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**AN UPHILL FIGHT:
ERNEST F. HOLLINGS AND THE STRUGGLE
TO PROTECT THE SOUTH CAROLINA
TEXTILE INDUSTRY, 1959–2005**

TIMOTHY J. MINCHIN*

IN JUNE 1985, U.S. SENATOR ERNEST F. "FRITZ" HOLLINGS OF South Carolina wrote President Ronald Reagan and urged him to support the Textile and Apparel Trade Enforcement Act, a measure that sought to protect the country's textile producers from cheap imports. Since 1980, Hollings claimed, imports of textile and apparel products had grown at an annual rate of 19 percent, forcing scores of mills to the wall. Reminding Reagan of his earlier promises to help the textile industry, the outspoken senator accused the president of having "callous disregard" for the three hundred thousand textile workers who had lost their jobs since 1981. There is no record of a reply from Reagan, although his leading economic advisers insisted that the proposed legislation would raise consumer prices and invite retaliation against U.S. exporters.¹

As Hollings's letter strongly implies, by the 1980s textile firms in the United States had been shedding jobs for some time, yet federal officials continued to support free-trade policies that hurt low-wage industries. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), employment in the textile and apparel industry fell from 2.4 million workers in 1969 to 1.64 million in 1994.² After 1994 the pace of decline quickened, and by 2008 fewer than five hundred thousand textile and apparel workers remained on the job. As the BLS has documented, the decline of the textile industry is directly related to a surge in imports, particularly from countries in Latin America and Asia, and it will undoubtedly continue in the years to come.³

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¹ Ernest F. Hollings to Ronald Reagan, June 21, 1985, box 10, Ninety-ninth Congress files, Ernest F. Hollings Collection, South Carolina Political Collections, University of South Carolina, Columbia (hereafter cited as Hollings Papers); George P. Shultz et al. to Senator Hollings, June 19, 1985, *ibid.* Although it is now open, the Hollings Collection is still being processed. When I used the collection, material was organized according to the relevant Congress, and this is how it is cited here.

² Lauren A. Murray, "Unraveling Employment Trends in Textiles and Apparel," *Monthly Labor Review*, August 1995, 62-63.

³ For statistics that document the industry's decline, see BLS employment data at http://www.bls.gov/iag/tgs/iag_index_alpha.htm (accessed July 16, 2008). A useful summary of the textile and apparel sector is also available at <http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs015.htm> (accessed May 1, 2008). The BLS is part of the federal Department of Labor.

These developments had a particularly harsh impact upon South Carolina, a key textile state. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the textile industry in South Carolina grew at a rapid pace, as enterprising industrialists recruited large numbers of rural migrants to work in their mills. Between 1880 and 1920, the number of workers employed by the textile industry in South Carolina increased over twenty-two times, from 2,053 to 48,079. As historian David L. Carlton has noted, the rise of the textile industry in South Carolina is "one of the more striking developments in postbellum southern social history," and it led to the creation of a mill population with considerable political clout. By 1920 one-sixth of the state's white population lived in mill villages, particularly in the piedmont counties. Greenville and Spartanburg Counties were home to more than a half-million spindles each, while several neighboring counties contained over two hundred thousand spindles each. Small numbers of African Americans also toiled in the industry, although state law and social custom excluded them from production jobs until the passage of the civil rights legislation in the mid 1960s.⁴

Following the difficult years of the Great Depression, World War II initiated a dramatic period of growth for the southern textile industry, which prospered by supplying the U.S. military with essential uniforms and other fabrics. By 1960 the Palmetto State was the nation's number one textile producer (40.6 percent of the nation's textile spinning activity and over 38 percent of its cotton looms were located within a one hundred-mile radius of the city of Clinton). At this time, over 54 percent of all manufacturing jobs in South Carolina were provided by the textile industry. Even as late as 1980, textile payrolls accounted for one-third of all manufacturing jobs in the state, and eight years later, the industry was still South Carolina's largest employer.⁵ By the end of the twentieth century, however, this economic dominance had come to an end. Whereas in 1973 around 160,000 people

⁴ For historical context on the growth of the textile industry in South Carolina, see especially: David L. Carlton, *Mill and Town in South Carolina, 1880-1920* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 6-7 (quotation on p. 6); G. C. Waldrep III, *Southern Workers and the Search for Community: Spartanburg County, South Carolina* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 11-31. For an influential region-wide study, see Jacquelyn Dowd Hall et al., *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987). For the story of the industry's racial integration, see Timothy J. Minchin, *Hiring the Black Worker: The Racial Integration of the Southern Textile Industry, 1960-1980* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

⁵ "Remarks by Governor Ernest F. Hollings before United States Tariff Commission," March 2, 1960, box 21, Gubernatorial files, Hollings Papers; Michael Oreskes, "In South Carolina, Republicans Find Import Issue," *New York Times*, February 26, 1988; "Other Industry Helps Replace a Dying Textile Trade in 1980s," *State* (Columbia, S.C.), December 28, 1999.

worked in the state's main industry, by 1996 less than eighty thousand remained, and this had further declined to sixty thousand by 2001. In that year alone, thirty-one South Carolina textile plants closed their doors, and many others have followed suit since.⁶

On four occasions between 1978 and 1990, Hollings sponsored federal legislation drafted to protect the textile industry from imported goods. On each occasion, the bills passed Congress, but were thwarted by presidential vetoes. These outcomes were a grave disappointment to the influential Democratic senator from Charleston, who spent his long political career fighting to assist textile manufacturers. As he explained in his recent memoirs, "The battle to protect the textile industry was a top priority and would command my attention as long as I served in the United States Senate." Hollings represented South Carolina in the Senate from 1966 until 2005, and he previously tried helping the industry as governor of the state from 1959 to 1963. An important figure in postwar southern politics, Hollings deserves more scholarly attention.⁷

The demise of the textile legislation was a turning point for the industry. As Hollings has documented, the failure of the textile bills "started a trickle of outsourcing" that only accelerated in subsequent years. With the passage of the North American Free Trade Agreement in 1993 and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in 1994, the industry's fate was sealed. A vast and rich collection, Hollings's newly opened papers offer fresh insights into why the decline occurred.⁸ Along with other sources, they show that efforts to protect textile manufacturers received an impressive level of support, but ultimately fell short because national political leaders and most of the business community wanted to expand free trade. By the 1990s, an increasing number of South Carolinians also reasoned that the state's economy was strong enough to bear the loss of textile jobs. Hollings's papers document how South Carolina's economy gradually diversified, a transition that generated prosperity for some, but was painful for the thousands of textile workers who lost their jobs. In his efforts to preserve a declining industry, Hollings led what one *New York Times* journalist termed

⁶ Fred Monk, "Painful Trend Will Continue," *State*, July 7, 1996; John Monk, "Roger Milliken: The Last Textile Giant," *State*, October 7, 2001; "Textile Industry Topic of Summit," *State*, March 21, 2002.

⁷ At present, there is no scholarly biography of Hollings, although his recently published memoirs do provide some important insights into his long career in public service. See Ernest F. "Fritz" Hollings with Kirk Victor, *Making Government Work* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), quotation on p. 130.

