HOMOSEXUAL DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA:
POLITICAL IDEOLOGY & ORGANIZATION IN THE MATTACHINE, 1950-1954

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INTRODUCTION

The Mattachine Society brought about the inception of American homosexual organization at the dawn of the Cold War. Founded in 1950 and continuing to the Stonewall Riots of 1969, the Mattachine developed from a small group of five men who met secretly in a Los Angeles home into a public organization that had thousands of members over its lifetime. Spontaneously spreading to San Francisco and other parts of California, the Mattachine inspired chapters in New York City, Denver, Washington DC, and several states throughout the country. The organization founded a not-for-profit corporation for education and debate, held discussion groups, published newsletters and a monthly magazine, corresponded internationally, spoke on the radio, offered legal counsel to gay people, and sponsored important scientific research. The Mattachine Society and closely affiliated groups, along with contemporaneous lesbian movement Daughters of Bilitis, were the first American organizations to advocate for homosexuals and to inspire historic levels of gay membership.

The political principles of the organization shifted considerably over its lifetime. Harry Hay, a Communist Party member from 1934-1951, hosted the first meetings in 1950 with a small group of mostly leftist gay men, which consisted of Rudi Gernreich, Chuck Rowland, Bob Hull, and Dale Jennings. These five founders, known as the Fifth Order, structured a secret society and organized separate discussion groups, each limited to a few dozen members. The rank-and-file members of the organization did not know of the other chapters' existence, but the Fifth Order directed the entire structure, maintaining secrecy and anonymity reminiscent of Freemasonry or the Communist Party. The purpose of the organization was to mobilize and unify a distinct and potentially militant

homosexual minority, which would follow a new code of ethics to distinguish itself from the dominant heterosexual majority.

Recruitment numbers remained low for the first few months, but the Mattachine began to develop organizationally in 1952. These developments shifted the Mattachine from its ideological foundations and split the consensus of the Fifth Order. The process began that summer when Dale Jennings pled innocent after being accused of lewd conduct by a police officer. Emboldened by their success after the jury sided with Jennings and the district attorney dismissed the case, the Mattachine leadership sought a visible position in society by attempting to officially incorporate as the Mattachine Foundation. Three female relatives were the figureheads of the organization, but the Fifth Order operated the organization and recruited professionals—including a minister and a doctor—to lend the Mattachine Foundation credibility. In the autumn of 1952, one of the discussion groups decided to found a publication on homosexuality, and *ONE Magazine* emerged, assembled by individuals who held leadership positions within the Mattachine, but tended to hold more conservative political views. The Dale Jennings trial, the Mattachine Foundation and *ONE Magazine* encouraged participation from many individuals who disagreed with Hay's thesis of a separate homosexual minority and prescribed a different path towards social integration.

As the Mattachine gained prominence and publicity, discussion groups began to spontaneously grow across the state with almost no assistance from the founding members. This grassroots growth was fueled by an influx of new constituents who supported an organization for homosexuals, but otherwise tended towards anticommunist prejudices and "I Like Ike" sympathies. The increasingly conservative rank-and-file

opposed the secrecy of the organization with growing adamancy. These tensions reached a fever pitch in the spring of 1953, when a column published by Paul V. Coates in the *Los Angeles Mirror* questioned the invisible leadership and motives of the organization, drawing on popular Cold War sentiment to suggest that sexual deviants could be organized and manipulated by Communist subversives. The Fifth Order finally agreed to hold a public convention.

A series of constitutional conventions fundamentally transformed the organizational structure and political ideology of the Mattachine. The Fifth Order hosted the first convention in April, one month to the day after the Coates column. The April convention resulted in stalemate, but during the second convention in May, the Fifth Order relinquished control. The Mattachine reorganized democratically as the Mattachine Society, and former members of the rank-and-file—including engineer Ken Burns, businesswoman Marilyn Rieger, and veteran and journalist Hal Call—assumed leadership of the organization.

The constitutional convention of May 1953 transformed the organization from a revolutionary secret society to a society of homosexual democrats. The reconstituted Mattachine Society contradicted its founding legacy on many fronts, especially its Communist sympathies, its thesis of homosexuals as an oppressed minority, its secret and anonymous structure, and its deeply critical view of American society. While the ideological consistency of the organization faded, the Mattachine replaced it with a messy democratic process, originally intended to allow the various chapters more freedom to pursue their goals. These homosexual democrats assured themselves that their

aims were legitimate and their methods patriotic. They believed they could gain acceptance in society through evolution rather than revolution.

The purpose of my thesis is to chart this transition in political ideology and organizational structure of the Mattachine Society. Most historians locate the organization's strength in its radical politics, but I will argue that its growth and success stemmed mostly from its attempts to locate itself within the mainstream of American politics. This transition aided the Mattachine in dealing with government institutions and police forces, university professors conducting research on homosexuality, and the public at large. Furthermore the ideological development of the Mattachine increased its appeal to American homosexuals. The conceptual departure from its Communist foundations proved a crucial factor in the organization's rapid expansion. The grassroots growth transformed the rigid and hierarchical structure imposed by Hay and his political allies, and expanded the base of potential constituents. The insurgents who gained control of the organization rejected a radical critique of American society, and instead sought an "integrationist" or "assimilationist" approach to achieve acceptance of homosexuality. They sought to counter Communist elements they perceived to be subversive and threatening in the Cold War era, and to reconcile their sexuality with existing American mores, proving that homosexuals could be happy and productive American citizens, loyal to God and country. The new leaders shaped the organization to suit their prejudices and ideals, and sought to establish a democratic means of homosexual organization in American society.

I have broadly characterized the prior historiography of the Mattachine Society into three traditions, all of which differ in their interpretation of the shifting political

ideology of the Mattachine Society. Some scholars treat the insurgency as an aberration, a reactionary political currently moving awkwardly against the flow of history. According to these historians, the Mattachine's transition led to decline and stagnation, stifling the political possibilities envisioned by men like Harry Hay. John D'Emilio pioneered this tradition in 1983 in his important work *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities*.

D'Emilio's historical project was to demonstrate that the Stonewall Riots did not create the modern gay rights movement, for "mass movements for social change do not spring into existence fully grown."[1] His historical instinct was correct, but although he acknowledges the importance of 1950s and 1960s activists, D'Emilio draws an ideological line from the Mattachine's founders to gay liberation, and credits the development of the gay rights movement almost entirely to this ideology. His historical errors result from his mistaken analysis of the impetus behind Mattachine's shifting political ideology. As valuable as his scholarship is, D'Emilio emphasizes the perspective of Hay and his allies in the Fifth Order to the degree of historical inaccuracy, presenting a historical narrative that views the insurgents only through the rancorous lens of their defeated enemies.

The scholarship of Stuart Timmons and Will Roscoe, two vivid and informative biographers of Harry Hay, falls into this tradition. Both authors express an emotional kinship with Hay, who they worked with closely over several years, and to a notable extent rely on his impressive intellect and persuasive interpretation of the Mattachine's history. Their treatment of the Mattachine's development is also one-sided. Timmons

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[1] John D'Emilio, *Sexual Politics, Sexual Communities: The Making of a Homosexual Minority in the United States, 1940-1970* (Chicago: The University Of Chicago Press, 1983), 240.

criticizes the "timid 'white-glove' assimilationist attitude that characterized the homophile movement until Stonewall."[2] Roscoe writes that a "small band of conservatives" manipulated Cold War sentiments, whereupon the "broad, grassroots base of Mattachine vanished."[3] Timmons and Roscoe provide helpful details, but their accounts do not adequately explain the Mattachine's transition, and they rely primarily on oral history rather than academic footnotes.

The Hay vision of history has been challenged by a second tradition of scholarship, exemplified by Martin Meeker, James T. Sears, and C. Todd White, historians critical of Hay and sympathetic to the achievements of the reorganized Mattachine Society. White argues that certain perspectives was excluded from the D'Emilio and Timmons accounts, and suggests that "Hay is held aloft in the text," while other contributions are "unfairly distorted and usually diminished."[4] White emphasizes the perspective of Dale Jennings, who brought internal divisions to the Fifth Order (D'Emilio glosses over this lack of consensus), and founded *ONE Magazine* alongside relatively conservative individuals.

Sears and Meeker deal more extensively with the Mattachine Society itself, but their analysis falls short insofar as they reinterpret the Mattachine's transition as secretly radical. Meeker claims that the "respectable public face was a deliberate and ultimately successful strategy to deflect the antagonisms of its many detractors," and even more implausibly states that the Society "perfected the politics of irony and even the practice of

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[2] Stuart Timmons, *The Trouble with Harry Hay: Founder of the Modern Gay Movement* (Boston: Alyson, 1990), 179.

[3] Harry Hay, *Radically Gay: Gay Liberation in the Words of Its Founder*, ed. Will Roscoe (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 4-5.

[4] C. Todd White, *Pre-Gay L.A.: A Social History of the Movement for Homosexual Rights* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), viii-ix.

camp."[5] Meeker argues that historians have misunderstood the intentions of these figures, but he underestimates the impact of individuals who genuinely believed what they claimed to believe. Sears succeeds most fully in bringing the political diversity of the Mattachine to life and providing a wealth of evidence on the 1953 transition, but his text is littered with transcripts and block quotations and is somewhat short on analysis. Unlike Meeker, he acknowledges that the reconstituted Mattachine indeed intended to achieve "social respectability and assimilation," but he focuses primarily on the "materialist sexual radicalism" of Hal Call.[6] Despite intriguing and sometimes penetrating argumentation, these works implausibly reinterpret the critical 1953 transition as radical and subversive, and do not fully recognize the appeal of the "integrationist" mindset in the Cold War era. These historians ultimately follow the first historical tradition by treating the development of the gay rights movement as a basically radical trajectory, highlighting subversion, and deemphasizing the mindset that seeks to accommodate itself with society.

One historian, Daniel Hurewitz, observes the importance of this "conservative" influence on its own terms, and hence understands the resulting diversity, debate, and disagreement within the modern gay rights movement. "At the heart of that movement," he writes in *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics*, "was not a single idea about homosexuality and identity, but an evolving set of questions and debates."[7] Hurewitz goes on to compare the debate between Harry Hay and his opponent Marilyn

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[5] Martin Meeker, "Behind the Mask of Respectability: Reconsidering the Mattachine Society and Male Homophile Practice, 1950s and 1960s," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10, no. 1 (January 2001): 81.

[6] James T. Sears, *Behind the Mask of the Mattachine: The Hal Call Chronicles and the Early Movement for Homosexual Emancipation* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2006), 2-4.

[7] Daniel Hurewitz, *Bohemian Los Angeles and the Making of Modern Politics* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 277.

Rieger to the debates between Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. about the black community and its proper relationship to society. As provocative as this comparison may be, the bulk of Hurewitz' work deals with Communists, artists, and the left-wing politics of Edendale, California as the ideological precursor to identity politics. His study is important, but does not reflect the gay rights movement as a whole, or adequately explain the shifting political ideology of the Mattachine Society.

I will draw from various aspects of these histories to present a new narrative of the Mattachine's transition from a Communist-inspired organization to a relatively mainstream society that nonetheless advocated for homosexuals. My study demonstrates how the original rise of the Mattachine occurred through tactics that shifted the organization from Hay's organizational vision. The grassroots growth of the rank and file mobilized a new constituency, who established a society of homosexual democrats that modeled their association after the political institutions of the US. The Mattachine Society experienced both success and failure after 1953, but its activities were fundamentally defined by its new democratic structure, which ultimately pushed Mattachine to become a more decentralized, visible and ideologically diverse movement.

Section 1

Historical Background

Three historical trends engendered the existence of the Mattachine and influenced its development: (1) the cultural development of homosexuals in urban locations and the repressive response from society, (2) the rise of a medical conceptualization of homosexuality, and (3) the tremendous power of anti-Communism in the US as the Cold War began. The first two trends began in Europe, and slowly moved to the US over the course of decades, reaching new heights during the period described in this thesis. Yet circumstances unique to the US and the historical moment influenced the Mattachine as well, especially as homosexuality and Communism became increasingly linked in the public mind during the Cold War. In the 1950s, these three historical trends crested in Los Angeles, birthplace of the Mattachine. The city was a growing metropolis adjacent to academic communities and scholarly research at UCLA and other schools. The region had long been a stronghold for Communist organization, but the prevalent military, business and government influence in the city established deep political tensions. The politics of the city defined the early growth of the Mattachine.

Urbanization is one of the key factors in the global history of the growth of same-sex expression, organization, and community. According to one historian, the rise of cities represented the "most fundamental precondition, if not exactly a cause" of developing homosexual subcultures.[8] In the fifteenth century, police forces and religious leaders in several Italian cities sought to control an increase in criminal homosexual activity. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, burgeoning homosexual subcultures

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[8] Nicholas C. Edsall, *Toward Stonewall: Homosexuality and Society in the Modern Western World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2003), 13.

