from within; men in stable marriages were less likely to fall prey to corrupting influences, like homosexuality and communism.<sup>16</sup>

As such, Chapter One of this dissertation extended May’s theory of “domestic containment” into the political sphere. It examined how leaders like Louis St. Laurent and Dwight Eisenhower embodied the hegemonic masculine ideal. Both men actively positioned themselves as the head of their national family, a paternalistic figure to their people. During the 1949 Canadian general election, St. Laurent styled his radio addresses as “neighbourly visits” where he drew listeners into his “family circle.” Speaking to mothers directly, he told them that “the needs, the aspirations, the joys and sorrows of my dear ones” were the same as “the needs, the aspirations, the joys and sorrows of practically all Canadian women.” The governing Liberal Party marketed him as “Uncle Louis,” the benevolent patrician presiding over the expansion of the social welfare state that would keep communism at bay.<sup>17</sup> President Eisenhower, meanwhile, spoke of the problems facing each family as no different than those facing the nation, just “multiplied a millionfold.”<sup>18</sup> During the 1952 presidential election, he positioned himself as a unifying, apolitical father figure with the necessary experience to bring a sense of calm to the nation in the throes of the tumultuous Truman years. He promised mothers that he would bring their sons home from Korea, keep the nation out of future entanglements, and reduce the threat of nuclear

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<sup>16</sup> Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War Era*, Revised Edition (New York: Basic Books, 2017), 13, 16-18.

<sup>17</sup> Dale C. Thomson, *Louis St. Laurent: Canadian* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1967), 268; Paul Litt, “Uncle Lou, Both Old and New: The Marketing of St-Laurent,” in *The Unexpected Louis St. Laurent*, ed. Patrice Dutil (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2020), 100.

<sup>18</sup> “Radio and Television Address to the American People on the State of the Nation,” April 5, 1954, Dwight D. Eisenhower, *The American Presidency Project*, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/233652>



war. He became, as one cartoon put it on inauguration day, “President Grandpa.”<sup>19</sup>

James Messerschmidt notes that a key facet of hegemonic masculinity is that it “legitimizes unequal gender relations... among masculinities.”<sup>20</sup> The campaigns of St. Laurent and Eisenhower benefitted from the portrayal of their opponents as outside the bounds of the hegemonic masculine ideal. In Canada, Louis St. Laurent faced off against Progressive Conservative Party leader George Drew in both the 1949 and 1953 general elections. The former premier of Ontario, Drew was an establishment conservative who was seen friendly to business interests, with staunch anti-communist leanings. When he took the party’s helm, one Canadian periodical described him as “Churchillian.”<sup>21</sup> However, his fixation with outlawing communism allowed for the governing Liberals to paint Drew as a dangerous reactionary, whose fear-mongering would lead “down a road at the end of which we would lose the freedom we are trying to protect.”<sup>22</sup> The words are those of Louis St. Laurent on the campaign trail, and George Drew was unable to distance himself from the notion that they would usher in an era of hyper partisan persecution. As one newspaper described Drew in 1953, he became the “Canadian ‘Joe McCarthy.’”<sup>23</sup> Quite a drift from the 1948 assumption he would be the Canadian “Churchill.”

In the United States, while Eisenhower faced down the isolationists in the right-

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<sup>19</sup> Pamphlet, “Vote For Ike” in “Republican Presidential Campaign and Election, 1952-54 (3), Box 540, General File, White House Central Files, Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library (DDEPL), Abilene, KS; Comic Clipping, “President Grandpa!,” *News-Sentinel* (Fort Wayne), January 20, 1953, in “Cartoons, 1952-53 (2),” Box 630, General File, White House Central Files, DDEPL.

<sup>20</sup> James W. Messerschmidt, *Hegemonic Masculinity: Formulation, Reformulation, and Amplification* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018), xi.

<sup>21</sup> Litt, 97; Pierre Berton, “George Drew,” *Maclean’s*, October 1, 1948.

<sup>22</sup> Hugh Boyd, “St. Laurent Speech Answers Prog Con Leader’s Charges,” *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 16, 1949, in “EF - April 19 - May 17, 1949,” Box 313, Louis St. Laurent Fonds (MG26-L), Library Archives Canada (LAC).

<sup>23</sup> Dillon, O’Leary, “Not in Canada,” *Vancouver Sun*, June 27, 1953, in “Press Clippings, Drew, June 17-30, 1953,” Box 379, MG26-L, LAC.

wing of his party, the main electoral threat came from Democrat Adlai Stevenson. Prior to becoming the governor of Illinois, Stevenson had a breadth of experience in the American government, including time at the State Department and United Nations. However, his bookish nature and his past as a diplomat allowed the Eisenhower-Nixon campaign to portray him as an effete, weak-willed intellectual. He would, they said, prove unable to stand up to communism. As Richard Nixon put it on the campaign trail: “What this country needs is a khaki-clad president, not one clothed in State Department Pinks.”<sup>24</sup> Stevenson’s divorce from his wife in 1949 only enhanced the perception that he was not a *real* man. Beyond allusions to possible homosexuality, many Americans questioned the governing abilities of a man who could not manage his own family.<sup>25</sup> Stevenson’s image was irreparably damaged. He became the quintessential “egghead,” a man of “spurious intellectual pretensions... [who is] over-emotional and feminine in reactions to any problem.”<sup>26</sup>

In forming her theorization of “domestic containment,” Elaine Tyler May utilized the work of psychologist Robert Lifton and his observations that governments attempted to “domesticate” the fear around nuclear weaponry.<sup>27</sup> When brought together, the arguments of May and Lifton establish that strict gender ideals, centred around the nuclear family, provided a sense of security and stability in the early Cold War era. As a result, Chapter Two of this dissertation examined the impact of growing public understanding of increasingly dangerous hydrogen-based weapons and the emergence of new fears about

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<sup>24</sup> Ernest Brashear, “Who is Richard Nixon,” *New Republic*, September 1, 1952, in “Correspondence: Nixon, A-Bo,” Folder 4, Box 222, Series 4.1, Adlai Stevenson Papers (MC-124), Mudd Manuscript Library (MML), Princeton, NJ.