⁸ Hollings quoted in "Q and A: Hollings Shares Views on Variety of Issues," *State*, June 15, 2008, accessed at <http://www.thestate.com/news-extra/story/434436.html>. The author received permission to use the Hollings Collection shortly before it was opened to the public in mid June 2008.

an "uphill fight," yet the determined senator rarely let the long odds deter him.⁹

The decline of the textile industry is part of the broader demise of manufacturing industries, a process that has been a defining theme of postwar U.S. history. In less than a human lifetime, the entire character of the American economy has been transformed; in 1950, for instance, half of the work force was employed in the manufacturing sector, but by 2001, just 12 percent were.¹⁰ Over the last two decades or so, scholars have begun to take a closer look at the decline of manufacturing industries. In 1982 Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison introduced the term "deindustrialization" to a broad audience. Their pioneering work, *The Deindustrialization of America*, concentrated chiefly on the "Rust Belt," however, especially areas that were hurt by the decline of the steel and auto industries. Since then, many other studies have also focused on struggling communities in the Northeast and Midwest.¹¹

Scholars are only just beginning to explore how deindustrialization affected the South, and they have almost completely overlooked the story of the region's biggest employer. Since World War II, the bulk of the American textile industry has been located in the South. In 1991, for example, around three-quarters of the country's textile workers were based in the region.¹² In recent years, historians have explored the lives of southern textile workers in unprecedented detail, but little attention has been paid to the industry's decline. Instead, most scholars have focused on the growth of the southern mill village and the failure of efforts to unionize southern

⁹ David E. Rosenbaum, "Trade Issues Enter Crucial Political Phase," *New York Times*, April 9, 1991.

¹⁰ Barry Bluestone, foreword to *Beyond the Ruins: The Meanings of Deindustrialization*, ed. Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott (Ithaca, N.Y.: ILR Press, 2003), xii.

¹¹ Barry Bluestone and Bennett Harrison, *The Deindustrialization of America: Plant Closings, Community Abandonment, and the Dismantling of Basic Industry* (New York: Basic Books, 1982). Among the other works with a northern focus are: Terry F. Buss and F. Stevens Redburn, *Shutdown at Youngstown: Public Policy for Mass Unemployment* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983); Steven P. Dandaneau, *A Town Abandoned: Flint, Michigan, Confronts Deindustrialization* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996); Ruth Milkman, *Farewell to the Factory: Auto Workers in the Late Twentieth Century* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Kathryn Marie Dudley, *The End of the Line: Lost Jobs, New Lives in Postindustrial America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994). Apart from these case studies, Steven High has published a somewhat broader work on the entire Rust Belt. See Steven C. High, *Industrial Sunset: The Making of North America's Rust Belt, 1969-1984* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

¹² Peter Applebome, "The Southeast—A Special Report," *New York Times*, September 10, 1991. Economists have studied the industry's problems, although these works generally lack historical context. See, for example, Fariborz Ghadar et al., *U.S. Industrial Competitiveness: The Case of the Textile and Apparel Industries*

textile workers, particularly in the 1930s and 1940s, as well as the post-1965 battles to integrate the mills. It is important to complement this work by exploring the industry's demise, especially as South Carolinians were at the forefront of efforts to avert it. In addition to Hollings, Congressman Butler Derrick and Senator J. Strom Thurmond played leading roles in the fight to stem the tide of textile imports.¹³

Although some textile jobs were eliminated by automation, imports were clearly the main threat to the industry's viability. The incoming goods had their greatest impact on the apparel sector, where labor costs comprised a significant part of the finished product. Because the textile firms were a major supplier to apparel producers, however, both sectors were hurt by imports.¹⁴ In the mid 1950s, 5 percent of the women's and children's

(Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath, 1987). For a sociological work that also explores the industry's decline, see Jeffrey Leiter et al., eds., *Hanging by a Thread: Social Change in Southern Textiles* (Ithaca, N.Y.: ILR Press, 1991). As this book was published almost two decades ago, however, it does not cover recent developments. For path-breaking early work on deindustrialization in other southern industries, see Bill Bamberger and Cathy N. Davidson, *Closing: The Life and Death of an American Factory* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998); Steve May and Laura Morrison, "Making Sense of Restructuring: Narratives of Accommodation among Downsized Workers," in Cowie and Heathcott, *Beyond the Ruins*, 259-283; Joy L. Hart and Tracy E. K'Meyer, "Worker Memory and Narrative: Personal Stories of Deindustrialization in Louisville, Kentucky," *ibid.*, 284-304.

¹³ For important work on southern textile workers and their communities, see: Hall et al., *Like a Family*; James A. Hodges, *New Deal Labor Policy and the Southern Cotton Textile Industry, 1933-1941* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1986); John A. Salmond, *The General Textile Strike of 1934: From Maine to Alabama* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002); Michelle Brattain, *The Politics of Whiteness: Race, Workers, and Culture in the Modern South* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001). For textile studies with a South Carolina focus, see Carlton, *Mill and Town in South Carolina*; Waldrep, *Southern Workers and the Search for Community*. For a useful overview of some of the earlier work on southern textiles, see Robert H. Zieger, "Textile Workers and Historians," in *Organized Labor in the Twentieth-Century South*, ed. Zieger (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 35-59. For case studies that give some coverage to early individual mill closings, see Beth English, *A Common Thread: Labor, Politics, and Capital Mobility in the Textile Industry* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), especially pp. 173-176; Douglas Flamming, *Creating the Modern South: Millhands and Managers in Dalton, Georgia, 1884-1984* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 307-327. The mill closures that English and Flamming explore occurred in 1959 and 1969, well before the industry's broader collapse.

¹⁴ For an overview of the relationship between the textile and apparel sectors, see Murray, "Unraveling Employment Trends in Textiles and Apparel," 62-72; U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, *The U.S. Textile and Apparel Industry: A Revolution in Progress—Special Report*, OTA-TET-332 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1987), 11. In this article, as in the Office of Technology Assessment report, the term "textile" is often used to represent the entire industry complex.

apparel sold in the United States was imported, but by the mid 1980s, this figure had risen to 52 percent. Over the same period, textile imports increased 428 percent, and by the mid 1980s, they accounted for about one-third of U.S. textile consumption. In 1987 a detailed study by the federal Office of Technology Assessment claimed that import competition was threatening the very existence of the textile and apparel industry: "Imports have flooded domestic markets. Unless policy action is taken in the next few years, there is reason to be concerned about the very existence of many parts of the industry." Because top policy makers continued to embrace free trade, by 1998 textile and apparel imports stood at \$66.6 billion, nearly four times U.S. exports of \$17.48 billion.¹⁵

While Hollings's actions were partly a reflection of the industry's economic importance to his home state, they also reflected his broader belief that if it did not do more to protect its key manufacturing industries, the United States would decline on the world stage. "It has always been my strong conviction," he wrote in 1984, "that a great country cannot sustain without basic industry such as steel, automobiles, textiles and the like. There are those who think our future is in high tech or the service sector, but I don't believe they have any understanding of what makes a nation great." During World War II, Hollings had served as an army officer, and he concluded from the experience that the United States had prevailed in the conflict largely because of its manufacturing capacity. After the war, Hollings argued that American policy makers had naively opened the country's markets, while their counterparts in developing countries had refused to reciprocate. As a result, U.S. industries declined and the country's trade deficit increased dramatically. Rising deficits worried Hollings, who consistently argued that government had to be fiscally responsible in order to retain the public's trust. In 1984 Hollings made fiscal accountability the key theme of his short-lived presidential campaign, which collapsed after a heavy loss to Walter Mondale in the New Hampshire primary.¹⁶

Throughout his long political career, Hollings tried to protect the textile industry, because he viewed it as a bellwether for the American economy as a whole. His gubernatorial papers detail his early efforts to assist the industry. Over the course of the 1950s, around four hundred thousand textile workers lost their jobs, and most mill owners blamed rising imports

¹⁵ John Gaventa and Barbara Ellen Smith, "The Deindustrialization of the Textile South: A Case Study," in Leiter, *Hanging by a Thread*, 183; Rhonda Zingraff, "Facing Extinction?" *ibid.*, 208; U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, *The U.S. Textile and Apparel Industry*, 3 (quotation); Stella M. Hopkins, "Textile Institute Continues Long-term Battle with Imports," *State*, March 11, 1999.