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existed in cities such as London and Paris, where—despite cultural, religious, and political differences—men congregated in similar patterns to seek same-sex contact, identifying each other through verbal or visual cues.

Examining the process of urbanization helps to explain why homosexual organization occurred in Europe before it did in the US. Even by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the "critical mass needed to foster a sexual subculture simply did not exist," as all American cities held populations less than one hundred thousand.[9] As the nineteenth century drew to a close, however, urbanization and industrialization changed the face of American society, and these social forces allowed for the emergence of American homosexual subcultures.[10] These subcultures were not politically orientated or publicly sanctioned, but they supported some degree of interaction between homosexuals. In 1898, a Massachusetts doctor described the existence "in nearly every center of importance…[of] men of perverted tendencies, men known to each other as such, bound by ties of secrecy and fear and held together by mutual attraction."[11] These trends continued during the world wars, and in the postwar era, many homosexuals moved to cities such as New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles.

The growing visibility of homosexual activity over the centuries evoked a variety of societal responses, which led to the emergence of nuanced medical interpretations of homosexuality that gained precedence over blunt legal and religious prohibitions of sodomy.[12] Scientists first addressed same-sex sexuality at the end of the eighteenth century, and physicians began to address the subject consistently by the 1860s. By the

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[9] Edsall, 72.
[10] D'Emilio, 9.
[11] Edsall, 141.
[12] D'Emilio, 17-19.

end of the nineteenth century, England and especially Germany produced a stream of scientific and medical works dealing with the question of homosexuality.[13] These medical conceptions were not entirely distinct from previous traditions, and physicians frequently used moralistic arguments against homosexuality as they prescribed cruel treatments such as castration. Nevertheless, some argue that the "new dissenting theories" produced by scientific scrutiny had some positive effects insofar as it brought attention to the issue of homosexuality, and—unlike previous religious conceptions—allowed for the possibility of innovative perspectives on the nature of homosexuality.[14]

An important landmark in American medical studies of homosexuality occurred in 1948, with the publication of Alfred Kinsey's *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. Kinsey's research brought the United States to the "center of the scientific study of sex," an area where it had lagged behind European countries for decades.[15] The study, based on interviews with over 10,000 white American men, made shocking claims about the prevalence of homosexuality, arguing that 37% of males had reached orgasm through same-sex activity after adolescence. The study became an instant best seller and eventually sold nearly a quarter of a million copies, provoking intense opposition along the way. This medical conception suggested that homosexuality was far more common than many Americans had suspected, and that social deviance represented a topic worthy of study and discussion.

The Cold War culture of the 1950s America further magnified these trends, and provided a formidable new threat to homosexual political organization. The widespread

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[13] John Lauritsen and David Thorstad, *The Early Homosexual Rights Movement (1864-1935)* (New York: Times Change Press, 1974), 8-9.
[14] D'Emilio, 18.
[15] Edsall, 265.

persecution of homosexuals in government positions—which historian David K. Johnson terms the "Lavender Scare," began at the same time as the Red Scare, and disrupted even more lives. In 1950, the State Department fired "one homosexual per day, more than double the rate for those suspected of political disloyalty."[16] This campaign to limit homosexual employment in government jobs continued into the 1970s.

The government initially conducted a quiet campaign from the end of World War II to 1950, which linked homosexuality with Communist subversion. In 1947, Secretary of State George C. Marshall instituted a Personnel Security Board, which established two standards of criteria to determine loyalty, one based on political persuasion and one based on personal character. This latter criterion was meant to eliminate those who might divulge state secrets due to susceptibility to blackmail, foolish talkativeness, or simply moral weakness, all traits associated with homosexuality. "One homosexual," officials warned, "can pollute a Government office."[17]

The government campaign operated under the radar for three years, but the tone changed significantly when the public became aware of the issue on February 28, 1950.[18] In the wake of Senator Joe McCarthy's famous speech about Communists in the State Department, representatives from the State Department appeared before a Senate committee, and the senators' questions soon turned to "security risks" within the State Department. One spokesperson, Deputy Undersecretary for Administration John Peurifoy, referred to 91 people of a "shady category" who had resigned after being questioned about their loyalty. When a senator pressed Peurifoy to clarify his language,

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[16] David K. Johnson, *The Lavender Scare: The Cold War Persecution of Gays and Lesbians in the Federal Government* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 2-4.
[17] D'Emilio, 42.
[18] Johnson, 15-19.

he eventually acknowledged that most who resigned were homosexuals. These revelations sparked a firestorm in Washington DC and across the country. Republican National Chairman Guy Gabrielson issued a statement calling Peurifoy's confession the "talk of Washington and of the Washington correspondents corps," and wrote further that homosexuals were "perhaps as dangerous as actual Communists."[19] Politicians recognized that campaigning against homosexuality would enliven a constituency even more than questions of Communism. A memorandum from President Harry Truman's top advisors argued that the "country is more concerned about the charges of homosexuals in the Government than about Communists."[20] One newspaper found that one fourth of McCarthy's mail dealt with Communist subversion, whereas the other three fourths related to sexual deviance.[21] Indeed, attacking homosexuals sometimes proved safer than attacking Communists. When Gabrielson spoke on "Meet the Press" in April of 1950, he declined to endorse the controversial claims of McCarthy, but had no compunctions against calling for purifying the State Department of homosexuals.[22]

During the Cold War, Communism and homosexuality were often linked in the public eye. This conflation arguably stemmed from the ideological underpinnings of the Cold War, which fostered a national consensus to define the proper behavior for American citizens. Politicians emphasized commitment to religious principles as the US girded up for battle against the atheistic Soviet Union. "Communism is secularism on the march," said J. Edgar Hoover, "It is a moral foe of Christianity."[23] A moralistic campaign

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[19] Jonathan Katz, *Gay American History: Lesbians and Gay Men in the U.S.A.* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1976), 92.

[20] Johnson, 2.

[21] Ibid., 19.

[22] Ibid., 24-25.

[23] Richard Gid Powers, *Not Without Honor: The History of American Anticommunism* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), 254.

against deviant sexuality fit the national zeitgeist. Furthermore, the consensus of the Cold War era promoted the "family as a bastion of safety in an insecure world" and emphasized child-rearing and family values.[24] Homosexuals, sterile and disruptive of gender norms, did not fit into this idealized image of American society. Other minority groups were also sometimes viewed as subversive, and one historian of the Cold War argues that the "American 'Other' had become politicized and increasingly identified with Communism."[25] Furthermore, emerging homosexual subcultures seemed reminiscent of what people imagined about Communism, complete with "meeting places, literature, cultural codes, and bonds of loyalty."[26] Both homosexuals and domestic Communists represented an internal threat to the nation's virility and strength.

Some media outlets and politicians questioned the frequent connection drawn between Communists and homosexuals. A Washington Post editorial stated that there is "no reason for supposing that person of homosexual bias is psychologically any more predisposed to the Communist ideology than a heterosexual person."[27] Nonetheless, the dominant impression was that Communists and homosexuals were cut from the same cloth. In an interview with the *New York Post*, Senate Minority Leader Kenneth Wherry claimed, "You can't hardly separate homosexuals from subversives. … Mind you, I don't say every homosexual is a subversive, and I don't say every subversive is a homosexual."[28] The journalist interviewing Wherry pressed the point, demanding to know whether the Senator meant to imply that "there are no homosexuals who might be

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[24] Elaine Tyler May, *Homeward Bound: American Families in the Cold War* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), xviii.

[25] Ellen Schrecker, *The Age of McCarthyism: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 13.

[26] Johnson, 33.

[27] Ibid., 31.

[28] Katz, 95.

Democrats or even Republicans?" "I don't say that by any means," replied the Senator, "but this whole thing is tied together."

In the city of Los Angeles, the historical trends of urbanization, scientific study of homosexuality, and political anti-Communism were especially prominent. The city was relatively culturally progressive and sexually uninhibited, and some performances in theaters and bars experimented with homosexual or gender-variant expression. These artistic expressions were politicized during the 1930s when politicians launched highly visible campaigns against the perceived immorality of nightclubs, and accused their political opponents of being Communists, friendly to perversity, or both. This politicization of homosexuality and its supposed connections to Communism did not represent a "sideshow of Angeleno public life," but was instead intimately connected to the "heart of the city's political life."[29]   After World War II, arrests for vagrancy and public lewdness spiked dramatically, many of which likely targeted same-sex activity as homosexuals increasingly moved to large cities. Psychologists frequently worked with law enforcement agencies to persecute homosexuals. In December 1949, for instance, the state government planned a "thousand-bed maximum-security hospital for sexual psychopaths and the criminally insane."[30] Nonetheless, despite the heightened tensions and discriminatory attitudes of Los Angeles, homosexual organization developed there in the early 1950s, succeeding where other American organizations designed to aid homosexuals often petered out after a few months with only a handful of members.

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[29] Hurewitz, 117.
[30] Ibid., 236.

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Section 2

Harry Hay and The Fifth Order

Harry Hay's idea of the Mattachine began in 1948, and ended five years later when he resigned from the Foundation he had labored to create. He envisioned a vast secret revolutionary vanguard of 250,000 homosexuals with himself and the Fifth Order at the head.[31] He eventually ceded control to a democratic society, a "bunch of diversified individualists going nowhere," which he perceived as devoid of militancy and revolutionary fervor.[32]

Harry Hay's experience in the American Communist Party (CPUSA) from 1934-1951 strongly shaped his concept of a homosexual rights organization centered on the groundbreaking theory of the homosexual as an oppressed cultural minority.[33] Hay first joined the Party during the era of the Popular Front, which emphasized a politics of coalition, focused on cultural development and appeal to racial minorities. At the time the CPUSA expressed hostility towards homosexuality, and homosexuals were frequently expulsed from the Party.[34] Soon after joining the Party, Hay told Party leaders about his sexuality, and they "counseled him to repress it," which encouraged him to marry in 1938.[35] Hay "perfected the mask of a heterosexual" and remained distant from the gay world for years.[36]

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[31] Diagram [ca. 1950], box 1, folder 23, Mattachine Society Project Collection, ONE National Gay and Lesbian Archives, Los Angeles, CA (hereafter cited as MSPC).

[32] Harry Hay, "Notes For Reply" [ca. March 12, 1953], box 1, folder 10, MSPC.

[33] Hay, *Radically Gay*, 37-40.

[34] Hurewitz, 236.

[35] D'Emilio, 59.

[36] Timmons, 115.

Hay studied Marxist theory, and gained a reputation as a rigorous scholar.[37] Hay was especially intrigued by Josef Stalin's theory of the minority, which defined a "nation" as a group with its own "language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture."[38] Furthermore, Hay was intrigued by the "race-nation" framework that applied Stalin's theory of the nation to the position of black Americans. The Stalinist model conceptualized the African-American minority as a distinct population with the "right to secede and establish an independent" form of government.[39] Hay believed that homosexuals too represented a distinct cultural minority, and he applied the analogy to homosexuals. This intellectual feat defined the "fundamental Party legacy" of the Mattachine Society, and most clearly represented its Communist background.[40]

Although Hay used Marxist theory to develop his political plan of action, this intellectual creativity did not align with contemporary interpretations of Marxist theory. The Communist Party held a formal policy against homosexuality during the Cold War.[41] However, according to D'Emilio, Hay did not exhibit the "dogmatism that often characterized American Communist thought," and he developed his own philosophy based on Communist principles, although this threatened his ability to work for the Party.[42]

Hay first came up with the idea for the Mattachine in the summer of 1948, at a party at the University of Southern California. The discussion turned to Kinsey's recent

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[37] Timmons, 119.
[38] Ibid., 40-42.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Hurewitz, 255.
[41] Ibid., 17.
[42] D'Emilio, 64.

report, and its claims about the prevalence of homosexual experience in the population.[43] Harry Hay had himself been interviewed for the Kinsey study.[44] Earlier that day, Hay attended a campaign event for Henry A. Wallace, the Progressive Party nominee for the US presidency earlier that day, where he was inspired by the prospect of "major political change" in the US.[45] Hay suggested that he and his friends politically mobilize the substantial population described in Kinsey's report. The group would consist of bachelors working to gain influence in the Progressive Party, potentially placing a plank on the platform to protect sexual privacy. When the sun rose the next day, however, the other men quickly dismissed Hay's fanciful plans for the political organization of homosexuals. None would join Hay for years to come.