<sup>25</sup> John Bartlow Martin, *Adlai Stevenson* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1952), 143.

<sup>26</sup> Louis Bromfield, “The Triumph of the Egghead,” *The Freeman* 3, no. 5 (December 1952): 158.

<sup>27</sup> May, 26.

manhood. As Canadians and Americans gained an understanding of the actual dangers that radiation posed, the very premise behind “domestic containment” and the reassuring paternalism that father figures like St. Laurent and Eisenhower offered comes into question. When a nuclear weapon could destroy entire cities, was paternalism enough? Thus, new questions about the hegemonic ideal begin to emerge, and there is a correlation between emergent nuclear fears and the rise of a “crisis” of masculinity.

Chapter Two bridged the gap between the 1953 Canadian federal election and the 1956 United States presidential election, a roughly two-and-a-half-year period where the Soviet Union gained a rudimentary H-Bomb and the United States carried out second-generation hydrogen tests. Although this dissertation primarily explored Cold War hegemonic ideals in electoral politics, the years between 1953 and 1956 are critical in forging a newfound “crisis” of masculinity and required in-depth exploration. Paul Boyer emphasizes that the *Operation Castle* tests of March 1954 represented a turning point in the public’s understanding of nuclear weaponry.<sup>28</sup> That month, hydrogen weapons testing in the Pacific Ocean got out of control. Most visibly, it spread radioactive coral dust one-hundred-and-sixty kilometres from the blast site, coating a Japanese fishing trawler. The story of the *Fukuryu Maru (Lucky Dragon)* and the crew’s radiation sickness quickly rounded the globe. Beyond nausea and dizziness, the sailors suffered from blistering and blackened skin, swollen hands, and hair loss.<sup>29</sup> The men were severely ill and their side effects proved to be a far cry from the “sunburn” and “x-ray” level exposure that civil

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<sup>28</sup> Paul Boyer, *By the Bombs Early Light: American Thought and Culture at the Dawn of the Atomic Age* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), 352-353.

<sup>29</sup> Matashichi Oishi, "The Fisherman," in *Grappling with the Bomb*, ed. Nic Maclellan (Acton, Australia: ANU Press, 2017), 56-57; Aya Homei, "The Contentious Death of Mr. Kuboyama," *Japan Forum* 25, no. 2 (2013): 213.

defence pamphlets described to the Canadian and American public.<sup>30</sup>

As understanding of the real dangers of nuclear weaponry began to grow, the “false consciousness” established by civil defence literature was firmly broken asunder. As Andrew Burtch states: “What point was there in fighting fires when the entire city would be cratered?”<sup>31</sup> Elaine Tyler May similarly observes that by the mid-1950s, the public’s relationship with science began to shift. Initially seen as capable of positive change and societal advancement, increasingly people began to question whether science may, in fact, be harmful to social progress.<sup>32</sup> This disconcert is reflected in films from the era, from *Godzilla* (1954) and *Them!* (1954), to *The Incredible Shrinking Man* (1957) and *On The Beach* (1959). The fear of radiation and its impacts is a common theme across these films, but it is *The Incredible Shrinking Man* that raised interesting questions for this dissertation. It tells the story of Scott Carey, who encounters a cloud of radioactive mist while on vacation with his wife. Over the coming weeks and months, Scott continues to shrink in size until he can easily fit inside a dollhouse. The film, and the 1956 novel, are parables emergent mid-decade fears about eroding manhood.<sup>33</sup> That Scott’s condition results from radioactivity only feeds into the linkage between nuclear fears and an emergent “crisis” of masculinity.

Around the time that society was beginning to process the realities of radiation, the first articles begin to emerge that raise concern about modern manhood. One of the earliest

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<sup>30</sup> Michael Scheibach, *Atomic Narratives and American Youth* (London: McFarland and Co., 2003), 83-85; “Organization For Civil Defence,” Manual No. 1, H.Q. CDC 475-M-2 (Ottawa: Department of National Defence, October 1950), 18-20.

<sup>31</sup> Andrew Burtch, *Give Me Shelter: The Failure of Canada’s Cold War Civil Defence* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2012), 3, 10-11.

<sup>32</sup> May, 26.

<sup>33</sup> *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, directed by Jack Arnold (1957; Universal City, CA: Universal Pictures, 2012), DVD.

pieces of note comes from Jean Mayer in *New York Times Magazine* in November 1955. Mayer observes that “our motorized, mechanized, ‘effort-saver’ civilization is rapidly making us as soft as our processed foods, our foam rubber mattresses, and our balloon tires.”<sup>34</sup> Modern life, fuelled by scientific and technological advancement, was said to be making men soft. As Steven Watts observes, modernity was perceived to have a “corrosive effect of abundance on masculine vigor.”<sup>35</sup> Deborah McPhail, surveying Canadian periodicals, notes a similar trend: the health of the male body is tied to the health of the nation. Beyond modern conveniences, sedentary office jobs were thought to make men physically weak and also more effete. Desk jobs left little opportunity to assert oneself or experience the agency needed to feel like a “self-made man.”<sup>36</sup> It was in 1956 that sociologist William Whyte provided these emergent problem with a name — the “organization man.” While his work is quick to stress that it is “not a plea for nonconformity,” he does cite concerns about the lack of individualism in modern life.<sup>37</sup>

Chapter Three picked up in 1956 as fears about the impact of modernity on manhood became an open point of discussion in the news media. Questions raised during the 1956 American presidential election and the 1957 Canadian general election, about the age and fitness of Eisenhower and St. Laurent, reflect larger the societal discussions happening about masculinity. To return to the work of Connell, she argues that masculine hegemony has the ability to disrupt itself. James Messerschmidt expands on this concept, arguing that the process of disruption allows for hegemonic masculinity to renew, modify,

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<sup>34</sup> Jean Mayer, "Muscular State of the Union," *New York Times Magazine*, November 6, 1955.