¹⁶ Ernest F. Hollings to Rick Miller, March 21, 1984, box 9, Ninety-eighth Congress files, Hollings Papers; Ernest F. Hollings, "U.S. Can't Trade Freely in Unfair Markets," *State*, July 18, 2004.

for the losses. Acting on their complaints, Governor Hollings used his friendship with John F. Kennedy to good effect. As one of Kennedy's most influential supporters in the South, Hollings was well placed to lobby the presidential candidate. Hollings wrote Kennedy in August 1960, for instance, urging him to do more to protect the industry from imports entering the U.S. market, particularly from Japan. The industry, he noted, was "of critical importance to the economy of my region and, indeed, to the entire United States." In a sympathetic and warm response, Senator Kennedy noted that the decline of the textile industry had hurt his home state of Massachusetts, too. He chastised President Eisenhower for failing to protect the mills and agreed that textile imports "should be within limits which will not endanger our own existing textile capacity and employment."¹⁷

After campaigning for him for president in South Carolina, Hollings secured several meetings with Kennedy in the fall. At the gatherings, Hollings was adamant that the industry should receive more presidential assistance. On January 7, 1961, Hollings had lunch with President-Elect Kennedy and secured a commitment from him that "solutions" would be found to the industry's problems. After further meetings, in May Kennedy announced a seven-point program to assist the textile industry. Key provisions included extra federal funding to assist modernization and the promise of further assistance from the federal government if the industry suffered "serious injury" from increased imports. In justifying the program, Kennedy insisted that the industry was such a large employer, its fate had a "direct effect" upon the health of the overall economy.¹⁸

Hollings was delighted with the outcome. "This is the best thing that has happened to the industry in decades," he declared. "The jobs of the textile workers will no longer be considered expendable." John K. Cauthen, a leading figure in the South Carolina Textile Manufacturers Association, was full of praise for Hollings's efforts. "Governor Hollings has opened the doors of the White House and all of the government departments, concerned with our problem, at the very top," he wrote. "We have not just gotten into the White House, but we have reached the President." Many association members sent similar letters of appreciation to Governor Hollings.¹⁹

¹⁷Hollings, *Making Government Work*, 101-102; Ernest F. Hollings to Senator John F. Kennedy, August 26, 1960, box 21, Gubernatorial files, Hollings Papers; John F. Kennedy to Governor Ernest Hollings, August 30, 1960, *ibid.*

¹⁸Ernest Hollings to Z. L. Sanders, January 14, 1961, box 21, Gubernatorial files, Hollings Papers; White House press release, May 2, 1961, *ibid.*

¹⁹Statement by Ernest F. Hollings, May 2, 1961, box 21, Gubernatorial files, Hollings Papers; John K. Cauthen to W. F. Robertson et al., May 8, 1961, *ibid.*; W. Gordon McCabe, Jr., to Ralph Cuthbertson and E. F. Hollings, May 4, 1961, *ibid.*

In the months that followed, the mood soured, especially as some executives realized that the agreement failed to contain strict import quotas. In addition, they charged that many of the provisions were not properly administered, particularly when Kennedy devolved the running of the program to State Department officials. By late 1962, Hollings was counseling one frustrated textile executive that he was doing his best to influence federal policy, but that "the 'force' approach is not a wise one."²⁰

Following his election to the U.S. Senate in November 1966, Hollings came to the conclusion that further action was needed on the import issue. "We were getting socked by the unfair practices of foreign manufacturers," he recalled. By now Hollings accepted that only strict import quotas could effectively protect textile jobs. Looking for a measure that he could use "as a vehicle to boost the textiles," in April 1968 Hollings introduced an amendment to a trade bill that had just passed the House. The amendment empowered the president to impose import quotas or otherwise restrict imports in order to protect textile jobs. Although sixty-eight senators supported the move, it was killed by what Hollings referred to as "the free trade crowd." In particular, the amendment was opposed by Wilbur Mills of Arkansas, the powerful chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, and by the State Department, which insisted that it would "damage the prestige of the U.S. abroad." Working with the Senate Finance Committee conferees, Mills made sure that Hollings's amendment was dropped. While disappointed with the outcome, textile executives insisted that the South Carolina senator had helped to publicize their plight. Calling the passage of the trade bill "reason for encouragement," the president of the American Textile Manufacturers Institute (ATMI) praised Hollings's efforts. "No one person has done more than you to find meaningful answers to the textile import problem," wrote Robert C. Jackson in a May letter to Hollings. "You have been a real leader in this effort, and we will be leaning heavily on you in the future."²¹

In the 1970s, textile imports continued to increase and Hollings's constituents urged him to take action. Pressure came from both workers and managers. "I am writing you because of concern for my job," explained mill worker Katherine Deese from Cheraw. "What concerns me most is the increase in imports in Textile. . . . America can not afford to loose [*sic*] this industry like it did with electronics and shoe industry." Some correspondents even reminded Hollings of his duty to assist them. "We, the people at

²⁰ J. M. Cheatham et al. to John F. Kennedy, June 29, 1961, box 21, Gubernatorial files, Hollings Papers; Robert Stevens to Fritz Hollings, July 28, 1961, *ibid.*; Ernest Hollings to William A. L. Sibley, August 23, 1962, *ibid.*

²¹ Hollings, *Making Government Work*, 129-130 (first three quotations); State Department press release, March 28, 1968, box 7, Ninetieth Congress files, Hollings Papers; Robert C. Jackson to Ernest F. Hollings, May 16, 1968, *ibid.*

La France and Riegel Corp. put you in office to help the textile people," warned Mr. and Mrs. Gary Padgett. "But, seems like no one cares about cheap imports coming to the U.S.A. any more."²²

Anxious to respond, Hollings promised to introduce legislation that would address the "serious danger" posed by textile imports. In 1970 and 1971, he sponsored bills that imposed import quotas, but they failed to pass Congress. Undeterred, Hollings insisted that the industry could not survive unfair competition from low-wage foreign producers, especially as they were often propped up by government subsidies. "The Korean textile worker receives hourly compensation of 55 cents, while our textile worker gets \$4.53," he explained. "I don't call this situation 'free trade'—I see it as a giveaway whereby we give the freedom and other countries get the trade."²³