Hay worked extensively to garner support his plan. He approached progressive leaders and professionals, but they recommended that he start a discussion group for homosexuals before seeking their assistance. When he approached "progressive-minded gays," they gave the opposite response, demanding that he obtain the sponsorship of respected community figures before they would join the organization.[46] Undaunted, Hay developed his theory of the homosexual minority, and authored a plan of action in the summer of 1950. At the time, Hay's marriage was failing, and he felt a rekindled sense of community with left-wing homosexuals after years of abstinence, which led him to write a prospectus based on a "distinctly leftist formulation."[47] The document described the

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[43] Timmons, 134.
[44] Hay, *Radically Gay*, 37-40.
[45] Timmons, 133.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Hurewitz, 245-248.

organizational skeleton of a "service and welfare organization devoted to the protection and improvement of Society's Androgynous Minority."[48]

Hay's written plan of homosexual organization demonstrated his intellectual debt to Communism. From its first statement, Hay's manifesto sounded a warning call against "encroaching American Fascism," which—like other forms of fascism—sought to "bend unorganized and unpopular minorities into isolated fragments of social and emotional instability."[49] At the time, many in the CPUSA believed that the US, like Germany before it, was headed towards a fascist political system.[50] Hay further noted that individuals faced the wrath of the American government not only for being a homosexual, but also for merely associating with homosexuals, accusations reminiscent of the conflation of fellow travelers with Communists. His manifesto suggested an affinity between Communists and the Androgynous Minority, both victims of a system of "thought control and political regimentation."[51] Hay viewed U.S. laws as "archaic," and he sought protection in the broader scope of international law, hailing as models the Atlantic Charter and the United Nations Charter for their protection of minorities.[52] Furthermore, the organization's members would be anonymous, a feat Hay accomplished by signing his name Eann MacDonald. This underground model mirrored contemporary Communist organization in the US, as the Party decided to move underground in 1947, and consigned a "sector of the Party apparatus to a clandestine existence" in the coming years.[53] The

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[48] Harry Hay, July 9, 1950, "Preliminary Concepts for the International Bachelors Fraternal Orders for Peace and Social Dignity," box 1, folder 21, MSPC.
[49] Ibid.
[50] D'Emilio, 63.
[51] Hay, "Preliminary Concepts," MSPC.
[52] Timmons, 136.
[53] David Caute, *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower,* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1978), 212.

organization consisted of multiple cells, with only the uppermost level aware of all the cells' existence, a measure designed to prevent security breaches.

In July 1950, Hay finally gained his first recruit when he started a relationship with Rudi Gernreich, a fashion designer who had emigrated from Vienna. The two men tried to appeal specifically to left-wing homosexuals, a tactic that met with little success. Hay and Gernreich canvassed beaches frequented by homosexuals, asking volunteers to sign a Communist statement against the Korean War. They asked responsive individuals if they would be willing to join a discussion group focusing on Kinsey's research on sexuality. Hundreds signed the statement, but nobody would join the organization. "They were willing enough to designate themselves Peaceniks," Hay later recalled, "but were *not* willing to commit themselves to participating in easily disguised semipublic forums."[54] Gernreich also tried to interest his crowd of "socially conscious audiences and avant-garde artists," but none dared risking their careers.[55]

The political climate of 1950 doubtlessly contributed to individuals' reluctance to associate themselves with a homosexual organization. Peurifoy had made his startling revelation about homosexuals in the State Department that February, and in June, the Senate devoted an investigation to homosexuals in the government.[56] President Eisenhower passed Executive Order 10450, which "equated homosexuality with sexual perversion" and forbade the federal government from employing homosexuals.[57] Public distaste for homosexuals had never been so visible and virulent in the US.

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[54] Timmons, 143.
[55] Ibid.
[56] D'Emilio, 42.
[57] White, 15.

After months of recruitment without many gains, Hay finally assembled five discussion group participants in November 1950. Of the original five members, Harry Hay, Bob Hull, and Chuck Rowland had all been members of the Communist Party, and Rudi Gernreich also had leftist sensibilities.[58] The group grew slowly, and the few participants they attracted did not remain long. "We kept meeting every other Thursday for weeks and weeks," Chuck Rowland remembered, "without getting anyone else to attend."[59]

The organization gained its sixth and seventh members in April 1951. These two men—Konrad Stevens and James Gruber—signaled an important development in the political ideology of the organization. Less politically orientated than the mostly leftist founders, Stevens and Gruber disliked the "communist jargon" of the organization, even though they supported its mission of acceptance for homosexuals.[60] These two members encouraged the original founders to compromise their ideology, and to "frame their ideas in language accessible to non-Marxists."[61] Whereas Hay had previously targeted only left-wing constituents, the organization now began to appeal to a broader spectrum of political opinion. That spring, the group first adopted the Mattachine name.[62]

During the autumn of 1951, the discussion groups promoted Hay's singular thesis of homosexuals as an oppressed minority, and the consequent necessity of developing a new ethic for homosexuals. The discussion group leaders argued that homosexuals fundamentally differed from heterosexuals. Heterosexuals had the "primate

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[58] Vern L. Bullough, ed., *Before Stonewall: Activists for Gay and Lesbian Rights in Historical Context* (New York: Harrington Park Press, 2002), 78.

[59] Chuck Rowland, April 11, 1953, "Opening Talk: California State Constitutional Convention of the Mattachine Society," box 2, folder 20, Donald Stewart Lucas Papers, Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Historical Society, San Francisco, CA (hereafter cited as Lucas Papers).

[60] D'Emilio, 66.

[61] Ibid., 67.

[62] Katz, 412.

responsibility" to raise a family which defined their ethics and morality, whereas homosexuals—who have no such biological drive—found "assimilation inconvenient, unnecessary, or impossible," and therefore lacked a guiding sense of ethics.[63] The Cold War consensus and its "almost mythic properties" of procreation and family, which defined a healthy American community, proved isolating for American homosexuals.[64] Hay expressed similar emotions himself when writing about his married life and fatherhood: "I know a little of what that alien world can do to a leper exposed."[65] Hay argued that the homosexual community needed to come together and define its own ethics.

Considering the ideological sway of the Cold War consensus, Hay's plans required American homosexuals to rethink their perception of society. Hay intended the discussion groups to alter the "consciousness of participants," and to encourage them to self-identify as "members of a minority group with a need to act collectively."[66] He wanted the Mattachine to aid in this endeavor, by mobilizing a "large gay constituency" which would develop into a "cohesive force capable of militancy."[67] Proponents of this minority thesis argued that society excluded homosexuals from the dominant culture, and so the "oppressed people" needed to organize, a task that could not be accomplished "without a fight."[68]

Throughout 1950 and 1951, Hay exerted more influence than any other individual on the ideology of the Mattachine Society. Hay required the Fifth Order to function by

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[63] "Sense of Value," September 6, 1951, box 1, folder 11, MSPC.
[64] May, 121.
[65] Harry Hay to "Mac," October 22, 1952, box 1, folder 10, MSPC.
[66] D'Emilio, 68.
[67] Ibid., 63.
[68] Rowland, "Opening Talk," MSPC.

unanimous consent, which sometimes meant that he held out until others gave in to his will, regardless of their own beliefs.[69] Nonetheless, the consensus of the Fifth Order began to splinter. Dale Jennings, who grew increasingly impatient with Harry Hay, later said that Hay used a "ceaseless stream of gray logic" to get his way during meetings.[70]

Hay took his leadership role in the organization increasingly seriously. In the fall of 1951, he divorced his wife and quit the Communist Party. He believed his work in the Mattachine contradicted the anti-homosexual stance of the CPUSA, and put both organizations at risk. He told Party leaders about the Mattachine and recommended his own expulsion, but—as he recalled—"in honor of my eighteen years as a member and ten years as a teacher and cultural innovator [they] dropped me as 'a security risk' but as a lifelong friend of the people."[71] After Hay left the CPUSA, Party members and close friends shunned Harry Hay, leaving him distraught.[72] Freed from familial and political commitments, Hay devoted himself to the Mattachine.

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[69] Timmons, 152-3.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Katz, 413.
[72] Timmons, 161.

Section 3

Dale Jennings and The Mattachine Foundation

In 1952, a series of events sparked a process of significant growth for the Mattachine. The momentum shifted the organization from the ideology espoused by Harry Hay, and towards a different vision espoused by Dale Jennings. These events included (1) Jennings' arrest in February 1952 and his defense that summer, (2) the Fifth Order's subsequent attempts to incorporate the Mattachine Foundation and gain professional allies, and (3) the creation of *ONE Magazine*. Each of these initiatives expanded the Mattachine, but also siphoned power from Hay and his allies, and fundamentally redirected the organization. These developments encouraged participation from individuals who disagreed with Hay's political views and aims for the Mattachine Society. These divisions led to internal disarray within the Mattachine Society, and ultimately aided the 1953 transfer of leadership.

Like many of the men first involved in the Mattachine, Dale Jennings served in the military during World War II. Prior to the war, he moved in artistic circles, and even established a traveling theater company, for which he wrote much of the material.[73] Jennings enlisted in political causes before joining the Mattachine, and actively defended the civil rights of Japanese Americans.[74] His political views were unpredictable, and he made several alliances and enemies during the Mattachine's early years, at various times expressing sympathy and anger towards both Communists and conservatives. Jennings vociferously opposed Hay's thesis of the homosexual minority, and one biography describes him as a "steadfast libertarian" who "frequently stood counter to the culture-

[73] Bullough, 83-84.
[74] D'Emilio, 62.

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forming 'minoritizing' tendencies" of the early Mattachine.[75] As he gained influence

within the organization, both as the star of the 1952 trial and one of the founders of *ONE*

Magazine, he challenged Hay's vision of the Mattachine.

Dale Jennings' increased influence in the Mattachine Society began with his

arrest in February 1952. According to an account Jennings published later, a man began

to tail him after he used a public restroom.[76] The man followed Jennings to his home,

despite Jennings' repeated discouragement, and—once inside—finally revealed himself

as a police officer and arrested Jennings. Hay bailed Jennings out of jail the next

morning, and pressed him to plead innocence. "We'll say you are homosexual but neither

lewd nor dissolute," said Hay, "And that cop is lying."[77]

The founders discussed the matter the same day and agreed to take on the case.

This decision reflected genuine consensus among the Fifth Order. James Gruber later

described the decision as a "rallying point" without "much arm-twisting at all," and said,

"Inasmuch as I was often a dissenter, I was aware that any of the dissenters would have

spoken up at that point."[78] The group hired a lawyer who had previously defended a

group of young Mexican-Americans accused of murder, a case that inspired leftist

communities in California to rally against police oppression.[79] The similarities between

the cases bolstered the Mattachine's argument that minorities shared a common cause,

and that the oppression of one minority threatened all minorities, as well as citizens in

general.

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[75] Bullough, 84.
[76] Dale Jennings, "To Be Accused, Is To Be Guilty," *ONE Magazine*, January 1953, 11.
[77] Timmons, 164.
[78] Ibid., 165.
[79] Hurewitz, 261.

The Citizens Committee to Outlaw Entrapment (CCOE), a front organization established by the Mattachine, authored and distributed pamphlets about the Dale Jennings case in Los Angeles areas that were frequented by gay men.[80] The documents' condemnation of police brutality was scarcely accomodationist, but the CCOE propaganda differed significantly from the "International Bachelors" blueprint in its depiction of US law. The documents praised the historical tradition of American freedoms. "Our eyes [are] fixed firmly on the day," read one pamphlet, "when we will have restored to us the simple rights and privileges traditionally accorded to American Citizens generally."[81] C. Todd White, who studied Dale Jennings more closely than the other historians, describes the CCOE propaganda as a "libertarian-based code of ethics."[82] By emphasizing constitutionality and the rule of law, the CCOE argued that their activities were not subversive, but rather aligned with the American political tradition. The CCOE received numerous donations from individuals who wanted to see Jennings succeed.[83]

Jennings acknowledged that he was a homosexual in his pioneering defense, but nonetheless claimed that he was not guilty of any crime, and that the policeman had illegally practiced entrapment. The jury voted 11-1 to acquit Jennings and the district attorney eventually dismissed the case. The CCOE declared the results a "GREAT VICTORY," and officially acknowledged its sponsor, the Mattachine Foundation.[84] The local press did not cover the case, though the CCOE distributed a press release, but the

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[80] D'Emilio, 70.
[81] CCOE Press release [ca. 1952], box 1, folder 14, MSPC.
[82] White, 26.
[83] D'Emilio, 70.
[84] "An Open Letter to Friends of the Citizens Committee to Outlaw Entrapment" [ca. 1952], box 1, folder 14, MSPC.

CCOE propaganda raised awareness of the Mattachine's activities and increased its ranks. One Mattachine remembered the excitement in Los Angeles. "Have you heard about the guy here who has fought the police and won?" homosexuals asked each other. "Well he has, and there's an organization about it."[85] This legal victory suggested that homosexuals might obtain the protection of the courts, and presented new possibilities for those who wanted to live within the law and respect its bounds.