<sup>35</sup> Steven Watts, *JFK and the Masculine Mystique: Sex and Power on the New Frontier* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2016), 23-24.

<sup>36</sup> Deborah McPhail, “‘What to do with the ‘Tubby Hubby’?’ ‘Obesity,’ the Crisis of Masculinity, and the Nuclear Family in early Cold War Canada,” *Antipode* 41, no. 5 (2009): 1028, 1030-34.

<sup>37</sup> William F. Whyte, *The Organization Man* (1956; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 10-13.

and redefine itself.<sup>38</sup> As suburban life, corporate jobs, and modern life were interpreted less as protective and more as constricting, the foundations of paternalistic masculine dominance eroded. This is not to say that the patriarchal ideal or fatherhood ever came under question. Indeed, hegemonic masculinity maintains power through the subjugation of femininity and other masculinities.<sup>39</sup> Rather, the hegemonic ideal was undergoing a process of identity transformation that is evident starting in the mid-1950s.

The 1956 presidential election is often viewed as a “rematch” between President Eisenhower and former Illinois governor Adlai Stevenson. The president’s second overwhelming victory, combined with the geopolitical chaos surrounding the campaign, has resulted in it receiving less scholarly attention than the 1952 race. However, when the contest is examined closely it has some unique features that indicate the influence of a shifting hegemonic ideal. The first was the Stevenson campaign’s brazen attempt to make political capital out of Eisenhower’s health issues. In trying to undercut the president’s grandfatherly appeal, Stevenson raised the spectre of the president dying in his second term. As Stevenson stressed in an election-eve address: “A Republican victory tomorrow would mean that Richard M. Nixon would probably be president within the next four years.... I recoil at the prospect of Mr. Nixon... as guardian of the hydrogen bomb....”<sup>40</sup> The strategy was based on data that demonstrated that while voters were wary of the divorced, intellectual Stevenson, they were even more troubled by the reactionary Nixon in the Oval Office. An August 1956 study on electoral images for the Democratic campaign detailed that while Eisenhower was perceived as a father figure by Americans, Nixon was

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<sup>38</sup> Connell, 37; Messerschmidt, xii.

<sup>39</sup> Connell, 77.

<sup>40</sup> Adlai E. Stevenson, *The Papers of Adlai Stevenson*, Volume IV, eds. Walter Johnson and Carol Evans (Toronto: Little, Brown, and Co., 1972-79), 324.

the aggressive brother who lacked empathy.<sup>41</sup> The “inner-directed” egghead won out over the “other-directed” cold warrior.

Though Stevenson’s strategy ultimately failed, mainly because there was no evidence Eisenhower *was* likely to die in office, his attempts to highlight the role of the vice presidency at the Democratic convention *did* elevate the profile of Senator John F. Kennedy. If Eisenhower stood as a metaphor for the ageing, paternalistic ideal, Kennedy embodied the growing desire for proactive leadership. Although he fell short of the vice-presidential nomination, letters from Americans to Eisenhower, Stevenson, and Kennedy himself demonstrate an enthusiasm for the young, vital, masculine presence that the senator presented. As one writer warned Eisenhower, the Republican Party was struggling with a disconcerting “lack of bright young Kennedys.”<sup>42</sup> Part of the young senator’s appeal was that he offered a stark contrast to what Philip Wylie warned was the spectre “abdicating male.” His piece of *Playboy* in November 1956 asserted that men were becoming too cerebral and cautious, and that modern life was turning them into “merely earners, not spenders.”<sup>43</sup> Margaret Mead, in a February 1957 article in *New York Times Magazine*, expressed similar concern. She argued that the modern male is becoming risk-averse. Early marriages, suburban life, mortgages, and modern comforts forced men to play it safe, Mead argued, which would cause men to not take the risks that drove the “self-made man.”<sup>44</sup>

These concerns partially explain the appeal of John Diefenbaker to the Canadian electorate in the general election of 1957. Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent sought a third

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<sup>41</sup> Kenneth S. Davis, *The Politics of Honor: A Biography of Adlai E. Stevenson* (New York: Putnam, 1967), 409; Memorandum, “Images of Presidential Possibilities,” August 1956, in “Public Opinion Surveys, Folder 7, Box 280, Series 4.2, MC-124, MML.

<sup>42</sup> Letter from C. Ludwig Baumann, Jr., August 19, 1956, in “Folder: A-B,” Box 1, Letters Referred to RNC, Bulk Mail File, White House Central Files, DDEPL.

<sup>43</sup> Philip Wylie, “The Abdicating Male,” *Playboy*, November 1956.