Hollings's best chance came in September 1978, when he introduced an amendment that granted the textile industry automatic exclusion from tariff reductions. Although the amendment was attached to a key trade bill, Hollings mobilized enough support to ensure that it passed the Senate easily. Despite this President Carter vetoed the measure, because he believed that it would invite retaliation from America's trading partners and "harm the entire U.S. economy." Worried by Japanese protests, Carter's aides also undermined Hollings's efforts. At the time, Hollings noted his "disappointment" with the outcome, but he refrained from openly criticizing the Democratic president. In the aftermath of the veto, the senator tried to get Carter to enforce pledges to help the ailing textile industry.²⁴

With the election of Ronald Reagan, the prospects for assisting the textile industry seemed to improve. During the election campaign, Reagan had promised to strengthen the 1974 Multifiber Agreement to protect "vitaly needed American jobs," and Hollings was determined to hold the new president to his word. Although this international agreement was supposed to regulate the textile trade, by the early 1980s it was being widely violated. In December 1982, for example, Hollings complained to Reagan that a "rising tide of Chinese imports" was hurting domestic textile produc-

²² Katherine Deese to Ernest F. Hollings, September 12, 1978, box 8, Ninety-fifth Congress files, Hollings Papers; Mr. and Mrs. Gary Padgett to Ernest Hollings, October 4, 1978, *ibid.*

²³ Ernest F. Hollings to A. C. Terry, March 5, 1971, box 10, Ninety-second Congress files, Hollings Paper; Ernest F. Hollings to P. Bailey Williams, July 18, 1978, box 8, Ninety-fifth Congress files (first quotation), *ibid.*; Ernest F. Hollings to Colleague, April 24, 1978, box 8, Ninety-fifth Congress files (second and third quotations), *ibid.*

²⁴ Art Pine, "Carter Veto Expected on Textile Tariffs," *Washington Post*, October 19, 1978; Jimmy Carter, "Memorandum of Disapproval," November 11, 1978 (Carter quotation), box 8, Ninety-fifth Congress files, Hollings Papers; Ernest F. Hollings to Ronald L. Muller, November 14, 1978, *ibid.*

Despite the upbeat language, Hollings knew that it would be very difficult to get the bill onto the statute books. Powerful senators such as Oregon's Robert Packwood and Washington's Slade Gordon opposed the legislation, and President Bush's aides also were hostile. Hollings fought back, amending the bill to broaden its appeal. Ultimately, sixty-eight senators voted for the legislation, but Bush followed Reagan's lead and exercised his veto. On October 10, 1990, the House fell ten short of the two-thirds vote needed to override the veto. For Hollings the outcome was both familiar and frustrating. "President Kennedy had saved the industry in 1961," he wrote, "but now four Presidents—Johnson, Carter, Reagan, and Bush—had thwarted efforts to protect our nation's textile industry even after substantial majorities of lawmakers had backed our legislation."³⁵

Although he promised Americans a clear change after twelve years of Republican rule, President Clinton likewise supported the expansion of free trade as a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy. The new Democratic president proved an enthusiastic backer of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which Bush had signed in his closing days in office. The measure was designed to remove trade barriers between the United States, Mexico, and Canada, but it contained few safeguards for workers' rights, particularly those in the manufacturing plants along the U.S.-Mexico border. An interesting coalition of labor, environmental, and protectionist groups opposed the agreement, chiefly because they feared that it would undermine American living standards. Believing that textile jobs were too good to lose, Hollings spoke out against NAFTA in typically forthright fashion. As he wrote an opponent in late 1993, "While daddy grows tobacco there in Hartsville, mama is working in the sewing plant and together they are trying to send that boy to Clemson. NAFTA would ruin this."³⁶

For Hollings, NAFTA would simply encourage U.S. firms to flee to Mexico in search of lower wages. Before the agreement was ratified, he argued, the nations involved should commit to a "social compact" that would establish "minimum standards for labor rights and environmental protection." Although he was a conservative Democrat from a right-to-work state, when it came to NAFTA Hollings cooperated with labor unions. After seeing the squalid conditions endured by Mexican workers in foreign-owned assembly plants, the veteran senator believed that the proposed accord would only "bolster the Mexican oligarchy and legitimize oppres-

³⁵ "Rebuttal to Administration Objections to the Textile, Apparel and Footwear Trade Act of 1990," July 12, 1990, box 8, One Hundred First Congress files, Hollings Papers; Hollings, *Making Government Work*, 237-239 (quotation on p. 238).

³⁶ Robert H. Zieger and Gilbert J. Gall, *American Workers, American Unions*, 3rd ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 250; Ernest F. Hollings to Edward E. Saleeby, November 18, 1993, box 9, One Hundred Third Congress files, Hollings Papers.

sion." In the lead up to the key Congressional vote, the country's largest federation of unions, the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), spent \$3.2 million on billboard and radio advertising in order to convey a similar message.³⁷

Despite this intensive lobbying effort, NAFTA's opponents came up short. President Clinton was a persuasive advocate for the agreement, which he insisted would open up new markets and "benefit every region of our country." The Arkansan helped to persuade 102 Democrats to vote for the agreement, most of them from rural and southern districts that contained few unions. Hollings felt that the president's role was decisive. "Clinton's mastery as a speaker and a backroom dealer was too much for those of us opposed to NAFTA," he later admitted.³⁸ Export-oriented businesses also pushed hard for the agreement. Crucially, textile executives were divided in their response to NAFTA, as some yarn-makers hoped that it would unlock new export markets. NAFTA was even endorsed by the ATMI, the industry's main trade organization. Within South Carolina, powerful Springs Industries chief executive Walter Elisha reasoned that NAFTA would create "hundreds of jobs" in the company's plants. A few other textile-industry leaders agreed with this position.³⁹

While NAFTA has benefited some export-driven businesses, the agreement has undoubtedly had a negative overall impact on the import-sensitive textile industry. Between 1993 and 2003, about half of all U.S. textile and apparel workers lost their jobs. While some of these losses were generated by other causes, including rising competition from China and the ongoing impact of automation, NAFTA clearly facilitated outsourcing. In North Carolina, where many observers blamed NAFTA for the industry's collapse, Governor Michael F. Easley emerged as a fierce critic of the agreement. Across the country, even ardent free traders were placed on the defensive. In 2004, for example, the Business Roundtable acknowledged in a key publication that textile and apparel workers had been hurt by NAFTA. Nevertheless, the free-trade group insisted that the agreement had been

³⁷ Peter T. Kilborn, "The Free Trade Accord; Little Voices Roar in the Chorus of Trade-Pact Foes," *New York Times*, November 13, 1993; Hollings, *Making Government Work*, 251-255 (quotations on p. 254). For an eloquent summary of Hollings's opposition to NAFTA, see Ernest F. Hollings, "Reform Mexico First," *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1993, 91-102.

³⁸ Bill Clinton to Mr. Chairman, November 18, 1993, box 9, One Hundred Third Congress files, Hollings Papers (Clinton quotation); Peter T. Kilborn, "The Free Trade Accord: Labor, Unions Vow to Punish Pact's Backers," *New York Times*, November 19, 1993; Hollings, *Making Government Work*, 255.