The ostensible establishment of the Mattachine Foundation allowed the Mattachine to adopt a more public face and engage with professionals and educators more openly. In the aftermath of the Jennings trial, the founders drew up the incorporation papers to establish the Foundation, though papers were not officially filed for several months.[86] This legal technicality did not stop the founders from sending out a promotional letter, signed by three female relatives of the Fifth Order: Mrs. D. T. Campbell, Romayne Cox, and Mrs. Henry Hay. The Foundation's letter established a non-confrontational tone that distinguished it from both the "Bachelors for Wallace" prospectus and the CCOE propaganda. The letter extensively complimented US society and its just treatment of minorities, and expressed confidence that Americans would "welcome the opportunity to rectify a long-overlooked injustice."[87] The Foundation announced its intention to promote the "integration" and "development of social and moral responsibility" of homosexuals, and to gather together those who shared these

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[85] Timmons, 170.
[86] "Minutes of General Convention of Mattachine Society," May 23-24, 1953, box 2, folder 21, Lucas Papers.
[87] Mattachine Foundation to "Dear Friend," June 12, 1952, box 1, folder 12, MSPC.

goals.[88] The Foundation's apparent legitimacy appeased homosexuals who were worried about joining an illegal organization.[89]

The Foundation appealed to prominent members of the society in order to "advance the Foundation's value in the eyes of the community."[90] The Administrative Council, which purportedly consisted of both homosexuals and heterosexual professionals, directed the activities of the Mattachine Foundation. Some professionals did respond to the Foundation's promotional letter with some interest. The Foundation's letter claimed that its Administrative Council held representatives from "law, labor, science, medicine, education, [and] the ministry."[91] But in actuality it originally consisted only of the three female directors and the seven original founders.[92] Few professionals ever joined the Foundation, but those who did included Dr. Richard H. Gwartney, who studied psychosomatic medicine, and Universalist minister Wallace de Ortega Maxey. These individuals also helped to transform the ideology and organization of the Mattachine in 1953, and usually agreed with those who wanted a democratic society instead of a secret organization or a separate culture.

The creation of *ONE Magazine* further shifted the political ideology of the movement. Contemporaries often confused the magazine with the Mattachine Society, thanks to the overlap in leadership and constituents. However, the founders of *ONE Magazine* consciously worked to distinguish the new publication from the Mattachine. The leaders of the new organization resisted the influence of the Mattachine Foundation,

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[88] Mattachine Foundation to "Dear Friend," June 12, 1952, MSPC.
[89] D'Emilio, 73.
[90] "Minutes of the Meeting of the Administrative Council of the Mattachine Foundation," September 16, 1952, box 1, folder 15, MSPC.
[91] Mattachine Foundation to "Dear Friend," June 12, 1952, MSPC.
[92] "By-Laws of the Mattachine Foundation, Inc." July 29, 1952, box 1, folder 7, MSPC.

and rejected a $100 donation, saying, "All gifts must come without stipulations or conditions."[93] D'Emilio barely addresses this aspect of *ONE Magazine*, but the creation of the magazine in fact reflected not only the impressive growth of homosexual organization in Los Angeles, but also the breakdown of consensus on Hay's thesis of a unified and militant homosexual minority. W. Dorr Legg, who hosted the discussion group that originally came up with the idea for *ONE Magazine* and served as the business manager throughout the magazine's duration, later expressed fury that historians perceived the publication as an "outgrowth of Mattachine," and said *ONE Magazine* was "nothing of the kind…totally spontaneous."[94]

Several of the founders of *ONE Magazine* had worked in the Mattachine, but were "sidelined by Hay's Marxist leadership style," because they opposed the Communist inclinations of the Mattachine and Hay's idea of the homosexual minority.[95] Legg later criticized Hay and his allies, and their "insane concept that they were going to marry Marxism and homosexuality."[96] W. Dorr Legg joined the Mattachine in 1952, whereupon he was later invited to join the Fifth Order, and he had previously worked with a small interracial organization of homosexuals known as the Knights of the Clock.[97] He was not a leftist, however, and much of his activism centered on a "libertarian distrust of government" (he would eventually be a founding member of the Log Cabin Republicans).[98] The first editorial board of *ONE Magazine* consisted of Dale Jennings, Martin Block, and Don Slater. According to one historian, Block—though a leftist—

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[93] White, 34.
[94] Ibid., 30.
[95] Sears, 167.
[96] Ibid., 150-1.
[97] Bullough, 98.
[98] Ibid., 95.

believed that the "communist way was a betrayal of all the revolutionary ideals," and Slater was a "quick-tempered individualist who stressed the right of sexual privacy."[99] Slater disliked the discussion groups of the Mattachine but considered a publication worthwhile.[100] Like Legg, he was a Republican at the time.[101] The founders of *ONE Magazine* were significantly more conservative than Harry Hay, or allies such as Chuck Rowland and Bob Hull, and their publication project was in part inspired by their rejection of Hay's political ideology and minority thesis. However, the ideological polarization of the Mattachine movement did not neatly divide its members on all controversies. Legg supported the minority thesis, a debate that pitted the "Culturalists" such as Hay, Legg and Rowland against the "Libertarians" Slater and Jennings.[102]

In the third issue of *ONE Magazine*, Dale Jennings offered an extensive critique of Hay's minority thesis. The publication encouraged dissent, and Chuck Rowland and Reverend Maxey both addressed the issue in *ONE Magazine*'s pages over the next few months, respectively arguing for and against the idea of the homosexual minority. Writing under a pseudonym, Jennings termed homosexuality "today's great irrelevancy."[103] He described the goals of the Mattachine Foundation: "to press for equal rights," and "to formulate an 'ethic' by which homosexuals may live."[104] He endorsed the first goal, but mocked the latter. Such an ethic, he wrote, would be "unnecessary if not antagonistic to their [homosexuals] integration into society."[105] He claimed that those who engaged in same-sex relations were too diverse to fit into one category, and that

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[99] Sears, 166-168.
[100] White, 31.
[101] Jim Kepner, *Rough News, Daring Views: 1950s' Pioneer Gay Press Journalism* (New York: Routledge, 1997), xvi.
[102] White, 40.
[103] Dale Jennings, "Homosexuals Are Not People," *ONE Magazine*, March 1953, 4.
[104] Ibid., 2.
[105] Ibid.

sexuality itself could not be categorized into homosexual and heterosexual. Given this reality, he argued, the Mattachine could not invent or impose an ethic, for an ethic was created over time and represented the "folkway of a people, the "particular rules for dealing with their particular problems."[106] To pursue a unique ethic for homosexuals, he warned, led to isolation rather than integration, supported society's stigmatization of homosexuality, and responded to the "common accusation, 'You're queer,' with the weak euphemism, 'No, I'm special.'"[107]

Hay found his influence waning as the Mattachine gained traction over the course of 1952 through the Jennings trial, the ostensible incorporation of the Foundation, and the creation of *ONE Magazine*. Rudi ended his relationship with Hay and grew distant, whereas Jennings began to disagree with Hay constantly.[108] In July 1952, Hay addressed rising criticisms of his leadership. "I have relied on…the undemocratic characteristics of my own personality," he confessed at a Fifth Order meeting, "to impose by overbearing blasts of rhetoric and by emotional dynamics those tenets which I felt to be important."[109] These tensions grew over the course of 1952, and even before the Fifth Order and Mattachine Foundation dissolved in 1953, Hay's position of leadership was compromised. In February 1953, a Los Angeles newspaper described Hay as a Communist teacher, and the Fifth Order together agreed that Hay must no longer speak for the Mattachine, and only write under a pseudonym.[110] The Administrative Council issued a statement on politics and the Mattachine Foundation, saying that the

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[106] Jennings, "Homosexuals Are Not People," 4.
[107] Ibid., 2.
[108] Timmons, 168-9.
[109] Harry Hay, "Untitled," July 1952, quoted in Hay, *Radically Gay*, 88-89.
[110] Timmons, 174.

"Foundation must never be identified with any "ism"—political, religious, or otherwise,"

and that the organization is a wholly non-partisan one.[111]

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[111] "Official Statement of Policy on Political Questions and Related Matters," February 1953, box 1, folder 16, MSPC.

Section 4

Grassroots Growth

The increased prominence of the Mattachine Society resulted in grassroots growth that challenged Hay's leadership. The "original plan of a tight-knit, secret organization" began to unravel as "groups sprang up in Whittier, Laguna, Capistrano, San Diego, Bakersfield, Fresno, Monterey, and the San Francisco Bay Area."[112] "We moved into a broad sunlit upland filled with whole legions of eager gays," Rowland later said while reflecting on the Mattachine's growth after the Jennings trial, "No combination of people in our limited leadership could handle them."[113] The group diversified considerably in political orientation since the founders were unable to effectively regulate the membership by guiding the discussion groups. The organization, Hay believed, was "growing with the wrong people."[114] The new members were predominantly middle-class, and their rapid entry into the organization reflected a broader trend in the 1950s. One historian describes this trend as the "rise of a visible middle-class homosexual identity after World War Two," filled disproportionately with "college educated professionals and white-collar workers."[115] These new members "subverted the effort to build a consensus" because they were attracted to the organization mainly because of their sexual preference as opposed to common beliefs and values.[116]

Marilyn Rieger and Ken Burns provide two examples of this shift in the Mattachine's membership composition. Both joined the organization around the

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[112] Timmons, 170-171.
[113] D'Emilio, 71.
[114] Timmons, 176.
[115] Craig M. Loftin, "Unacceptable Mannerisms: Gender Anxieties, Homosexual Activism and Swish in the United States, 1945-1965," *Journal of Social History* 40, no. 3 (Spring 2007): 578.
[116] D'Emilio, 75.

beginning of 1953, but their initial activities do not immediately suggest the leadership roles they held in the May 1953 reconstitution of the Mattachine Society. During one discussion group meeting in February, Burns read one of the Foundation's pamphlets on entrapment: "What To Do In Case of Arrest" out loud for the group.[117] Marilyn Rieger first came into contact with the leadership when Mrs. Harry Hay (or a member of the Fifth Order using her name) wrote to thank her for the detailed notes on a discussion group meeting, and praised them as "about the finest we have ever received."[118] The Foundation offered to place Rieger on the mailing list, and Rieger gladly accepted, saying "I hope I will be called upon again to perform any service I can for the Foundation."[119] Though Burns and Rieger assumed some degree of leadership in February 1953, they did not yet register opposition to the prevailing order.

In Los Angeles, the discussion groups began to stratify along class divisions. The discussion groups inspired specific types of membership, including "professionals," "working class," "Hollywood-ish (actors, writers, etc.)," and "some ordinary people."[120] Furthermore, the wealthier groups seemed especially insistent on challenging the Mattachine leadership. "They just seemed to be running everything and they were very wealthy," one leftist member later recalled of one especially conservative discussion group, "the Laguna Beach crowd called us Communists and they didn't want that; they wanted an open society."[121] The class divisions in the Mattachine, and the dissent from groups like Laguna Beach, represented an impediment to the development of a unified homosexual minority, and to the secretive nature of the organization.

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[117] "Subject: Entrapment," February 5, 1953, box 1, folder 5, Lucas Papers.
[118] Mrs. Harry Hay to Marilyn Rieger, February 23, 1953, box 1, folder 3, Lucas Papers.
[119] Marilyn Rieger to Mrs. Harry Hay, February 26, 1953, box 1, folder 3, Lucas Papers.
[120] Chuck Rowland to Gerard Brissette, March 7, 1953, page 2, box 1, folder 9, MSPC.
[121] Sears, 172.

According to Chuck Rowland, the Fifth Order developed a plan of expansion, but these preparations proved insufficient, for the "situation is exhilaratingly dynamic…and carefully thought-out concepts of two years ago seem to have virtually no relation to the demands of the present."[122] The new Mattachine members contradicted the original plans for the organization. The growing membership in the discussion groups threatened the secret and secure structure of the Mattachine, and the speedy development rendered the Administrative Council of the Foundation "unable to keep up with them from one week to the next," as the groups organized "almost without assistance from us."[123] Whereas the Mattachine had previously succeeded in communicating certain ideas about group identity and the status of the homosexual minority, the rising autonomy of the groups made it difficult for the Founders to maintain control.

This rapid grassroots development in Los Angeles, and its impact on the political ideology of the organization, posed serious implications for the development of leadership in Northern California. Overwhelmed with requests for a local discussion group in San Francisco, yet overcome with work in Los Angeles, Chuck Rowland of the Fifth Order tried to identify potential leadership in Northern California, someone who could manage discussion groups and serve as a political ally as the organization moved towards ideological polarization.