<sup>44</sup> Margaret Mead, “American Man In A Woman's World,” *New York Times Magazine*, February 10, 1957.

term, despite recurring bouts of exhaustion and depression. “Uncle Louis” remained the Liberal’s greatest asset, and as one party insider mused, they would run under St. Laurent even “if we have to have him stuffed.”<sup>45</sup> Succeeding the ailing George Drew as leader of the Progressive Conservative Party, Diefenbaker leaned heavily into ideals of masculine self-sufficiency, citing his childhood on a prairie homestead in Saskatchewan.<sup>46</sup> As one campaign pamphlet noted, “[Diefenbaker] knew what it was to break land on the virgin prairie and haul a first crop.”<sup>47</sup> The Progressive Conservative campaign against the Liberals essentially emphasized Diefenbaker as the definition of a self-made man who could offer Canadians a return to autonomy and individualism. One aspect of this approach saw Diefenbaker elevate concerns about masculine individualism into a conversation about self-assertion and independence on the national level. As a result, his campaign was heavily Amerosceptic. In appealing to both personal and national individualism, Diefenbaker linked concerns about how modernity was eroding the agency of men to fears with the agency of the state was eroded by American influence.

In getting this message across, the Diefenbaker campaign worked to highlight the vitality of their leader in comparison to St. Laurent. The Progressive Conservative campaign covered 30,000 miles across the electoral contest. As one newspaper put it, his gruelling campaign schedule showed that he offered the promise of “fresh and vigorous leadership.”<sup>48</sup> In contrast, there was a “lack of sparkle” in the Liberal campaign, according

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<sup>45</sup> Thomson, 399-402; John English, *The Worldly Years: The Life of Lester Pearson*, Vol. 2 (New York: Knopf, 1992), 154; Peter C. Newman, *Renegade In Power: The Diefenbaker Years* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973), 34.

<sup>46</sup> Denis Smith, *Rogue Tory: The Life and Legend of John G. Diefenbaker* (Toronto: Macfarlane, Walter, and Ross, 1995), 1-5; Patrick Nicholson, *Vision and Indecision* (Don Mills, ON: Longmans, 1968), 16-19, 36.

<sup>47</sup> Pamphlet, “John Diefenbaker,” in “Election Campaign Material,” Box 193, Series VII/A, John G. Diefenbaker Papers (MG 01), Diefenbaker Centre, Saskatoon, SK.

<sup>48</sup> Clipping, “This Pace Can Kill,” *Globe and Mail*, April 25, 1957, in Scrapbook #14, MG 01, Diefenbaker



to the *Toronto Telegram*.<sup>49</sup> St. Laurent was often tired and irritable, snapping at reporters and children alike. The exhaustion that political insiders had long spoken of was now frequently evident, and he came across not as “Uncle Louis” but rather as a man who was “good enough to take time out from his duties at Ottawa to go through the formality of being re-elected.”<sup>50</sup> St. Laurent stands as a metaphorical representation of an era that is questioning the paternalistic hegemonic ideal and seeking the leadership of a different type of man who can help address growing concerns about masculinity in “crisis.” As Diefenbaker promised Canadians, he would lead them towards a “new frontier.”

Chapter Four picked up on this idea of a “new frontier,” which features prominently in Diefenbaker’s quest to move from a minority to a majority government in 1958. The concept is also famously associated with John F. Kennedy and the 1960 American presidential election. By the end of the decade, as *Look* magazine warned about the “Decline of the American Male” and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.’s piece in *Esquire* stressed a newfound “Crisis of American Masculinity,” both John Diefenbaker and John F. Kennedy angled to meet the historical moment.<sup>51</sup> As mentioned, in the late nineteenth century, those concerned about the industrial age’s impact on manhood sought solace in the ideas of the wilderness and the frontier.<sup>52</sup> The perceived ravages of suburbia, the office job, and modern conveniences on the “organization man” again saw a similar nostalgic turn to the past. Looking back on the 1950s, David Riesman, the author of *The Lonely Crowd* (1950), spoke

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Centre.

<sup>49</sup> “No Kick In Kickoff to PM’s Campaign,” *Toronto Telegram*, April 30, 1957, both in “General Election - Aug 1955 - May 1957,” Box 395, MG-26L, LAC.

<sup>50</sup> Clipping, “Ducking the Real Issues,” *Winnipeg Tribune*, May 27, 1957, in “Elections Federal - 1957,” Box 13, Series XII/A, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>51</sup> Editors of *Look*, *The Decline of the American Male* (New York: Random House, 1958); Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., “The Crisis of American Masculinity,” in *The Politics of Hope* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), 292-303.

<sup>52</sup> Kimmel, 91-92.

of the “consequences for individual character in the loss or attenuation of the older social functions on the frontiers of production and exploration” and the “tension between an individual’s search for fulfillment and the demands of the [institution].”<sup>53</sup>

Diefenbaker’s quest for a majority government in the 1958 election relied heavily on what he referred to as a “new frontier” policy focused on northern development.<sup>54</sup> He spoke to Canadians of the need to fulfill the promise of Confederation and leaned heavily on the legacy of Canada’s first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald. While the traditional Western frontier had been settled, Diefenbaker encouraged Canadians to look to the promise of the North for resource development, job creation, and settlement. Opening his campaign in Winnipeg, Diefenbaker told Canadians that he wanted the government to provide them with a “sense of national purpose” and “adventure.” Northern development would allow Canada to “control... [its] own economic and political destiny.”<sup>55</sup> It was a speech (and a campaign), notes Cara Spittal, rooted in “masculine cultural themes.”<sup>56</sup> His focus on the nostalgia of the frontier, appealed to a yearning for adventure in Canadians who were longing to break free of the bonds of the “organization man.” Who better to lead that crusade than a self-made man who grew up on the Canadian frontier?

Opposing Diefenbaker was the new Liberal leader, Lester B. Pearson. Try as they might, the party was unable to turn the former External Affairs minister into a champion of the common man in the two months since he took party’s helm. Sounding a bit like Eisenhower, the Liberal campaign focused on “prosperity, progress, and peace” but fell

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<sup>53</sup> David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd: A Study of the Changing American Character*, Twentieth Anniversary Edition (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), xxviii.

<sup>54</sup> Nicholson, 82.