³⁹ "North American Free Trade Agreement" (ATMI press release), May 3, 1993, box 9, One Hundred Third Congress files, Hollings Papers; Walter Y. Elisha to Fritz Hollings, March 4, 1993, *ibid.*; M. L. Cates, Jr., to Ernest F. Hollings, November 2, 1993, *ibid.*

beneficial "on balance" because "the 'winners' outweighed the 'losers.'" For its critics, however, NAFTA was a "job-killing accord" that only benefited corporate elites.⁴⁰

As he fought to protect the textile industry, Hollings cooperated closely with Roger Milliken, the most powerful textile industrialist in the state. With over sixty plants in eleven countries, at the turn of the twenty-first century Milliken and Company was South Carolina's largest privately held business. Interestingly, the two men worked together even though Milliken was an active Republican. As journalist John Monk has observed in the *State*, Milliken's money "helped propel the Republican careers of major politicians, including Ronald Reagan and Strom Thurmond." Although the Republicans generally supported free trade more vigorously than the Democrats, in reality trade issues cut across party lines. In Congress southerners from both parties supported the textile bills, while most representatives from the western states, which were home to many export-oriented industries, opposed them. As David E. Rosenbaum of the *New York Times* explained, members of Congress tended to be "parochial," and they naturally responded to their constituents' concerns.⁴¹

Ultimately, Hollings and Milliken worked together because they both wanted to save as many textile jobs as they could. As early as 1961, they were corresponding closely about the industry's fate, and Milliken was already pushing Hollings to "fight vigorously" for legislation that would introduce "specific quotas" on textile imports, a position that the governor disagreed with at the time. On March 13, 1961, however, Hollings had a cordial visit to Milliken's research facility in Spartanburg, where he presented the textile magnate with an engraved cigarette box.⁴² In 1978 Milliken played a key role in mobilizing support for Hollings's textile bill, securing enough corporate backing to ensure that the legislation made it through the Senate. During the fight to pass subsequent textile bills, Milliken again backed the Democratic senator. In 1990, for example, he sent Hollings a personal note to thank him

⁴⁰ Michael Janofsky, "For Bush, Loss of Jobs May Erode Support," *New York Times*, August 18, 2003; Ariel Hart, "South, North Carolina: A Case against Free Trade," *New York Times*, October 18, 2003; "NAFTA: A Decade of Growth," Business Roundtable white paper, February 2004, p. 24 (available online at <http://www.businessroundtable.org/publications>); David Sirota, "Hope in the Time of NAFTA," *In These Times*, March 7, 2008 (available online at http://www.inthesetimes.com/article/3558/hope_in_the_time_of_nafta/).

⁴¹ John Monk, "Roger Milliken: The Last Textile Giant," *State*, October 7, 2001; Rosenbaum, "Trade Issues Enter Crucial Political Phase."

⁴² Roger Milliken to Ernest F. Hollings, January 12, 1961, box 21, Gubernatorial files, Hollings Papers; Ernest Hollings to Roger Milliken, January 16, 1961, *ibid.*; Roger Milliken to Fritz, March 13, 1961, *ibid.*

for the "grand leadership" he had exerted "at this key moment of signing up cosponsors and introducing the textile bill."⁴³

In the wake of NAFTA, the two men shared their thoughts about what Milliken termed "the destruction of our manufacturing and job base." For instance, in 1995 the industrialist thanked Hollings for trying to save textile jobs: "The textile/apparel complex of over 1.4 million manufacturing jobs in this country is indebted [*sic*] to you for your efforts on behalf of these most important, steady, good-paying jobs." Unlike many other executives, Milliken refused to become despondent about the prospects of keeping the industry alive.⁴⁴ As Hollings noted in his memoirs, "Roger 'stayed on ready' when it came to international trade. He's the one corporate executive who supports American production." Even when Milliken was well into his eighties, he was still fighting to protect American jobs.⁴⁵

Following NAFTA, Hollings did his best to influence trade policy, and he remained a commanding presence in Washington. As the *New York Times* noted in 1994, the South Carolina senator was "a Made-in-America warrior on free trade" who wielded considerable influence. In that year, Hollings used his power as chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee to "single-handedly" delay passage of the comprehensive General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).⁴⁶ Dubbed by the *Times* as "the Godzilla of free-trade accords," GATT was a complex 22,000-page agreement that mandated \$744 billion in tariff reductions between 123 nations. Using fast-track rules that required each chamber in Congress to act with only an up-or-down vote with no amendments, the Clinton administration was anxious to get GATT through Congress before the midterm elections. Hollings, however, found that the rules also allowed each committee chairman with jurisdiction to take as much as forty-five days to consider the bill. He decided to use the full time as a means of protesting against the way that free-trade policies had hurt manufacturing industries. Hollings also felt that the newly created World Trade Organization should not be allowed to referee members' trade disputes because this undermined national sovereignty. In an effort to make his case, Hollings organized important hearings, which showed that 4.5 million Americans had lost permanent jobs to outsourcing over the previous three years, and that the collapse of the textile

⁴³ Hollings, *Making Government Work*, 195-196; Roger Milliken to Fritz Hollings, April 11, 1990, box 8, One Hundred First Congress files, Hollings Papers.

⁴⁴ Roger Milliken to Ernest Hollings, October 31, 1995, box 8, One Hundred Fourth Congress files (first quotation), Hollings Papers; Roger Milliken to Ernest F. Hollings, August 7, 1997, box 10, One Hundred Fifth Congress files, *ibid*.

⁴⁵ Hollings, *Making Government Work*, 196; Roger Milliken to Fritz Hollings, October 9, 2001, box 9, One Hundred Seventh Congress files, Hollings Papers.

⁴⁶ Edmund L. Andrews, "Man in the News: Ernest Frederick Hollings; A Made-in-America Warrior on Free Trade," *New York Times*, September 29, 1994.

industry had caused the U.S. textile deficit to grow from \$4 billion in 1980 to \$31 billion in 1994.⁴⁷

Despite Hollings's efforts, pressure from the president and business groups helped to ensure that GATT made its way through Congress in late November 1994. According to Clinton, free trade was good for American workers. "Opening markets and expanding exports are fundamental parts of our overall strategy to create jobs and improve the living standards of working Americans," he insisted. In the wake of the midterm elections, in which the Republicans recorded big gains, Clinton's aides made a deal with incoming majority leader Robert J. "Bob" Dole, and GATT was adopted with only minor revisions.⁴⁸

Following GATT, the decline of the American textile industry accelerated, and mill closures became a familiar feature of the news. As the industry shrank, mill owners gradually lost their ability to influence public policy. In 2001 China gained entry to the World Trade Organization, and over the next two years, that country's share in twenty-nine textile and apparel products jumped from 9 to 45 percent. Between 2001 and 2003, the U.S. Labor Department estimated that 270,000 textile and apparel workers, or a quarter of the industry, lost their jobs. In July 2003, ATMI spokesman Cass Johnson declared that "this industry is literally flat on its back, and if the government doesn't do something about it, we're going to disappear." The Bush administration, however, was reluctant to alienate China, which had become an important trading partner and a vital ally in the nuclear dispute with North Korea.⁴⁹ By 2004 the U.S. trade deficit with China was \$162 billion, the largest imbalance ever recorded with a single country. While some textile products were still protected by quotas, when the Multifiber Agreement expired in 2005 all remaining restrictions were lifted, and textile firms had to compete directly against Chinese imports, many of them made by workers who were paid just fifty-seven cents an hour. Unable to survive, several of the leading American textile makers sought bankruptcy protection. By 2006 the U.S. trade deficit was an unprecedented \$763.6 billion.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ David E. Sanger, "Funny Things Happen on the Way to a Treaty," *New York Times*, November 20, 1994; Hollings, *Making Government Work*, 255-258.