Chuck Rowland found such an ally in Gerard S. Brissette, a chemistry lab technician with a history of pacifism, art, and academics. In late February, Brissette wrote the Mattachine Foundation requesting brochures to assist him in starting his own discussion group. Chuck Rowland explained that the Foundation could not provide

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[122] Rowland to Brissette, March 7, 1953, MSPC.
[123] Chuck Rowland to Guy Rousseau, March 20, 1953, box 1, folder 9, MSPC.

leadership for the next few months, as the Mattachine suffered from a "lack of competent people," a "lack of money," and a legal arm that drained the Foundation's resources.[124] Rowland added that he knew few homosexuals who could handle organization, and commented on the difficult task of "trying to inject the concepts of minority cohesion within the framework of a dominant and expressive majority."[125] Rowland needed an individual who grasped the original intention of the Mattachine, and could work to alter the thinking of discussion group participants. Brissette seemed a likely candidate for leadership in Northern California, and Rowland invited Brissette to Los Angeles to meet the Fifth Order.

Brissette immediately organized three discussion groups in Berkeley, Oakland, and San Francisco upon returning to Northern California, but the organizational challenges faced by the Fifth Order in Los Angeles also emerged in San Francisco. The discussion group participants challenged the structure and ideology of the organization. Hal Call joined one of the Brissette discussion groups soon after its inception. A World War II veteran who worked very successfully as a newspaper publisher until August 1952, Hal Call was arrested in Chicago for illicit sexuality, whereupon he lost his job and moved to San Francisco.[126] When Call heard about the Mattachine, he was thrilled by the notion of a "group of homosexual people that were banding together to try to get society to erase the stigma against homosexuality."[127] However, Call, a staunch anticommunist, also opposed the Mattachine's secretive organization. "We were learning that it was a secret society," he later remembered, "we had to get it in some format where we could do

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[124] Chuck Rowland to Gerard Brissette, February 23, 1953, box 1, folder 9, MSPC.
[125] Ibid., 2.
[126] Sears, 140-141.
[127] Ibid., 147.

it in a more public way and not be so terrorized by the fact that we were homosexuals secretly meeting together or had a secretive group lording over us."[128] In Laguna Beach, San Francisco, and elsewhere, the discussion groups grew increasingly dissatisfied with the yoke of the Foundation's leadership, and called for reorganization to elect their own leaders.

On March 11, 1953, Chuck Rowland wrote to Harry Hay and expressed his grave concern about the direction of the organization. If the situation was not addressed, he warned, "We will lose our leadership."[129] Rowland pointed out that calls for reorganization were pouring in from both the heterosexual professionals on the Foundation and the mostly gay participants in the discussion groups of the Society, despite the lack of lines of communication between the two groups. Dr. Gwartney of the Administrative Council said he "could not possibly join a 'secret' organization," but he would "join an organization of individuals (heterosexual as well as homosexual) concerned with the problems of sexual deviation."[130] Gay members of the society had similar views. This dissent concerned Rowland because the opposition did not stem from discontented leftists, but instead the "cry of reorganization is raised in our Jr. Chamber of Commerce Laguna Group (the exact type of group the secrecy of the Society was designed to protect)."[131] Given the political climate, the challenge from the right wing represented a significant issue. The founders were once "pioneers in a hostile society," Rowland claimed, but now a "qualitatively new situation" had arisen.[132] In order to retain leadership, Rowland proposed that the Fifth Order abandon the secret society and invite

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[128] Sears, 150.
[129] Chuck Rowland to Harry Hay, March 11, 1953, box 1, folder 10, MSPC.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Ibid.
[132] Ibid.

the rank-and-file to a public convention. However, Hay did not believe the time was right, and resisted Rowland's advice.[133] Chuck Rowland shared more political beliefs with Hay than most other members of the Fifth Order, and Hay seemed alone as even his closest ally supported a democratic reorganization.

Only one day after Rowland wrote Hay to express his concern, the significant pressures mounting against the Mattachine's structure erupted when *Los Angeles Mirror* columnist Paul V. Coates wrote an article titled "Well, Medium and RARE." He referred to questionnaires about entrapment that the Mattachine sent in 1952 to political candidates for a local election. This "strange new pressure group," Coates wrote, claimed it could command the "support of 150,000 to 200,000 homosexuals in this area."[134] Furthermore, Coates found that no records of a corporation called the Mattachine Foundation actually existed. Coates interviewed Mrs. Harry Hay, but she spoke vaguely and somewhat erroneously, saying, "We started three years ago. Then we incorporated. Now we're building groups in every community. There are thousands of members."[135] Coates was unable to locate the treasurer of the organization, and he suggested that the lack of official records or accessible leadership might be a sign of subversive intent. He speculated that the Mattachine could be a "group of responsible citizens," but on a darker note suggested that homosexuals might respond to society's oppression by mobilizing.[136] He warned that a "well-trained subversive" could manipulate this population into "dangerous political weapons."[137] Coates also wrote that the Mattachine's lawyer had been an unfriendly witness before HUAC. Despite this incendiary rhetoric, Coates

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[133] Timmons, 176.
[134] Paul V. Coates, March 18, 1953, "Well, Medium and RARE," box 1, folder 3, Lucas Papers.
[135] Ibid.
[136] Ibid.
[137] Ibid.

concluded that "to damn this organization, before its aims and directions are more clearly established would be vicious and irresponsible."[138]

Harry Hay immediately recognized the threat posed by the Coates column, which publicly voiced the concerns that had been raised by discussion group participants and heterosexual professionals for the past few weeks. The Coates column threatened to further exacerbate the divisions about the proper course of the homosexual minority, and further shrink support for his notion of collective militancy. Hay composed a response to Coates' column, in which he criticized the Mattachine Foundation's response to his minority thesis. Hay noted that several on the board "don't give a shit" about "integration of our minority <u>as a group</u>."[139] "This move isn't radical, it's betrayal," he continued, "Mattachine is nothing if it isn't Brotherhood of the spirit. You can't build a democratic society on a bunch of diversified 'individualists' going nowhere."[140] Hay recognized that the "leaps and bounds" of the organization stemmed partly from the influx of a "status-quo crowd," and he later said the Coates column inspired the "real dissension…between the founders and the middle-class crowd."[141] Hay believed that a democratic reorganization contradicted the revolutionary purpose of the Mattachine Society.

New leaders of the organization emerged in the response to the controversy. Marilyn Rieger, disturbed by the allegations, embarked on a personal mission to prove Coates wrong, and—if his account held any accuracy—to correct the situation. Rieger wrote Coates the day after the column's publication. She quickly and unambiguously defended the Mattachine Foundation, and said she had attended twenty-five Mattachine

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[138] Coates, "Well, Medium, and RARE," Lucas Papers.
[139] Hay, "Notes for Reply," MSPC.
[140] Ibid.
[141] Katz, 417.

meetings, and that "there is no doubt in my mind of the sincerity of purpose, not only of the Mattachine Foundation, Inc., but of every individual attending a discussion group meeting."[142] There is "no political aim of the Mattachine Foundation," she insisted, "IT IS DEFINITELY AND ABSOLUTELY NON-PARTISAN." She claimed that Communism had no place in the Mattachine, and that the organization focused only on issues of homosexuality.

Rieger expressed conviction about the Mattachine's virtues in her letter to Coates, but after her weekly Mattachine discussion group, she continued to investigate the situation. The discussion group decided to jettison the proposed agenda for the week and discuss the Coates article instead. Members of the group expressed concerns about the lack of an official corporation, as well as Coates' claims that HUAC had cited the Mattachine's lawyer as an unfriendly witness. Worried that "any adverse publicity would be detrimental to the aims and purposes of the Foundation," the majority of discussion group participants demanded that Coates' questions be answered adequately for the benefit of the discussion groups and the public.[143] A minority of participants "were not quite as alarmed as the others seemed to be," and praised Coates for his conclusion advising against premature judgment of the organization.[144] The group asked Rieger to investigate Coates' claims, and she accordingly wrote the Division of Corporations and the Los Angeles Bar Association. She also contacted the Foundation directly. She demanded clarification, in order "to insure that the true aims and purposes of the Foundation are for the unification and education of the homosexual and that it is not

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[142] Marilyn P. Rieger to Paul V. Coates, March 13, 1953, box 1, folder 3, Lucas Papers.
[143] Marilyn Rieger, March 20, 1953, "Notes of Discussion Group Meeting," box 1, folder 3, Lucas Papers.
[144] Ibid.

subterfuge."[145] "In order to continue working for a cause," she said, "I must have complete faith in the people behind the scenes, the people who set forth policies, principles, aims and purposes."[146]

Shortly after the discussion on Coates, Rieger's discussion group addressed Hay's ideas for a separate homosexual culture. The debate signaled the growing controversy of Hay's thesis, and the ideological polarization of the Mattachine. Marilyn Rieger had previously supported the Foundation's ideological stance as illustrated in published materials that mentioned the homosexual minority thesis. Though she had called for the "unification" of the homosexual, after the Coates column, she developed intense opposition to the idea of a united and separate homosexual minority. The group participants discussed whether it was possible to create a "pattern of behavior" for "all members" of the various gay communities.[147] Addressing destructive behavior that defined negative stereotypes of homosexuality, some members said most homosexuals did not behave in this manner, and concluded that the Mattachine should explain that these individuals were not representative. Ultimately, the group decided there was no "line of demarcation" between heterosexuals and homosexuals to justify a separate moral code.[148] These discussion groups reveal a process reversed from late 1951. Rather than identify as a collective, the participants distinguished between themselves and other homosexuals. Rather than defining a unique ethic, they concluded that homosexuals had no need to depart from traditional standards.

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[145] Marilyn Rieger to The Mattachine Foundation, March 23, 1953, box 1, folder 3, Lucas Papers.
[146] Ibid., 2.
[147] "Discussion Group Selkirk Lane," March 25, 1953, box 1, folder 5, Lucas Papers.
[148] Ibid., 5.

Meanwhile, professionals on the Foundation also worked to dismantle and reorganize the Mattachine. Dr. Gwartney argued that future growth of the Foundation's membership, especially in terms of heterosexual professionals, depended on the political reorganization of the Mattachine Society. Gwartney opposed the Communist affiliations of the group's ideology, and said "Communism, Fascism, or ay other isms or divergent political leanings of any group or individual" could not be promoted by or even associated with the Mattachine.[149] To bolster his case, he contacted professionals in St. Louis and Chicago and proposed questions, including whether the Mattachine Foundation should have an "open membership, secret, or semisecret," the appropriate stance towards "red or red front organizations," and what "pattern of reorganization" they favored.[150] According to Gwartney, the various individuals gave similar responses, and he presented his undifferentiated findings. Unsurprisingly, all of the interviewees opposed Communist infiltration, supported open membership, and advised that the Mattachine restructure as a "large scientific body" or "one of the large church groups."[151]

Gwartney presented an alternative vision for the organization. He said the Foundation should focus on research and education, and support the idea that the "deviate is not a menace to society, cannot be cured by marriage, and cannot "just forget it."[152] The leaders of the organization should consist of elected members from the discussion groups, as well as heterosexual professionals working in law, medicine, education, religion, the arts, labor, and business. Such an organization, he said, would aid the homosexual in "understanding and accepting of himself as one capable of integrating into

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[149] Richard H. Gwartney, "Reorganization Study" [ca. March 27, 1953], box 1, folder 18, MSPC.
[150] Ibid.
[151] Ibid.
[152] Richard H. Gwartney, "Proposed Reorganization of Mattachine Foundation" [ca. March 27, 1953], box 1, folder 18, MSPC.

society."[153] Dr. Gwartney rejected coercive legal or medical control over homosexuals, and argued that if Kinsey's estimates were "even partially true"—then "punishment or hospitalization" were not effective responses, and the "only practical realistic approach lies in the ideals and ideas of the Mattachine Foundation carried out with a singleness of purpose completely divorced from all religious denominational or political influences."[154]

With pressure coming from discussion groups and the Administrative Council of the Foundation itself, Hay finally gave in to the call for reorganization, and the Founders scheduled a democratic convention on the 11th and 12th of April. In their invitation to the convention, the founders argued that the "secret organization with a structure deliberately complicated to insure secrecy" had a necessary and noble, but ultimately outdated goal.[155] They included a draft constitution that called for elected leadership, as well as rules and an agenda for the convention.

Meanwhile, several members of the rank-and-file came to the convention with the intention of fundamentally changing the Mattachine. "We decided we really didn't need to get involved in such a secretive society if we were going to change society," Burns recalled, "a group of about five people and myself decided to have an open organization…and use our own names—not using pseudonyms or covering our faces."[156] Call and Burns planned an alternative constitution to combat the vision espoused by Harry Hay and the Fifth Order.