<sup>55</sup> “Opening Campaign Speech, Winnipeg,” February 12, 1958, “The Federal Elections of 1957 and 1958,” Online Exhibit, Diefenbaker Centre, accessed August 2020, [https://diefenbaker.usask.ca/documents/online-exhibits/1957-1958-elections/campaign\\_speech\\_1958.pdf](https://diefenbaker.usask.ca/documents/online-exhibits/1957-1958-elections/campaign_speech_1958.pdf)

<sup>56</sup> Cara Spittal, “The Diefenbaker Moment” (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Toronto, 2011), 178-79.

short in projecting a grand vision to the nation.<sup>57</sup> It did not help that Pearson scoffed at Diefenbaker's proposed new frontier as building roads from "igloo to igloo." This gaffe allowed the prime minister to deride the Liberal leader's lack of vision. Pearson would later remember that it gave the Progressive Conservatives the opportunity to "forever brand [him] as a narrow-minded, *effete* easterner who had sneered at the 'vision of the North.'"<sup>58</sup> In fairness to Pearson, the election was called only a matter of days after taking his seat in the House of Commons as Leader of the Opposition. He had little opportunity to define himself to Canadians. As a result, Diefenbaker ran the 1958 election almost in the absence of an opposition. The Canadian people, he said, had an "appointment with destiny."<sup>59</sup>

In the United States, Senator John F. Kennedy spoke in similarly grandiose terms and he warned his fellow Americans of a "slow corrosion of luxury" that was the result of the nation "losing that Pilgrim and pioneer spirit of initiative and independence."<sup>60</sup> Like Diefenbaker, Kennedy presented his promise of a "new frontier" by invoking the legacy of a late nineteenth century politician — Theodore Roosevelt. Similarly concerned about the impact of modernity on masculinity, Roosevelt warned against "swollen, slothful ease" that would allow "bolder and stronger peoples [to] pass us by."<sup>61</sup> Kennedy's campaign blamed Eisenhower and his paternalistic leadership for much of the stagnation, pointing to a

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<sup>57</sup> Campaign Platform, "The Pearson Plan: Canada's Liberal Path to Prosperity, Progress and Peace," "Plateformes Électorales," *Poltext*, Université Laval, accessed August 2020, [https://www.poltext.org/sites/poltext.org/files/plateformesV2/Canada/CAN\\_PL\\_1958\\_LIB\\_en.pdf](https://www.poltext.org/sites/poltext.org/files/plateformesV2/Canada/CAN_PL_1958_LIB_en.pdf).

<sup>58</sup> Emphasis added; Lester B. Pearson, *Mike: The Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. Lester B. Pearson*, Volume Three (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 46.

<sup>59</sup> Clipping, "Barnstormer Won Great Victory," *Sun-Herald*, April 6, 1958, in "1958.5 - Election Congratulations," Box 95, Series VI (PMO), MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>60</sup> Clipping, "Senator Kennedy Wonders If We Want to Endure," *Denver Post*, October 7, 1959, in "Speeches: Newspaper Clippings," Box 1051, Series 15.06, Campaign Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library (JFKPL), Boston, MA.

<sup>61</sup> Kimmel, 121; Excerpts from Waldorf-Astoria Address, February 13, 1960 in "The Presidency: The Man in the White House," Box 1031, Series 15.01, Campaign Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKPL.

presumed “missile gap” between the United States and the Soviet Union as evidence. Kennedy compared his predecessor to King Lear, an elderly monarch in the throes of senility, no longer able to handle the duties of governance.<sup>62</sup>

Unlike Diefenbaker, Kennedy’s concept of the “new frontier” was more abstract and urbane, rooted in ideas about service, fitness, and technological advancement. However, it helped fuel what Norman Mailer put as the choice between “adventure or monotony.”<sup>63</sup> The “monotony” in Mailer’s opinion was the Republican nominee, Vice President Richard Nixon. Despite attempts to create a more moderate persona, known colloquially as “new Nixon,” the vice president struggled to shake off the reactionary, sewer-dwelling image that fuelled Herbert Block cartoons.<sup>64</sup> The debates, especially the first in the series, only compounded Nixon’s image problem. As Stephen Watts observes, “Nixon came off as the shifty, sweating, weak symbol of masculine decline, the organization man wilting when pulled from behind his desk and thrust into the bright lights.”<sup>65</sup> The choice, Kennedy told Americans, was between “those who are willing to sit and lie at anchor and those who want to go forward.”<sup>66</sup> In contrast, Nixon asked Americans to vote for experience rather than for a cult of personality. He also leaned heavily on Eisenhower in the closing weeks, despite previous concerns that it would make him look

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<sup>62</sup> Gary A. Donaldson, *The First Modern Campaign: Kennedy, Nixon, and the Election of 1960* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), 128; Address by John F. Kennedy on “The Presidency in 1960,” as printed in the Congressional Record for Monday January 18, 1960, in “The Presidency, July 1956 - May 1960,” Box 995, Series 14.2, Campaign Files, Pre-Presidential Papers, JFKPL; Transcript: <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/presidency-in-1960-19600114>.

<sup>63</sup> Norman Mailer, “Superman Comes to the Supermarket,” *Esquire*, November 1960, repr. December 8, 2009, <https://www.esquire.com/news-politics/a3858/superman-supermarket/>.

<sup>64</sup> Donaldson, 6; Theodore White, *The Making of the President, 1960* (1960; New York: Barnes and Noble, 2004), 326.

<sup>65</sup> Watts, 67.