⁴⁸ "The Lame-Duck Congress: The Vote; House Approves Trade Agreement by a Wide Margin," *New York Times*, November 30, 1994; David E. Sanger, "Senate Seems Set to Approve Trade Accord," *New York Times*, December 1, 1994; Bill Clinton to Mr. Chairman, September 28, 1994, box 9, One Hundred Third Congress files, Hollings Papers (quotation).

⁴⁹ David Barboza, "Textile Industry Seeks Trade Limits on Chinese," *New York Times*, July 25, 2003.

⁵⁰ Edmund L. Andrews and Elizabeth Becker, "U.S. Begins Steps to Limit Import Surge from China," *New York Times*, April 5, 2005; Judith Banister, "Manufacturing Earnings and Compensation in China," *Monthly Labor Review*, August 2005, 22-40 (wage statistic on p. 22); Hollings, *Making Government Work*, 255.

Appalled by these developments, many South Carolinians urged Hollings to keep up the fight. "Manufacturing is leaving the United States and soon we will have nothing left," wrote Herbert Vanderbilt from Hilton Head Island in 2001. "If the people of this country don't manufacture something and keep all the dollars within it's [sic] borders, you and I both know what will eventually happen." Another correspondent spelled out the consequences of further job losses. "No de-industrialized superpower can long remain a superpower," asserted Gary P. Bunker from Aiken. Although he agreed with these sentiments, Hollings's efforts to alter the direction of trade policy now achieved little. As the *State's* Carolyn Click has noted, in his fight against the expansion of free trade the senator was "floating against a current."⁵¹

Throughout his career, in fact, Hollings came up against some powerful opponents. Among them were the big retailers, who could make higher margins by selling imported textiles. In addition, retail stores supported free trade because they wanted access to new markets. Helped by NAFTA, which it strongly advocated, Wal-Mart surged into Canada and Mexico. After opening its first Mexican store in 1991, within twelve years the giant firm had 633 outlets and was the biggest private employer in the Latin American country.⁵² The press supported free trade, as well, partly because it was heavily dependent on advertising revenue from retailers. In 1978, for instance, the *Washington Post* insisted that the textile industry was already protected from foreign competition. Hollings's amendment, it added, was "a highly destructive little piece of legislation."⁵³

On at least four occasions in the 1980s, the *New York Times* also opposed efforts to help the textile industry. In October 1988, the paper supported President Reagan's veto of the textile bill by asserting that it had prevented retaliation against American exporters. What is more, the *Times* argued that because textile jobs were low-paying, laid off workers had a good chance of landing better-paying work in other industries.⁵⁴ This line continued in the 1990s, and in 1994 the paper's editors even argued that the loss of textile jobs under GATT was "a reasonable price to pay for the country to rack

⁵¹ Herbert Vanderbilt to Ernest Hollings, June 26, 2001, box 9, One Hundred Seventh Congress files, Hollings Papers; Gary P. Bunker to Ernest Hollings, January 26, 2002, *ibid.*; Carolyn Click, "Power and Possibilities," *State*, June 15, 2008.

⁵² Tim Weiner, "Wal-Mart Invades, and Mexico Gladly Surrenders," *New York Times*, December 6, 2003.

⁵³ "The Price of Protection," *Washington Post*, October 5, 1978, p. A18.

⁵⁴ "When Labor Owns the Mill," *New York Times*, January 16, 1984; "Why Rig the Rules against Imports?" *New York Times*, September 28, 1987; "Who'll Pay to Fatten Textile Profits?" *New York Times*, September 8, 1988; "Twice Right on Trade," *New York Times*, October 3, 1988.

up huge gains nearly everywhere else." Within South Carolina, the *State* supported free-trade policies.⁵⁵

While the bulk of Hollings's correspondents agreed with his trade policies, some took a different view. In 1984 retired government employee Robert G. Trumbull, Jr., criticized the senator's stance. "We must find a place in our market for third world textiles and other products if we intend to keep the world financial markets in balance, and if 'protectionists' are allowed to push false issues . . . we can damage our own exports," he argued. As the textile industry gradually declined, this viewpoint became more common. In particular, many South Carolinians reasoned that their state no longer needed to rely on textile companies because it was attracting better-paying firms to replace them. New arrivals such as Michelin and BMW were the way forward, they insisted. BMW's appearance certainly generated other growth, particularly in the Greer area. Between 1986 and 2003, some two hundred auto-supply companies invested \$11 billion in the state, with most locating close to the German firm's plant.⁵⁶

As the state's economy changed, residents debated whether the new jobs could effectively replace those that were being lost. By the start of the 1990s, some insisted that South Carolina no longer needed the textile industry. According to McBee businessman J. W. Martin, in a "free market economy" it was futile to try stopping low-wage jobs from moving overseas. "South Carolina is trying to attract higher-end industry," he added. "We are successful in doing so. We are getting car plants. We are getting businesses that supply them and other good business, too." Pointing out that the new factories did not provide as many jobs as the textile plants, others strongly disagreed. "That sucking sound you hear in the future will be the closing of the coffin as 2.1 million textile jobs head to Mexico and Red China," blasted Saluda resident William G. Carter. "It will take more than a BMW plant to replace them." Supporting Carter's point, in 1993 BMW executives announced that they expected to receive over one hundred thousand applications for the first thousand jobs at their Greer facility.⁵⁷

Hollings also faced an influential opponent in Carroll A. Campbell, Jr., the Republican who served as governor from 1987 to 1995. As a young Congressman from a textile district, Campbell initially backed efforts to

⁵⁵ "For Freer Trade—and Better Jobs," *New York Times*, November 29, 1994; "Textile Bill Could Spur Trade Problems," *State*, September 19, 1988, p. 12A.

⁵⁶ Robert G. Trumbull, Jr., to Senator Hollings, August 6, 1984, box 9, Ninety-eighth Congress files, Hollings Papers; Phil Patton, "Driving: The Changing South Finds Its Way on I-85," *New York Times*, July 11, 2003.