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[153] Richard H. Gwartney, "Long Range Benefits Which Can Accrue from the Mattachine Foundation" [ca. March 27, 1953], box 1, folder 18, MSPC.
[154] Ibid.
[155] "A Call to All Members," The Fifth Order of the Mattachine Society, box 1, folder 19, MSPC.
[156] Sears, 152.

Section 5

Constitutional Conventions

The constitutional conventions fundamentally altered the path of the Mattachine, but this process required two separate meetings. The April convention highlighted the ideological polarization of the Mattachine, but resulted in a stalemate. During the month between the two conventions, the pressures at work in the discussion groups revealed the concerns of the rank-and-file, which defined the decisions made in May. Accounts of the May convention vary from historian to historian, but I argue that the balance of power— although it shifted between groups of individuals over the course of the convention— ultimately rested in the hands of the conservative rank-and-file.

The Mattachine's April convention took place at the First Universalist Church, a space offered by Mattachine Foundation member Reverend Wallace de Ortega Maxey.[157] Roughly one hundred people attended the gathering, only entering the church after repeatedly being asked to provide their credentials. The crowd seemed quite respectable, and Jim Kepner felt some surprise at the make-up of the convention, since "most of us still expected a crowd of gays to look effeminate and somehow disreputable."[158] Like many of the Fifth Order, Jim Kepner came from a "working-class, Marxist-oriented" background, unlike the "middle-class and politically much more conservative" delegates.[159] Kepner also worked in the Communist Party from 1945-48.[160] However, the conservative physical appearance of the delegates mirrored the predominant political

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[157] "A Call to All Members," The Fifth Order of the Mattachine Society, box 1, folder 19, MSPC.
[158] Sears, 179.
[159] Bullough, 128.
[160] Hurewitz, 243.

ideology in the room. "They were mainly Republicans," remembered Brissette, "We were a vague coalition of Christian left-wingers, Trotskyites, Populists."[161]

The delegates of the convention first elected representatives to guide the convention through its constitutional questions. Delegates nominated Martin Block, Ken Burns, and W. Dorr Legg to serve as the Chairman for the opening session, but Legg declined the nomination and Burns was ultimately elected.[162] The delegates elected Martin Block as Parliamentarian and Marilyn Rieger as Secretary. The convention then moved to a series of speeches from representative members of the Mattachine Foundation, including Chuck Rowland, Harry Hay, and Reverend Maxey.

Chuck Rowland's speech sparked intense ideological polarization. Rowland explained the homosexual minority thesis, and described how this thesis mandated the Mattachine's course of action. "There are some here who believe we should stop talking about our separate culture," said Rowland, "and strive instead only for integration."[163] Rowland compared the plight of homosexuals to that of blacks, Jews, Mexicans, and Japanese in America, driving home the point that "whether we like it or not, the fact is that we are a minority with a minority culture."[164] Society's oppression demanded a militant response, and he warned that anyone who wanted to organize homosexuals "without a fight had better forget the whole project."[165] The vision of homosexual organization he described repelled the conservative delegates and even alienated men like Jennings who supported militant action, but opposed the minority thesis. According to Jim Kepner, the speech disassembled the positive attitude of the convention, and caused

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[161] Sears, 180.
[162] "Minutes of Convention," April 11-12, 1953, box 2, folder 20, Lucas Papers.
[163] Rowland, "Opening Talk," Lucas Papers.
[164] Ibid., 2
[165] Ibid., 5.

the "feeling of optimism and unity…to evaporate."[166] Kepner recalled that the

provocative tone evoked "mounting shock and revulsion among the audience," and

though he personally shared Hay's perspective and opposed the conservatives, he too felt

misgivings about the implications of Rowland's speech, and later recalling that "we

didn't want that kind of militant or regimented organization."[167] Given Kepner's political

allegiances, the average delegate likely felt even more strongly about Rowland's speech.

Harry Hay spoke about the 5th Amendment, and took the opportunity to reflect on

the political associations of the Mattachine. Considering the political leanings of the

group, this was not a politically savvy move. In the early 1950s, the 5th Amendment

represented a "public relations disaster" associated with unfriendly witnesses to

HUAC.[168] Harry Hay addressed recent letters from the rank-and-file demanding to know

the political affiliations of the Mattachine. He retorted that an answer was impossible to

give. "To be 100% pro-American," he complained, "one is required to be not only 100%

anti-New Deal but also 100% anti-homosexual."[169] Hay noted that no political group—

whether left-wing or right-wing—defended homosexuals during the government purges,

and argued that there is "outright antipathy unitedly maintained by every color of

political opinion."[170] Notably, the political exile of homosexuals that Hay described

mirrored the Cold War consensus towards Communists, as even liberals during the Cold

War believed it necessary to "police their own ranks to ensure that they would not be

duped by the Communists."[171] As he had in 1948, Hay argued that the plight of

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[166] Sears, 180.
[167] Sears, 183; Hurewitz, 274.
[168] Schrecker, 69.
[169] Harry Hay, "Are You Now Or Have You Ever Been A Homosexual?" *ONE Magazine*, April 1953, 6.
[170] Ibid., 7.
[171] Schrecker, 99.

homosexuals resembled that of Communists. He ultimately concluded that the Foundation could not compromise its mission to appeal to the "tastes of the most conservative community," but must instead represent the interests of the homosexual minority.[172] In this speech, Hay continued to hold steadfast to the Communist associations of the Mattachine despite the shifting political consensus of the organization.

After the controversial speeches, the delegates discussed the constitution presented by Chuck Rowland of the Fifth Order and the alternative written by the conservative opposition, but the complexity of the separate proposals demanded that discussion be postponed to Sunday.[173] Even during the second day of the convention, however, the delegates failed to reach a consensus, and produced instead a "constitutional quilt of contrasting, if not contradicting, philosophies and structures."[174] The delegates from the convention elected to meet again in May, to resolve the tensions brought up during the convention.

During the period between the two conventions, a tremendous amount of grassroots pressure accumulated against Hay and his allies. In San Francisco, Brissette grew increasingly distressed about his ability to promote the agenda of Rowland and Hay, or even to maintain control of the discussion groups. The opinions expressed about the political ideology and structural organization of the Mattachine continued to influence the organization, even after the second constitutional convention.

As the meetings in San Francisco grew larger, Brissette expressed concern about the growing organization, and its shift from the Mattachine's original ideology. He questioned whether the discussion groups could follow the "vision of the Mattachine,"

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[172] Hay, "Are You Now," 10.
[173] Sears, 186-187.
[174] Ibid.

because we have had a "highly developed-philosophy, a tradition, a whole three years of experience…tossed into our laps."[175] Brissette's words suggested the difficulty of superimposing the original structure of the Mattachine onto the present situation. The hardheaded discussion group participants resisted the efforts to control their ideology. "Many intelligent, many independent thinking individuals" joined the organization, Brissette told Rowland and the Fifth Order, who "under control, would be great assets to us." [176] Brissette could not achieve this control, and he told Rowland, "I am no longer pulling this group, but they are pushing me."[177]

Brissette indicated that the group expressed ideological leanings that departed from the vision of the Fifth Order, and he placed their dissent into the context of the last convention's debate. The ideological leanings of the discussion groups in San Francisco threatened the vision of Hay and Rowland, and Brissette warned that the "first signs of an official reaction against us have made their appearance."[178] The "question of integration has come up again and again," he said, and it is "almost universally agreed that we do not want to create a society of 'happy homosexuals.'"[179] This rough approximation of the Hay minority thesis indicated that the discussion group participants did not bother with elaborate, separatist Marxist theory, and preferred an alternative relationship to society. Rather than modeling themselves after oppressed black or Hispanic communities, the discussion group participants wanted to follow the integration of the Irish minority in the US. Although Brissette opposed the imposition of a loyalty oath in accordance with the desires of the Fifth Order, the membership created an Area Council against his will,

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[175] Gerard Brissette to Chuck Rowland, April 19, 1953, box 1, folder 9, Lucas Papers.
[176] Gerard Brissette to Chuck Rowland, April 26, 1953, box 1, folder 9, Lucas Papers.
[177] Brissette to Rowland, April 19, 1953, Lucas Papers.
[178] Brissette to Rowland, April 26, 1953, Lucas Papers.
[179] Ibid.

which placed more organizational power in the hands of Northern California members. The Area Council passed a number of measures including legal investigation into the possibility of a loyalty oath, and a measure allocating less money to the central organization of Mattachine, and more money to the discussion group itself question. "Chuck, let's be frank here," Brissette wrote, "I'm so worried, I'm sick inside."[180] He begged Chuck to come down and visit. Rowland traveled to Northern California in order to explain the minority concept to the discussion group participants, and in effect run a "kind of 'school' for your leadership."[181] However, this leadership school further irritated conservatives like Hal Call, who planned to gain control of the organization in May.[182]

Unlike the stalemate in April, the constitutional convention in May dramatically shifted the balance of power in the organization. Historical accounts of this convention vary. D'Emilio writes that the convention "produced paradoxical results," since the delegates elected conservatives even though the delegates "earlier rejected the dissenters' stands on key philosophical issues."[183] He supports his claim by saying that delegates rejected an anti-Communist statement written by Hal Call, and accepted a preamble that described a homosexual culture. Sears challenges D'Emilio's view, on the grounds that the Founders failed to pass any "constitutional provision to link the Foundation to the Society."[184] Aside from this observation from Sears, D'Emilio is also factually incorrect regarding the Call resolution, which was approved by the delegates (though as a separate resolution, not as part of the preamble). The balance of power shifted throughout the

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[180] Brissette to Rowland, April 26, 1953, Lucas Papers.
[181] Chuck Rowland to Gerard Brissette, April 24, 1953, box 1, folder 9, Lucas Papers.
[182] Sears, 187.
[183] D'Emilio, 80.
[184] Sears, 211.

convention, but conservatives won the most important battles, and Hay's triumphs were compromised and limited.

The delegates first debated the structure of the organization, and specifically how the central body, and how the central body should govern individual chapters. The Mattachine Foundation had previously served this guiding role, but the Constitution designated a new controlling body, the Coordinating Council. Harry Hay spoke against the Constitution, noting the "absence of any reference to the Foundation."[185] Burns immediately declared such questions out of order. "This organization is ours," he asserted, "What connection we may have with the Mattachine Foundation is not a Constitutional matter but a matter for the Convention to decide after the adoption of the Constitution."[186] Burns' statement indicated his belief that the fate of the group depended only on the group assembled in the church, and not on any debt to the original leadership. This announcement disturbed Rowland and Hay, who had planned for a provision linking the Foundation to the Society, and their ally Harriet Stanley, a delegate from Northern California, requested a recess.[187]

However, Stanley ultimately chose not to challenge Burns' claims on the group's relationship to the Foundation, and rather spoke in favor of a decentralized structure. She emphasized her own experience with Brissette in Northern California. She advocated for the "elimination of any [central] control," and suggested that the governing branch serve "only as a liaison body," leaving groups "full autonomy to organize themselves."[188] A Los Angeles delegate challenged Stanley's vision of reduced central control, and pointed

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[185] Sears, 202.
[186] "Minutes of General Convention," May 23, 1953, box 2, folder 21, Lucas Papers.
[187] Sears, 202.
[188] "Minutes of General Convention," May 23, 1953, Lucas Papers.

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out that the governing body had been "misconstrued as a body which makes rules and which might restrict the San Francisco group from forming any activities they might wish to undertake."[189] The San Francisco did not believe these reassurances, and "declared its unanimous opposition" to centralized control.[190] These questions fragmented the delegates, though not necessarily along the political and ideological fault lines of conservatism and radicalism discussed in this thesis. Call supported a decentralized structure, and member of the Fifth Order supported a centralized structure (at least until it was clear their body would not be at the center).

More traditional debates on political ideology began with a discussion of the Hal Call resolution. It advised that "integration" could only be achieved in a "free society," and noted that homosexuals faced the most oppression in totalitarian countries such as Russia, where "freedom of the individual is most severely limited."[191] The Hal Call resolution suggested that all political extremists threatened the progress of the homosexual. Though the resolution criticized both extremes in a centrist manner, Call evidently had anti-Communist purposes in mind. Speaking before the delegates, Call acknowledged that "we have rejected a loyalty oath," but argued that the resolution served the same purpose, and "guarantees us that we will not be infiltrated by Communists," since no Communist could take such a stance on Russia.[192] "We are already being attacked as Communistic," Call argued, "and without his article in our Preamble…our stand would then be clear."[193] Call believed that the future of the organization was threatened by the possibility of its members being mistaken for

[189] "Minutes of General Convention," May 23, 1953, Lucas Papers.
[190] Ibid.
[191] "Resolution," May 23-24, 1953, box 2, folder 21, Lucas Papers.
[192] "Minutes of General Convention," May 23, 1953, Lucas Papers.
[193] Ibid.