<sup>66</sup> “Speech of Senator John F. Kennedy, Boston, MA, Faneuil Hall,” November 7, 1960, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed August 2020, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/274193>

like a “papa’s boy.”<sup>67</sup>

The November election was the closest outcome explored in this dissertation, and Kennedy won both the electoral college and the popular vote by a marginal number of ballots. In Canada, John Diefenbaker had followed the contest closely, hoping for a Nixon win. For the prime minister, the vice president was the “predictable quantity.”<sup>68</sup> Nixon also offered less of an image problem for Diefenbaker than the youthful vitality of Kennedy. It was in November 1960 that Lester B. Pearson and the Liberal Party had pulled ahead in the polls for the first time. As Diefenbaker biographer, Denis Smith states, “Kennedy... offered a focus for those young, urban, educated voters who were losing faith in the prairie evangelist.”<sup>69</sup> Since the 1958 election, Diefenbaker’s image as a resolute, self-made man had suffered numerous setbacks through his leadership. His overwhelming majority and the challenges over governing had transformed the prime minister from “vital, decisive... man of destiny,” into a leader who was “cautious to the point of always searching for a consensus.”<sup>70</sup>

As a result, Chapter Five examined what can be defined as a “clash” of masculinity between Diefenbaker and Kennedy, as Canadians looked southwards towards an alternative “new frontier.” To the public, Diefenbaker came to represent what Riesman defined as the era’s “other-directed” man, who was driven less by instinct and more by concerns about perception. In a seemingly fitting description of the Canadian prime minister, Riesman observes that “repeated failures destroy [the other-directed man’s] hope

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<sup>67</sup> John W. Malsberger, *The General and the Politician* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 186; “Speech of Vice President Richard M. Nixon at CBS-TV, Chicago, IL,” November 7, 1960, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed August 2020, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/273792>

<sup>68</sup> Knowlton Nash, *Kennedy & Diefenbaker* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991), 60.

<sup>69</sup> Smith, 378; English, 234.

<sup>70</sup> Peter Stursberg, *Diefenbaker: Leadership Gained, 1956-62* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), 175-78.

of future accomplishment... [and] his internal strengths can no longer hold the fort against external evidence.”<sup>71</sup> After repeated failures with the economy, military weaponry, and a lack of resource development, it is understandable that Kennedy’s youthful vitality and promise of his own “new frontier” appealed to Canadians. This is why, at the end of 1962, President Kennedy was selected as Canada’s most admired man, with 21% of the vote. Diefenbaker, in contrast, scored 3% support, and Pearson 1%.<sup>72</sup>

The 1962 general election in Canada can be defined as a referendum on the Diefenbaker administration. Yet, Canadian voters failed to make a decisive choice, mainly because Lester B. Pearson continued to struggle to offer a viable alternative. By swapping out his signature bow-ties, emphasizing his nickname “Mike,” and orchestrating his speeches to deemphasize his lisp, Liberal Party organizers hoped to present Pearson in a more masculine light.<sup>73</sup> Events that highlighted Pearson’s past as a semi-professional baseball player and as a hockey coach were also hoped to benefit his brand. Unfortunately, Pearson was no Jack Kennedy. The Progressive Conservative campaign hit Pearson with charges of communist sympathies, and Diefenbaker pointed to the Liberal leader’s diplomatic past, in hopes of keeping the issue of Pearson’s intellectualism and effeminacy centre-stage. In turn, the Liberals fired back, pointing out Diefenbaker’s “trembling voice,” his “crocodile tears,” and a government of “delay, indecision, confusion, and fumbling.”<sup>74</sup> In the end, the results of the 1962 contest saw the PCs reduced to a minority government and another vote within a year’s time was all but certain. It was an election that has been

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<sup>71</sup> Riesman, 125.

<sup>72</sup> Clipping, “Kennedy Canada’s Choice As Most Admired Man,” *Ottawa Citizen*, January 2, 1963, in Scrapbook #71, MG 01, Diefenbaker Centre.

<sup>73</sup> “Pre-Campaign Strategy” and “Notes for Discussion,” both in “Elections, Part Two,” Volume 82, Series N2, Lester B. Pearson Fonds (MG26-N), Library Archives Canada (LAC).

<sup>74</sup> Newman, *Renegade*, 325; Memorandum, “Notes For Mr. Pearson’s Campaign Speeches,” April 5, 1962, in “Campaign Material,” Volume 29, Series N2, MG26-N, LAC.

described as “everybody’s Waterloo,” and as one voter put it: “If only you had someone else [to vote for]....”<sup>75</sup>

Kennedy’s presence only loomed larger over the Canadian political scene in the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962. The American administration’s mild annoyance with Diefenbaker’s indecisive approach to nuclear warheads transformed into concern that his government represented an active geopolitical danger in the crises’ aftermath. For the last year-and-a-half, Diefenbaker had dithered and retreated on the issue of nuclear warheads on Canadian soil. Even as public opinion in Canada solidified in support of arming defensive weaponry with warheads.<sup>76</sup> By January 1963, multiple condemnations of Diefenbaker’s continued indecision regarding nuclear warheads would come from the Supreme Commander of NATO, the Kennedy State Department, and Lester Pearson, whose own position had shifted in favour of seizing the political moment. The resulting political firestorm saw the fall of Diefenbaker’s fragile minority government on February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1963.<sup>77</sup>

Given widespread frustration in the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis and Kennedy’s popularity in Canada, Pearson’s Liberal Party started the general election from a position of strength. A sizeable majority government looked likely. However, every time Pearson went to the electorate, Canadians seemed to remember why they were tentative about his leadership. He would later refer to this election as “the most degrading experience of [his] life.”<sup>78</sup> Despite an unflattering, possibly Kennedy-contrived, *Newsweek*

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<sup>75</sup> N. Caiden, “The Canadian General Election of 1962,” *Australian Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (1962): 72; Clark Davey, “No Election Excitement Along the Unhurried Ontario Shore,” *Globe and Mail*, May 30, 1962.