⁵⁷ J. W. Martin, Jr., to Ernest F. Hollings, November 11, 1993, box 9, One Hundred Third Congress files, Hollings Papers; "GATT Treaty Will Kill S.C. Textile Industry," *State*, December 25, 1993, p. 12A (Carter quotation); Doron P. Levin, "What BMW Sees in South Carolina," *New York Times*, April 11, 1993.

protect the industry. A key member of the Congressional Textile Caucus, Campbell supported the 1985 textile bill and even arranged for members of the Ways and Means Trade Subcommittee to visit his district and see how imports were hurting local mills. "I have no higher priority than insuring [sic] the health of this most basic industry," he declared at the time.⁵⁸ Once elected to statewide office, however, Campbell embraced free trade and undercut Hollings's efforts. In the 1988 Republican primary, for example, the governor backed George Bush, who opposed the textile bill, rather than Bob Dole, who belatedly announced his support for the measure. A powerful and ambitious politician, Campbell helped to ensure that Bush easily overcame Dole's challenge.⁵⁹

During his political career, Campbell oversaw the growth of the Republican party in South Carolina, thus eroding Hollings's political base. In 1987 only twenty-nine of 124 state legislators were Republicans, but by 1994 the party controlled the legislature. During his term in office, Campbell argued that the decline of the textile industry was inevitable and was caused as much by automation as it was by imports. He also insisted that the state's future lay in attracting new industry, rather than trying to save the ailing textile mills. "We have 110,000 new jobs in South Carolina in foreign-owned factories," he boasted in 1996. "More than \$27 billion in new investment, lots from abroad. Jobs that pay an average of 5 to 15 percent more than the old average in this state." By attracting so much foreign investment, Campbell established a powerful political constituency that embraced free trade. They included both native-born South Carolinians and a significant number of migrants from other states. In the 1996 Republican primary, voters rejected Patrick J. "Pat" Buchanan's protectionist message, even though he made a direct appeal to textile workers. "The factory workers who collected paychecks from foreign corporations like BMW, Michelin and Hitachi concluded that tariffs were not in their best interest," stated journalists Jim Yardley and David Firestone.⁶⁰ As South Carolina became increasingly Republican, Hollings found it difficult to win re-election, a change that contributed to his decision to stand down after he had served six full terms.

⁵⁸ Carroll A. Campbell, Jr., to Tommy Crisp, March 26, 1985, box 25, Carroll Campbell Congressional Papers, South Carolina Political Collections, University of South Carolina, Columbia.

⁵⁹ Michael Oreskes, "In South Carolina, Republicans Find Import Issue," *New York Times*, February 26, 1988; R. W. Apple, Jr., "In Victory, Bush Seems Beneficiary of a Legacy," *New York Times*, March 7, 1988.

⁶⁰ R. W. Apple, Jr., "Former Carolina Governor Promises His State for Dole," *New York Times*, February 29, 1996; Jim Yardley and David Firestone, "Old-Line Republican Finds an Independent Streak among the Voters," *New York Times*, February 17, 2000.

He was one of five southern Democratic Senators not to run for re-election in 2004, and Republicans won all of those contests.⁶¹

Industries that relied heavily on exports also supported the expansion of free trade. In South Carolina, good examples included the pulp and paper industry, the medical-supplies industry, and agricultural producers. "I can't over-emphasize our industry's reliance on exports," wrote paper-mill executive L. Edward Haws, Jr., to Hollings at the time of the NAFTA vote. Instead of being a threat, for firms like Bowater, NAFTA offered "a clear opportunity to ensure long-term trade growth throughout North America."⁶² Working through corporate organizations such as the Business Roundtable and the United States Chamber of Commerce, the export lobby had a powerful influence on politicians around the country. This was certainly evident during the GATT vote. As the *New York Times* reported in 1994, ultimately Hollings was unable to stop GATT because he was "outnumbered by senators who have concluded that their states will gain more by exporting wheat, airplane parts or software than they will lose as aging industries fall by the wayside."⁶³

While free-trade advocates tried to downplay the costs associated with the textile industry's decline, there is no doubt that the demise of such a large employer has caused considerable hardship for thousands of South Carolinians. Over the last two decades or so, former textile workers have generally struggled to share in the wealth that new industries have created. Many had only ever worked in textile mills and were poorly equipped to transfer jobs, especially when they had not finished high school. "You go to a place now, they say, 'You ain't got a high school education, you can't work,'" related a laid-off Union County textile worker in the mid 1990s. "Used to be if you passed a test, you'd be OK." By the 1990s, the textile industry had become a leading employer of women and minorities, and these groups have found it particularly hard to forge new careers. When mills closed in the wake of NAFTA, African Americans lost jobs where they earned an average of eleven dollars per hour, and they also gave up valuable benefits. In late 1995, for example, Oneita Industries closed its sewing plant in the small town of Andrews, laying off a workforce that was comprised largely of black

⁶¹ For more information on the growth of the Republican party in the South and the problems that it generated for Hollings, see Earl Black and Merle Black, *The Rise of Southern Republicans* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), 295-297; Black and Black, *Divided America: The Ferocious Power Struggle in American Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2007), 221.

⁶² L. Edward Haws, Jr., to Ernest F. Hollings, May 17, 1993 (quotations), box 9, One Hundred Third Congress files, Hollings Papers; Harry S. Bell to Ernest Hollings, November 11, 1993, *ibid.*; Gayle O. Averyt to Ernest F. Hollings, October 20, 1993, *ibid.*

⁶³ Sanger, "Senate Seems Set to Approve Trade Accord."

women. For years Oneita's managers had pressed Hollings to stem the flow of imports, and the failure of his legislation clearly influenced the company to curtail its domestic operations.⁶⁴

Many textile mills had been located in small towns, and these communities have found adjusting to plant closures particularly difficult. Over the course of the 1980s, for example, J. P. Stevens and Company closed three textile plants in Great Falls, eliminating sixteen hundred jobs in a town of just twenty-six hundred people. Situated well away from the growth corridor along Interstate 85, Great Falls struggled to recover (in 1991, for example, unemployment in Chester County stood at 15.3 percent). Even in the Greenville-Spartanburg area, many former textile workers ended up working in fast-food restaurants or budget motels, rather than the new industrial plants.⁶⁵

South Carolina's experience was not unusual. Economists have found that workers across the United States struggled to find comparable work when they were laid off from manufacturing jobs. In one study of BLS data, Robert W. Fairlie and Lori G. Kletzer concluded that "for many workers, adjusting to permanent job loss can be difficult, with low probabilities of reemployment, long durations of joblessness, and sizable earnings losses." In 1994 and 1996, the BLS's data showed that displaced workers earned 15 percent less in their new jobs, many of which were part-time. Other studies have revealed that while manufacturing employers were likely to provide their workers with health insurance and other valuable benefits, service sector workers were less likely to receive these rewards.⁶⁶

The demise of the textile industry has recast the identity of not only South Carolina, but also the entire southern region. As one southern journalist noted in 2003, the decline of the industry meant the virtual "extinction" of "a way of life in the South for more than a century." Since the early twentieth century, the industry had dominated the regional economy and exerted a considerable influence on its politics and culture. As *New York Times* writer Henry P. Leiferman noted in 1973, mill workers were "the bedrock of the Deep South's economy, religion, politics, industry." Senators

⁶⁴ Pat Butler, "Job Losses Batter Textile Workers, Towns," *State*, February 17, 1995 (quotation by Stanley Haney); Kim E. McAleer to Ernest F. Hollings, July 21, 1987, box 6, One Hundredth Congress files, Hollings Papers; Louis Uchitelle, "Blacks Lose Better Jobs Faster as Middle-Class Work Drops," *New York Times*, July 12, 2003; "Oneita to Close Andrews Plant," *Post and Courier* (Charleston, S.C.), December 30, 1995.

⁶⁵ Applebome, "The Southeast—A Special Report"; Peter T. Kilborn, "Jobs Are Scarce in the Newest Economy," *New York Times*, October 9, 2001.