Communists. Delegates did not like the idea of such a statement in the preamble, which "should be general and should have positive wording."[194]

Given the lukewarm reception, Call recommended that his resolution not be inserted into the preamble, and instead be "unanimously adopted as a resolution."[195] His resolution did not pass unanimously, however, but simply by majority. Hay and his allies opposed the Call resolution, arguing that its passage meant, "We are genuflecting to the very forces which tend to nullify our efforts."[196] Delegates questioned the legality of this decision, and though Burns acknowledged that parliamentary procedure had not been followed, he asked the convention to vote on his ruling, and they supported his decision.[197]

After discussing the Call resolution on Saturday, the delegates moved to discussion of the preamble itself. The controversy centered on the phrase "highly ethical homosexual culture," a question that recalled the divide between Dale Jennings and Harry Hay.[198] The delegates offered careful interpretations of the phrase, which they believed indicated the Mattachine's stance on social integration. One delegate argued that the word "people" was preferable to "culture," as it acknowledged that homosexuals were not separatist, whereas the preamble as written "precludes heterosexuals from joining the organization."[199] These arguments evidently had some impact, as the delegates initially voted against adopting the preamble by 26-25.[200] However, by this point, the delegates had "visibly polarized into two camps," with the pro-Foundation forces voting in bloc

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[194] "Minutes of General Convention," May 23, 1953, Lucas Papers
[195] Ibid.
[196] Ibid.
[197] Ibid.
[198] Ibid..
[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid..

against any changes to the preamble.[201] After a series of votes, the balance changed considerably, and the preamble passed 41-7.[202] Sears writes that this decision was made given the "lateness of the hour, and the fact that the Call resolution already had been adopted," along with the unshakeable unity among the Foundation's supporters.[203]

The next morning, the Fifth Order decided to disband, evidently shaken by their failures the night before.[204] Given the politics of the average delegate, most of the Fifth Order did not believe they could maintain control of the organization. "Look, we can't hold this thing," Hull told Hay.[205] Furthermore, Hull noted, a congressional committee had made plans to travel to California to investigate "nonprofit foundations which were feeding the left," and Mattachine Foundation and Fifth Order could not withstand public scrutiny.[206]

Chuck Rowland addressed the delegates on Sunday afternoon, acknowledging that the Fifth Order was a "a little angry or a little unhappy that the proposed Constitution did not make any provision for a relationship between the Foundation and the Society."[207] However, his overwhelming message was positive, and he said that the delegates had lived up to the "ideal principles of the Mattachine Foundation," and could therefore take over its duties, funds, mailing lists, and property, and eventually serve all homosexuals in the United States.[208] Several delegates spoke strongly both in favor of and against the Foundation's decision to resign, but the Founders held firm.

Despite this rupture in continuity, the delegates chose to retain the name

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[201] Sears, 210.
[202] "Minutes of General Convention," May 23, 1953, Lucas Papers.
[203] Sears, 210.
[204] Ibid.
[205] Katz, 419.
[206] Ibid.
[207] "General Convention Minutes," May 24, 1953, Lucas Papers.
[208] Ibid.

Mattachine. The delegates eventually voted 47-4 to keep the name Mattachine because of its positive reputation in other states and internationally, and despite the fact that Los Angeles publications had linked the organization with Communism. "I feel that there is no more stigma that is attached to the name Mattachine," said one delegate, "than there is attached to anything that includes the word 'homosexual'."[209]

Delegates repeatedly raised questions about the secrecy of the organization over the weekend, but Burns tabled all such discussion. When elections of the new leadership began, however, Marilyn Rieger forced a decision on the matter of secrecy. When she was nominated for Secretary, she refused to accept her nomination until the delegates decided: "Is this going to be a secret society or is it not?"[210] In a letter she distributed at the beginning of the convention, Rieger explained her views about the secrecy and separatism of the organization. She offered an integrationist perspective, and urged the delegates to emphasize their humanity first and foremost, instead of any group label, whether homosexual, Catholic, Jewish, Democrat, or Republican. She criticized any organization of homosexuals that moved "underground, in secrecy and fear."[211] A "harmonious relationship with society," she insisted, depended on public acknowledgement and understanding of homosexuals. "It is only by coming out into the open…by declaring ourselves…by integrating," she argued, "not as homosexuals, but as people, as men and women whose homosexuality is irrelevant to our ideals, our principles, our hopes and aspirations, that we will rid the world of its misconcepts of homosexuality and homosexuals."[212]

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[209] "General Convention Minutes," May 24, 1953, Lucas Papers.
[210] Ibid.
[211] Marilyn Rieger to Delegates of the Convention, May 23, 1953, box 2, folder 21, Lucas Papers.
[212] Ibid.

Though he had previously tabled discussions of the secrecy of the organization, Burns—who had just been elected Chairman of the Coordinating Council—now interpreted the Constitution to mean that individual members could remain anonymous, but the organization's officers would be publicly known. Rieger pressed the question: "If Paul Coates should write an article, could I or could you write a letter stating your name as Chairman of the Mattachine Society and could you be contacted?"[213] Burns stated that he would be publicly known as the head of Mattachine, and Rieger therefore accepted her nomination, and won the role of secretary.

The May convention demonstrably shifted the organization from its ideological foundations, especially in its rejection of secrecy and its election of conservative, middle-class leaders in lieu of Communist sympathizers. The transfer of power was not complete, for other officers of the Coordinating Council supported the Fifth Order or had served on the Foundation. Nonetheless, the conservatives had gained tremendously in influence, and worked over the next few months to change the Mattachine to fit their beliefs.

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[213] "General Convention Minutes," May 24, 1953, Lucas Papers.

Section 6

Homosexual Democrats

The new leadership faced substantial challenges as they worked to rebrand the

Mattachine Society. Like the Mattachine Foundation, the new Society found it difficult to

obtain manpower and funding for the organization, and good leadership consistently

proved difficult to obtain. During the summer of 1953, controversies revolved around the

authority of the Coordinating Council and the autonomy of individual chapters, as well as

the relationship between homosexuals in the Mattachine and scientific and legal

professionals. These controversies revealed the limitations of the power of the

Coordinating Council. Although Marilyn Rieger, Ken Burns, and Hal Call tried to push

the organization to fit their views, they ultimately failed in many important respects.

Nonetheless, these new leaders worked within a democratic process, and retained their

leadership even when the rank-and-file disagreed with them.

Leadership of the organization presented many logistical challenges. At the

conclusion of the May convention, the Foundation turned over $8 to the Coordinating

Council for future activities, along with mailing lists, propaganda, and other documents it

had accumulated. Despite the transfer of power, however, the official dissolution of the

Foundation did not occur for another six months.[214] This delay hindered the ability of the

Mattachine Society to legally use the name, fund-raise and maintain bank accounts.

Though Martin Block initially served as the link between the Mattachine Foundation and

the Mattachine Society, and facilitated meetings with representatives from both

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[214] "Report of the CC Chairman," November 14, 1953, box 2, folder 22, Lucas Papers.

organizations, he withdrew from activity in the Society.[215] Several resignations occurred

for a variety of reasons, including personal issues, disapproval of the Society's aims (from

those who wanted it to be both more and less aggressive), and fear of growing publicity.

The actual discussion groups waned in size.[216] Though the Coordinating Council

continued to answer many requests for information, they had difficulty obtaining lasting

membership.[217] In November 1953, the Mattachine Society had 111 dues-paying

members and 14 chapters, and each chapter hosted a discussion group, some of which

attracted over 65 people.[218] However, by February 1954, one resignation letter indicated

that despite several new participants, few remained for very long, and he posited that the

problem is that "We have no basis on which to make an active emotional appeal," and an

"active and forceful program" would do more good.[219] The Mattachine Society struggled

to run an effective organization and maintain high rates of growth.

During the summer of 1953, the Mattachine Society established a new

organizational structure. The Coordinating Council directed a Northern Area Council and

a Southern Area Council, and each Area Council represented local chapters, which in

turn organized discussion groups. The Area Councils and chapters held to their vision of

a decentralized organization, forcing to the Coordinating Council to compromise to retain

their power. The Coordinating Council first over-stepped its bounds, in the eyes of some

local leaders, when it decided to charge a $5.00 registration fee for each additional

charter.[220] The chapters in Southern California paid the fee without discussion.[221] In

[215] "Coordinating Council Minutes, May 27, 1953, box 1, folder 9, Lucas Papers.
[216] "Coordinating Council Minutes," July 10, 1953, box 1, folder 15, Lucas Papers.
[217] "Coordinating Council Minutes," August 14, 1953, box 1, folder 19, Lucas Papers.
[218] "Convention Minutes," November 14-15, 1953, box 2, folder 22, Lucas Papers.
[219] 2nd Vice-Chairman to Ken Burns, February 16, 1954, box 3, folder 12, Lucas Papers.
[220] "Coordinating Council Minutes," May 27, 1953, Lucas Papers.

Northern California, however, some rebellion began to bubble up, inspired by the same individuals who troubled Brissette in April by establishing an Area Council. During the first meeting of the Area Council, some members questioned this $5 fee. The Area Council's opposition to the Coordinating Council was conflicted. One representative from San Francisco defended the need of the Coordinating Council to raise funds, and ultimately the group decided to "go along" with the $5 fee, but also question the authority of the Coordinating Council to levy such fees.[222]

Having papered over this initial difficulty, the Coordinating Council made more extensive efforts to control the activities of the chapters. It decided that no Chapter, nor the Area Councils that comprised the individual chapters, should make any "official utterances, publications etc. of a nature affecting the entire Society" without the explicit written permission of the Coordinating Council.[223] The next week, the Coordinating Council further restricted the exchange of information not only with the public, but also among various segments of the Mattachine Society, stating that all documents must traverse the "regular channels of communication," maintaining a hierarchy that brought information only from the Chapter to the Area Council to the Coordinating Council, whereupon the Coordinating Council would distribute it to other Area Councils.[224]

Leaders in the Coordinating Council tried to smooth over the rising controversy. In June 1953, Reverend Maxey visited the San Francisco area and met with four chapters, featuring a total of roughly one hundred members. In light of restrictions on publications, as well as the additional fees, these members "questioned whether the Chapters were

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[221] "Coordinating Council Minutes," June 5, 1953, box 1, folder 10, Lucas Papers.
[222] "Northern AC Report," June 11, 1953, page 2, box 1, folder 12, Lucas Papers.
[223] "Coordinating Council Minutes," June 12, 1953, box 1, folder 11, Lucas Papers.
[224] "Coordinating Council Minutes," June 19, 1953, box 1, folder 12, Lucas Papers.

autonomous."[225] Over the 4th of July weekend, Ken Burns traveled to Northern California in order to hear from these members. The Chairman of the Northern Area Council, although he did not personally oppose the fee, asked Burns to defend it due to the controversy. Burns dismissed these charges as a "needless fear," and asserted that the Coordinating Council did indeed have the authority to levy such fees, and advised dissenters that the Area Councils should hold another convention to assess the work of the Coordinating Council and "either remove them and elect a new one or handle it by some other parliamentary procedure, but certainly not to cripple it."[226] Ken Burns used the democratic structure of the organization to assert his own power, ultimately saying that the Mattachine membership could retrieve it should the Coordinating Council truly overstep its authority.

The Area Council in Northern California initially responded favorably to these visits from the Coordinating Council. During the next meeting, these members once again debated the authority of the Coordinating Council. One individual motioned to "accept the authority of coordinating council actions until the next general convention," a motion that initially failed 3-5.[227] The Area Council defined their opposition to the Coordinating Council in terms of its geographic distance from Northern Californians, which prevented them from influencing the organization as effectively. After discussing these geographic concerns, the Area Council gave a "unanimous vote of confidence" in the Coordinating Council, indicating that some of these difficulties had been addressed.[228]

Although the Northern Area Council had been appeased, the Southern Area

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[225] "Coordinating Council Minutes," June 26, 1953, box 1, folder 13, Lucas Papers.
[226] "Coordinating Council Minutes," July 4, 1953, box 1, folder 14, Lucas Papers.
[227] "Southern AC Report," July 9, 1953, page 2, box 1, folder 15, Lucas Papers.
[228] Ibid.