<sup>76</sup> Nash, 190-92, 222; “Canada Military Have Nuclear Weapons” and “Politicians,” November 1962, Poll #299, Gallup Canada, Inc., Public Opinion Polls, ODESI, <http://odesi2.scholarsportal.info/webview/>

<sup>77</sup> Peter Stursberg, *Diefenbaker: Leadership Lost, 1962-67* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 55-56; Newman, *Renegade*, 369-74.

<sup>78</sup> Gordon Donaldson, *Eighteen Men: The Prime Ministers of Canada* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1985), 211.

condemnation of Diefenbaker and tepid support by Canadian newspapers, Pearson's lead continued to narrow as election day approached. The Kennedy administration watched the election closely, offering help where they could. Still, the American ambassador warned a majority would prove allusive. "[Pearson] simply does not come across to the voter with an image of decisive leadership," he wrote to the White House.<sup>79</sup> Ultimately, Pearson's Liberals did win the election of 1963, however, their 128 seats fell far short of the original hope for a 175-seat majority. For the third time in seven years, Canadians elected yet another minority government.<sup>80</sup> "We need some new blood," observed one voter. "What this country needs," he said, "is someone like Jack Kennedy."<sup>81</sup>

As Peter Newman wrote in *Maclean's* towards the end of the 1963 election: "It's not John Diefenbaker who has changed; it is the times."<sup>82</sup> It is a prescient statement in more ways than one. Newman meant that by 1963 the binational relationship between Canada and the United States had aligned. Kennedy was a popular figure, and the Cuban Missile Crisis cemented Canadian public opinion in favour of warheads. Concerns were less those of the mid-fifties about the Liberals being complacent, but rather that the Progressive Conservatives being too suspicious. As Chapter Five proffered, part of Diefenbaker's decline can be traced to Kennedy's popularity and a "clash" of masculinity between the two men. While Diefenbaker faltered against the promise of a "new frontier," Kennedy inspired concepts of self-fulfilment and agency in those concerned about growing

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<sup>79</sup> John Boyko, *Cold Fire: Kennedy's Northern Front* (Toronto: Knopf, 2016), 234; Asa McKercher, *Camelot in Canada: Canadian-American Relations in the Kennedy Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 198.

<sup>80</sup> Frank Feigert, *Canada Votes: 1935-1988* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1989), 15, 40; "Liberals Hope to Take 175 Seats; Party in High Gear, Pearson Says," *Globe and Mail*, February 6, 1963.

<sup>81</sup> Peter Regenstreif, *The Diefenbaker Interlude: Parties and Voting in Canada* (Don Mills, TO: Longmans, 1965), 81.

<sup>82</sup> Peter C. Newman, "The powerful gifts and glaring flaws of John Diefenbaker," *Maclean's*, March 23, 1963.



masculine weakness and the rise of the “organization man.”

However, what Newman couldn't have predicted in referencing the changing times were the more significant historical shifts that began that same year. The result would firmly delineate the years before and after 1963. The first of those events was the Limited Test Ban Treaty, signed in August 1963 and ratified by the U.S. Senate that October. The agreement halted atmospheric, underwater, and outer space testing by the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Soviet Union.<sup>83</sup> It represented a *symbolic* de-escalation of the arms race, because as Stephen Whitfield observes, the absence of an underground testing ban allowed for the United States to quietly test *more* weapons in the five years after ratification than it had the previous five years.<sup>84</sup> That being said, this dissertation has shown a correlation between nuclear tensions and their impact on the hegemonic masculine ideal. It is understandable that as tensions lessened after the test ban treaty, one would expect another coming transformation regarding masculine norms. Unfortunately, what this change would have been is impossible to measure, largely as a result of the next shift in 1963.

The moment came on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1963. While campaigning in Dallas, Texas, President John F. Kennedy was shot on his way to deliver a speech at the Market Center. Rather than the Limited Test Ban Treaty, his assassination is what will represent a sharp break with the preceding years. There is a loss of innocence and with that, a new sense of urgency that will define the counterculture movements of the 1960s. As Michael Kimmel observes: “If Kennedy could be shot down, then the manhood he embodied was itself

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<sup>83</sup> Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., *A Thousand Days: John F. Kennedy in the White House* (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin, 1965), 893-918.

<sup>84</sup> Stephen J. Whitfield, *The Culture of the Cold War* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991), 211.

vulnerable.”<sup>85</sup> Indeed, over the coming years, the hegemonic masculine ideal, which was white and heteronormative, faced increased challenges from civil rights, women’s rights, and queer rights groups. Steven Watts attributes this shift, in part, to the legacy of JFK in life and death. “[His] crusade for regenerated, vigorous manhood,” Watts observes, “helped unleash social forces that proved dangerously unruly... [and resulted in] wholesale cultural and political rebellion.”<sup>86</sup>

Watts draws a link between calls for self-fulfilment and agency and the demand for those same rights from by the feminist movement. There is a similarity, he points out, between the rhetoric of John F. Kennedy and that of Betty Friedan. Her ground-breaking work, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), was published just before the Kennedy assassination. Addressing what she defined as the “problem with no name,” Friedan was highly critical of the gendered restraints placed on women by domestic, suburban life. Friedan herself notes the core issue was “not sexual but a problem of identity.” Indeed, as she observes in an epilogue to her original book, she wonders if men “weren’t really the enemy,” but rather “fellow victims, suffering from an outmoded masculine mystique that made them feel unnecessarily inadequate when there were no bears to kill.”<sup>87</sup>

Where Watts stumbles is in extending his connections further, beyond the calls for masculine self-fulfillment and its correlation with second-wave feminism. He lacks a similar discussion of the emergence of similar rights movements among other marginalized communities, including people of colour and those who identified as LGBTQ. This is not to say, in any sense, that the movements for sexual or racial equality owe anything to the

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<sup>85</sup> Kimmel, 177.