⁶⁶ Robert W. Fairlie and Lori G. Kletzer, "Race and the Shifting Burden of Job Displacement: 1982–93," *Monthly Labor Review*, September 1996, 13–23 (quotation on p. 19); Steven Hipple, "Worker Displacement in the Mid-1990s," *Monthly Labor Review*, July 1999, 16, 23–24.

such as Strom Thurmond, Samuel Ervin, and Herman Talmadge had traditionally courted the mill vote, while evangelist Billy Graham started his career by reaching out to "the souls of mill hands." Mill owners had traditionally acted as key powerbrokers in southern politics. Concluded Leiferman, "The industry, from floor sweeper to chairman of the board, reaches everywhere in the South." Despite the influx of new plants, no single industry dominates the region's economic and cultural life anymore. While more scholarship is needed to explore the full implications of the industry's demise, Hollings's papers chart how this once-dominant industry gradually lost its ability to influence political debate.⁶⁷

In South Carolina, closures eliminated companies that had played a defining role in the state's history. In 1845 the state legislature granted a charter to Graniteville Manufacturing Company and founder William Gregg proceeded to oversee the construction of the piedmont's first mill village. In order to secure a steady supply of labor, Gregg built modest houses for his workers, a move that many other industrialists later copied. With Graniteville's closure in 2006, the region lost one of its oldest and most influential textile firms. "Part of South Carolina's history is disappearing," commented University of South Carolina historian Thomas Terrill at the time. In 2007 Springs Industries also ended its long history of manufacturing in South Carolina, when it closed its last two plants in the state. As recently as the mid 1990s, the company had employed fifteen thousand workers in the Carolinas, but by 2007 just seven hundred remained, and they were mostly white-collar staff. "The closing of these plants reflects the global nature of the textile industry, which has made U.S. textile manufacturing uncompetitive," commented Springs chief executive officer Crandall Bowles, whose great-great grandfather had started the company in 1887.⁶⁸

Throughout his long career, Hollings was acutely aware of the textile industry's importance to both South Carolina and the South as a whole. While some politicians saw textile jobs as expendable, Hollings understood the pride that many southerners took in mill work, particularly in the close-knit piedmont villages. After a lifetime of working in the mills, many displaced workers could not imagine life without them. "Even in our darkest days, we had the mills," one worker stated, reacting to the 1996 closure of Olympia Mills in Columbia. "This just twists your heart." Despite Hollings's best efforts, the South is now home to hundreds of empty and

⁶⁷ Katherine Yung, "Trade Deal Hurts U.S. Textiles," *State*, October 19, 2003; Henry P. Leiferman, "Trouble in the South's First Industry: The Unions Are Coming," *New York Times Magazine*, August 5, 1973, 10.

⁶⁸ Hall et al., *Like a Family*, 116-117; Gina Smith, "Textile Workers See Bleak Future," *State*, July 23, 2006, p. A1 (Terrill quotation); Stella M. Hopkins, "Springs Closing Last S.C. Plants," *State*, June 28, 2007, p. B7.

padlocked mill buildings. Like millions of Americans, South Carolina's displaced textile workers now have to forge a future without the manufacturing plants that provided them and their ancestors with stable jobs.⁶⁹

After 2005, when Hollings stepped away from politics, many Americans remained troubled by the rapid decline of the manufacturing sector. As the pace of job loss accelerated and the economic climate worsened, some of the former senator's predictions were vindicated. In early 2008, for instance, NAFTA became a hot topic in the Democratic primaries as both Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama accused each other of supporting the unpopular trade deal, which many blamed for extensive job losses in manufacturing industries. In the first seven and a half years of George W. Bush's presidency, 3.5 million manufacturing jobs had disappeared, and many Americans consequently called for trade reform. Responding to this, once he secured the Democratic nomination, Obama pledged to implement "fair trade" policies that incorporated many of Hollings's ideas. In particular, he promised to fight for trade agreements that "spread good labor and environmental standards around the world" and expressed his opposition to "unfair government subsidies to foreign exporters." Noting that the trade deficit had reached an unprecedented 7 percent of the gross domestic product, Obama sensed that many Americans wanted new trade and economic policies. In the future, it seems clear that a fresh generation of lawmakers will continue the difficult struggle to protect American manufacturing jobs, a fight that Hollings helped to initiate.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Andrews, "Man in the News: Ernest Frederick Hollings"; Leona White quoted in Clark Surratt, "Mill Closing Marks End of Era for Neighborhood," *State*, June 29, 1996.

⁷⁰ Adam Davidson, "Clinton, Obama, and NAFTA: A Non-Issue?" February 26, 2008, available at <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=38185288> (accessed August 4, 2008); "Barack Obama's Economic Agenda," available at <http://www.barackobama.com/issues/economy/EconomicPolicyFullPlan.pdf> (accessed August 1, 2008); Tony Walker, "Give and Take of Globalisation," *Australian Financial Review*, August 21, 2008, 76.

"EVERY THING HERE DEPENDS UPON OPINION": NATHANAEL GREENE AND PUBLIC SUPPORT IN THE SOUTHERN CAMPAIGNS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

JAMES HAW*

ON OCTOBER 30, 1780, THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS confirmed George Washington's choice, General Nathanael Greene, as commander of the Continental army in the South.¹ A daunting challenge confronted Greene. After having captured Savannah, Georgia, in December 1778, and forcing the surrender of Charleston, South Carolina—and with it, virtually the entire American army in the South—in May 1780, British forces occupied the two southernmost states. Outrages on the part of the British army and their Tory allies against the persons and property of defeated rebels and other civilians had helped rekindle resistance, and during the summer, volunteer militia began conducting partisan warfare. But Greene's predecessor, General Horatio Gates, had led a restored southern army to disastrous defeat at Camden, South Carolina, in August 1780. Greene would assume command of the outnumbered and badly supplied survivors of Camden, aided by southern partisan militia.²

"Every Thing here depends upon Opinion," Greene wrote, shortly after joining his new command at Charlotte, North Carolina. "If you lose the Confidence of the People you lose all support."³ Greene's recognition that keeping the support of the people was crucial to victory in this popular

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¹ *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789*, ed. Worthington Chauncey Ford, 34 vols. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1904-1937), 18: 994-95.

² Sources on the war in the South are too numerous to list fully. They include Walter B. Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats: The Southern Conflict That Turned the Tide of the American Revolution* (New York: Morrow, 2001); Russell F. Weigley, *The Partisan War: The South Carolina Campaign of 1780-1782* (Columbia: Published for the South Carolina Tricentennial Commission by the University of South Carolina Press, 1970); Henry Lumpkin, *From Savannah to Yorktown: The American Revolution in the South* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1981); John S. Pancake, *This Destructive War: The British Campaign in the Carolinas, 1780-1782* (University: University of Alabama Press, 1985); John Buchanan, *The Road to Guilford Courthouse: The American Revolution in the Carolinas* (New York: Wiley, 1997). For the beginnings of resistance to British occupation in South Carolina, see especially Edgar, *Partisans and Redcoats*, 54-65.

³ Nathanael Greene (hereinafter cited as NG) to Henry Knox, December 7, 1780, *The Papers of General Nathanael Greene*, ed. Richard K. Showman et al., 13 vols.