Council expressed outrage when the Coordinating Council decided to require each Chapter to submit its minutes to the Coordinating Council, for dissemination throughout the Mattachine, in order that the Coordinating Council might give other Chapters ideas for promoting discussion groups.[229] One Area Council representative noted that the rising authority of the Coordinating Council was "contrary to the spirit of the constitution and to the feelings of the members of the general convention."[230] Opponents to the policy said that it threatened the "autonomy of the chapter doctrine."[231] The Coordinating Council did not back off on these demands, and in late August, they demanded that each chapter submit 20 mimeographed copies of each meeting, but the Southern Area Council said they would not comply.[232]

Individuals who raised these structural concerns were often those who expressed conservative views during the constitutional convention. Arguing that a "strong central organization" had been "completely rejected by the Convention," they favored instead a "minimum of control and power above the Chapter level."[233] They warned that "dictatorial methods" from the Area Council would burden the Mattachine with "red tape, reports and paper work," creating an "administrative machine that labors busily but accomplishes nothing."[234] Given that the Coordinating Council had repeatedly emphasized that their powers derived from the General Convention, and could only be changed at the next General Convention, some in the South advocated for moving the

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[229] "Coordinating Council Minutes," July 10, 1953, box 1, folder 15, Lucas Papers.
[230] "Southern AC Report," July 27, 1953, box 1, folder 17, Lucas Papers.
[231] "Southern AC Report," July 14, 1953, box 1, folder 16, Lucas Papers.
[232] "Coordinating Council Minutes," August 28, 1953, box 1, folder 21, Lucas Papers.
[233] "Southern AC Report," August 10, 1953, box 1, folder 20, Lucas Papers.
[234] Ibid..

next convention up in the calendar, prior to the planned date of November.[235] The Mattachine members proved willing to question the authority of the Coordinating Council, and threaten them with removal from office. At the November convention, however, the delegates favored both the leadership and the authority of individual chapters. They emphasized that chapters should have "full autonomy within the limits of the Preamble, the Constitution, and By-Laws adopted by the General Convention," and they also voted confidence in the current officers of the Coordinating Council.[236]

Over the course of the summer in 1953, as these lines of authority were being determined, the Mattachine experienced significant debates as to how it should interact with society, particularly in terms of its relationship to legal and scientific professionals. At the beginning of June, tensions developed between the Research Committee and the Coordinating Council about the treatment of scientific experts and the autonomy of individual segments of the Mattachine Society. The head of the Research Committee, Guy VanAlstyne, emphasized scientific accuracy and objectivity, regardless of what light this cast upon homosexuals. VanAlstyne emphasized that the committee should be "given free rein" to conduct is business, and said the committee "deems itself qualified to represent the Society in its contacts with the outside world."[237] Ken Burns expressed reservations as to the wisdom of this approach, and preferred that the Mattachine have more control over the scientific research it participated in. The members of the Research Committee continued to take a strong stand, and VanAlstyne said he would resign if the Society did not allow scientific professionals to be work detached from the will of the

[235] "Coordinating Council Minutes," August 14, 1953, box 1, folder 19, Lucas Papers.
[236] "Convention Minutes," November 14-15, Lucas Papers.
[237] "Coordinating Council Minutes," June 5, 1953, Lucas Papers.

Mattachine.[238] "The doctors will not be bothered with the society," he stated, "if we mean to interfere in any way."[239] The Coordinating Council largely supported control over scientific research, but the individual committees demanded autonomy.

The Coordinating Council of the Mattachine Society met with several doctors on June 24 to discuss future collaborations on research projects, including Dr. Evelyn Hooker, Dr. Phillip M. West, Dr. Sidney Bliss, and Dr. Richard H. Gwartney. The Mattachine represented a valuable resource for these researchers, as they could assemble several volunteers for studies on sexual deviance. The doctors emphasized, however, that their research must follow an "objective program," and that the Mattachine "must be prepared to accept the results regardless of whether they justify our point of view as homosexuals or not."[240]

Ultimately, the Research Committee prevailed over the concerns of Ken Burns, Marilyn Rieger, and others on the Coordinating Council who wanted the Mattachine to exert more control over this scientific research. The most significant scientific project undertaken that year by the Mattachine occurred in collaboration with Dr. Evelyn Hooker. Dr. Hooker was especially anxious to retain objectivity because that year she had applied for government funding from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) to study homosexuality and heterosexuality, a proposal that—rather surprisingly—was accepted after careful examination.[241] In late July, the Mattachine provided 73 research subjects to take psychological tests at UCLA.[242] The head of the Research Committee

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[238] "Coordinating Council Minutes," July 20, 1953, box 1, folder 16, Lucas Papers.
[239] Ibid.
[240] "Report of Research Committee," June 26, 1953, box 1, folder 13, Lucas Papers.
[241] Bullough, 346-347.
[242] "Coordinating Council Minutes," July 31, 1953, box 1, folder 17, Lucas Papers.

helped Hooker with interpretation of the data.[243] Other researchers also used the services

of the Mattachine that summer. The Mattachine helped Dr. Carl F. Bowman assemble

three hundred case histories for a study.[244] Dr. Phillip M. West obtained blood samples

from 31 Mattachine affiliates, and Dr. James Marsh administered psychological tests to

54 individuals.[245] Guy VanAlstyne expressed satisfaction that his Research Committee

had remained objective, and at the November convention, he said the Mattachine had

moved past a rough start, and "our standards of integrity today remain in alignment with

the position I have stated."[246]

The various levels of the Mattachine Society also intensely debated the proper

stance of the Society on legal activities. When the Coordinating Council first granted

temporary charters to four chapters, two of these chapters stated specific legal goals that

included "outlawing entrapment" and "revampment of the legal code as regards the

homosexual minority."[247] In June, another chapter proposed to address legal and

legislative concerns by creating an advisory council that would include judges, attorneys,

and legislators, as well as a committee that would perform such tasks as "watching bills

submitted, contacting legislators, amending existing bills."[248] Although these actions

implied a high level of legal engagement, the chapter also adopted a carefully non-

militant approach. It stated that "organized pressure won't work," and the Mattachine

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[243] "Coordinating Council Minutes," August 7, 1953, box 1, folder 18, Lucas Papers.
[244] "Report of the Chairman of the Research Committee," November 14, 1953, box 2, folder 22, Lucas Papers.
[245] Ibid.
[246] Ibid.
[247] "Coordinating Council Minutes," June 5, 1953, Lucas Papers.
[248] "Coordinating Council Minutes," June 19, 1953, box 9, folder 3, MSPC.

must act "within the limits of existing law," by emphasizing the importance of individual rather than institutional engagement.[249]

These concerns might have seemed modest, and even anemic compared to the militancy of the Dale Jennings trial. The Coordinating Council, however, tried to adopt an even less militant approach upon the advice of David Ravin, an attorney retained in the summer of 1953. He had first contacted the Mattachine Foundation in 1952, when he answered a questionnaire distributed by the Fifth Order.[250] The Coordinating Council believed that Ravin's positive response to the Mattachine Foundation, along with his subscription to *ONE Magazine*, demonstrated his sympathy for the Mattachine's aims.[251]

Ravin made a number of crucial recommendations in 1953, and adopted an extremely conciliatory approach. He suggested, for instance, that the pamphlets created by the Foundation were "straight out of the Civil Rights literature and also followed the literature of the Communist party."[252] He advised against any focus on legislation and even recommended that the legal chapters of the Mattachine Society be shut down.[253] Given these recommendations, members in the Mattachine extensively debated whether his approach to the law was the correct one for a minority to take.[254] Marilyn Rieger and Ken Burns generally supported Ravin, but members of the Legal-Legislative chapter thought Ravin specifically contradicted the mission of the Mattachine.[255] The historical record demonstrates that the Mattachine Society did not take all of Ravin's advice. After members of the Legal Chapter expressed intense distaste for his ideas, Burns said that

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[249] "Coordinating Council Minutes," June 19, 1953, MSPC.
[250] Questionnaire from David Ravin [ca. Summer 1952], box 1, folder 1, Lucas Papers.
[251] "Coordinating Council Minutes," July 4, 1953, Lucas Papers.
[252] "Report from Chairman of Coordinating Council," June 22, 1953, box 1, folder 13, Lucas Papers.
[253] "Coordinating Council Minutes," July 20, 1953, box 1, folder 16, Lucas Papers.
[254] "Coordinating Council Minutes," August 28, 1953, Lucas Papers.
[255] "Coordinating Council Minutes," September 11, 1953, box 1, folder 22, Lucas Papers.

Ravin might be a valuable advisor, but recommended reducing his fee.[256] The Mattachine Society ignored Ravin's advice on closing down a telephone service meant for those who were combating entrapment.[257] Once again, the individual chapters prevailed over the Coordinating Council.

During the summer, both the Northern and the Southern Area Council created propaganda that took an anti-Communist stand, even though such measures had not been accepted during the May convention. In November, three more resolutions were introduced to limit Communist engagement in the Mattachine Society. One delegate anonymously presented a resolution, which would establish a Committee for Investigating of Communist Infiltration that could "summon any society member to appear before it," and suspend membership given the "failure to satisfactorily answer questions concerning Communist Party membership within the past 5 years."[258] This motion failed, despite hearty endorsement from several delegates from Southern and Northern California. Another delegate introduced a statement called "The American's Creed," which called for loyalty to the US, and the "principles of freedom, equality, justice, and humanity for which American Patriots sacrificed their lives and fortunes."[259] Other delegates claimed that the resolution resembled a loyalty oath and specifically endorsed a creed. Ultimately neither of these resolutions succeeded. Although the homosexual democrats did adopt a more conciliatory approach, the organization as a whole rejected the views of its most anti-Communist members.

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[256] "Coordinating Council Minutes," September 11, 1953, Lucas Papers.
[257] "Convention Minutes," November 14-15, 1953, Lucas Papers.
[258] Ibid.
[259] Ibid.

CONCLUSION

In May 1954, slightly a year after writing the incendiary column that inspired the reorganization of the Mattachine, journalist Paul Coates again addressed the Mattachine Society. The program appeared on the television show Confidential File, and consisted of an interview with Curtis White, a 22-year-old office worker. During the 15-minute program, Curtis White acknowledged that he was a homosexual and an authorized spokesman for the Mattachine Society. He stated that the Mattachine had 160 members, and chapters in several large cities. Curtis White explained that the Mattachine intended to change society, but it planned "to work for the elimination of sexual discrimination in the law and in society" through an "evolutionary process."[260] White demonstrated remarkable bravery in making these statements. His parents did not know he was homosexual, but when asked whether his parents would find out by watching the television program, White replied, "I think it's almost certain they will. I think I will very possibly lose my job, too."[261] He nonetheless considered his self-identification an important work of public service.

The Curtis White interview demonstrated the significant steps that the Mattachine had taken in the past year. Whereas Paul Coates had been unable to track down a spokesperson aside from Harry Hay's reluctant and misinformed mother, he now interviewed an actual homosexual, who openly reflected on the need for gay bars, legal reform, and acceptance. The Mattachine gained some control over their message rather than being exploited by a tabloid. During this time period, society's attitude towards homosexuality had not eased. In the government purges, for instance, roughly 100 federal

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[260] Interview, May 2, 1954, box 3, folder 31, MSPC.
[261] Ibid.

employees lost their jobs due to allegations of homosexuality between the beginning of 1947 and the end of 1950. After the new Mattachine gained control, and in the two years after the May 1953 convention, rates of those losing their jobs quadrupled, to 400 per year.[262] Even considering the political climate of the time, men and women like Curtis White and Marilyn Rieger emphasized the importance of coming out publicly, avoiding the secrecy that had previously defined the organization.

Over the next few decades, The Mattachine Society openly advertised its intentions to American society, and inspired chapters throughout the US. These individual chapters often ignored the advice of the central leadership, following the decentralizing impetus witnessed in the first year of the Coordinating Council. Hal Call established the *Mattachine Review* in 1955, and developed business relationships with newsstands in several states. The interactions with scientists such as Dr. Evelyn Hooker were deeply influential, as Hooker became renowned for establishing the reevaluation of homosexuality as a mental disorder, and later advocated for decriminalization of sodomy and the 1973 removal of homosexuality from the list of illnesses defined by the America Psychiatric Association.[263] The relationships established during these years paid enormous dividends in the decades to come.

The Mattachine, as envisioned by Harry Hay as a secret society with hundreds of thousands of militant members organized in strict chains of authority, could not have succeeded. The Mattachine Society began to grow due to the activities of the rank-and-file, who encouraged a far more decentralized, inconsistent, and messy democratic organization. The conservatives who shifted the organization in 1953 ultimately failed in

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[262] Johnson, 166.
[263] Bullough, 348.

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many respects to implement their aims. Ken Burns and Marilyn Rieger tried to implement certain strategies towards medical research and legal accommodation, and Hal Call tried several times to institute anti-communist resolutions. After 1953, however, the leaders of the organization were required to answer to the demands of their general membership, and chapter members in the rank-and-file succeeded in wresting control from the Coordinating Council when necessary. These failures of the insurgency reflected the strength of the democratic politics and decentralized nature of the Mattachine Society, a shift in ideology and organization that created and ultimately sustained the society of homosexual democrats.

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