<sup>86</sup> Watts, 359.

<sup>87</sup> Watts, 359, 361-63; Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963; New York: W.W Norton, 2001), 77, 386

crisis mentality surrounding middle-class white men in the late 1950s. Rather, the rhetoric about self-fulfillment could naturally only further embolden oppressed and marginalized communities who had long since tired of their own agency being discounted and pushed aside. It is also important to acknowledge the role that the hegemonic masculinity discussed in this dissertation played in such oppression. In the 1950s and early 1960s, the voices of women, people of colour, and the queer community were largely discounted from societal power. As mentioned, this is because hegemonic masculinity maintained its power through the sublimation of such voices. Where participation did occur, such as from Canada's Voice of Women (VOW) and their involvement in the anti-nuclear movement, participation was often subjected to gendered performance. In that instance, appealing as wives and mothers. There had also been concerns that women were more vulnerable to the pleas of left-wing radicals. This perception was used to discount their concerns and participation by the political elite.<sup>88</sup> Historically, we have seen similar ties at this time made between civil rights leaders and concerns about communist and/or Soviet influence.

The changes that come in from the mid-1960s onward, which see marginalized groups forcefully assert their agency, bring an end to what K.A. Cuordileone describes as the "cold war cult of [masculine] toughness." She points to the abject failure that was America's venture into Vietnam, alongside the rising tides of feminism and counterculture, as putting pressure on eroding its hegemonic dominance.<sup>89</sup> Christopher Dummitt similarly argues in *The Manly Modern* (2008) that as the 1960s progressed, Canadians joined their American counterparts in beginning to question what he terms "the modernist project."

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<sup>88</sup> Nicole Marion, "Canada's Disarmers: The Complicated Struggle Against Nuclear Weapons, 1959-1963" (Ph.D. Dissertation, Carleton University, 2017), Chapter One; Tarah Brookfield, *Cold War Comforts* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2012), Chapter Three.

<sup>89</sup> Cuordileone, 237-38.

There was a radicalism, Dummitt notes, that sought “a break with the style and substance of the social, economic, and political authority of the past.” Like Watts, he points to a kinship between the fears that drove postwar concerns about masculinity and the trends that emerge as women and marginalized communities push for their own self-fulfillment. He also points out that masculinity and its hegemonic dominance are heavily tied to the existing social order, which is why the phrase “The Man” comes to stand out as a rallying cry for rebellion and counterculture. In Dummitt’s view, this marks beginning of the turn towards the *postmodern*, where rigid gender constructs will bend and then break.<sup>90</sup>

Though the trajectory of these liberation movements and their interaction with white male hegemony transcends the bounds of this exploration, the challenges these movements presented to hegemonic masculine dominance help justify this study’s cessation in 1963. To return to the work of Raewyn Connell, she observes that hegemonic masculinity can “be disrupted - or even disrupt itself,” and that “when conditions for the defence of patriarchy change, the bases for dominance of a particular masculinity are eroded.”<sup>91</sup> The era post-1963 marks the beginning of a new wave of disruption and adaptation of the hegemonic ideal, although it ultimately will continue to remain white, patriarchal, and heteronormative. Michael Kimmel, meanwhile, describes the coming years as a “frontal assault” on the masculine ideal, which brings a whole host of new challenges — mainly from marginalized communities no longer willing to sacrifice *their* self-fulfillment. As he elaborates: “It was as if the screen against which... men for generations projected their manhood had suddenly grown dark, and men were left to sort out the

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<sup>90</sup> Dummitt, 156-59.

<sup>91</sup> Connell, 37, 77.

meaning of masculinity all by themselves.”<sup>92</sup>

One of these young men, who would have been twenty-six or twenty-seven by 1963, launched an imaginary atomic bomb from his seesaw on a Manhattan playground in August 1945. His childhood escapades were detailed by the *New Yorker* in August 1945 and spearheaded the introduction of this exploration. The story was a social commentary on the pervasive ability of the atomic cloud’s shadow to permeate all aspects of life. This young man came of age an era that was defined by the “shadow of the atomic cloud,” to quote Dwight Eisenhower’s address to Canadian parliament in November 1953.<sup>93</sup> Influenced by modernity and the fear of nuclear annihilation, masculine norms were one of the many aspects influenced by this atomic shadow. The preceding pages have demonstrated how hegemonic masculinity and its transformation were influenced by Canadian and American society as it attempted to adjust to a postwar nuclear modernity. More specifically, this dissertation has shown of these masculine norms were reflected in the electoral politics of both nations, and how they were used by political campaigns as a way to create a favourable candidate impression, while denigrating opponents. Adherence to masculine hegemony proved both important and useful, because, to paraphrase Louis St. Laurent, it was the *man* voters responded to, above all else.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Kimmel, 179-85.

<sup>93</sup> Dwight D. Eisenhower, “Address Before a Joint Session of the Parliament of Canada,” November 14, 1953, *The American Presidency Project*, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/node/232412>

<sup>94</sup> Emphasis added; Thomson, 264.

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| <i>Calgary Herald</i>            | <i>Globe and Mail</i> (Toronto) |
| <i>Chicago Daily Tribune</i>     | <i>Halifax Chronicle</i>        |
| <i>Chicago Sun-Times</i>         | <i>Hamilton Spectator</i>       |
| <i>Christian Science Monitor</i> | <i>Hartford Courant</i>         |
| <i>Cleveland Press</i>           | <i>Kingston Whig-Standard</i>   |
| <i>Collier's</i>                 | <i>Le Canada</i>                |

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