

Utah State University

DigitalCommons@USU

---

All Graduate Theses and Dissertations

Graduate Studies

---

5-1966

## The Ideology of the John Birch Society

Max P. Peterson

*Utah State University*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd>



Part of the [Political Science Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Peterson, Max P., "The Ideology of the John Birch Society" (1966). *All Graduate Theses and Dissertations*. 7982.

<https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/etd/7982>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate Studies at DigitalCommons@USU. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Graduate Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@USU. For more information, please contact [digitalcommons@usu.edu](mailto:digitalcommons@usu.edu).



THE IDEOLOGY OF THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY

by

Max P. Peterson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Political Science

Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Major Professor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Head of Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of Graduate Studies

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, Utah

1966

37. 7  
944/12

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Milton C. Abrams for the many hours of consultation and direction he provided throughout this study. To Dr. M. Judd Harmon, I express thanks, not only for his constructive criticism on this work, but for the constant challenge he offers as a teacher. A very special thanks is given my wife, Karen, for her countless hours of typing, but first and foremost for the encouragement, understanding, and devotion that she has given me throughout my graduate studies.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction . . . . .	1
Chapter I.	
The Background and Organization of the John Birch Society	4
The Beginning . . . . .	4
The Symbol . . . . .	7
The Founder . . . . .	15
Plan of Action . . . . .	21
Organizational Mechanics . . . . .	27
Chapter II.	
The Ideology of the John Birch Society . . . . .	34
Idea of Conspiracy . . . . .	37
Desirability of Less Government . . . . .	53
Anti-Democratic Feelings . . . . .	60
Authoritarian Concept of Leadership . . . . .	61
International Relations . . . . .	67
Domestic Affairs . . . . .	73
Birch Role on the Local Level . . . . .	85
Birch Influence on Religion . . . . .	93
Chapter III.	
The Ideological Base of the John Birch Society . . . . .	101
The Birch Society as a . . . . Help to Build a Better World . . . . .	101
The Birch View of History . . . . .	105

Chapter IV.

Evaluation of the John Birch Society . . . . .	113
Tactics and Methods of the Society . . . . .	113
Strength of the John Birch Society . . . . .	126
America's Opinion of the John Birch Society . . . . .	136
Conclusion . . . . .	147
Bibliography . . . . .	155
Appendix . . . . .	162

There is the world outside and there are the pictures in our heads. Man behaves not according to the world as it really is but to the world as he thinks it is.

Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion,  
New York, Harcourt, Brace  
and Co., 1922.

## INTRODUCTION

This study is designed to examine and evaluate the basic beliefs and actions of the John Birch Society. It is not intended to determine the proper location for the Society on the American political spectrum, but to merely represent an opinion. An objective approach is intended, but the conclusion expresses a point of view, which, I hope, is clear and consistent enough to allow those who may disagree to take issue.

There is a great deal of room for disagreement on a subject such as this. The sources used in determining the content of this presentation are listed in the footnotes and bibliography. Those who see the subject in a different perspective are invited to examine the stated references and proceed from that base to form their own independent conclusions.

The main body of this study, which is concerned with the ideology of the John Birch Society, is based almost entirely on the official publications of the Society and statements made by its leaders. The primary sources in this case consist of the Blue Book, American Opinion Magazine, and the monthly Bulletin. Additional supplementary releases issued by the Society such as "Stop, Look, and Listen," "A Brief Introduction to the John Birch Society," Rousellot's "General Beliefs and Principles of the John Birch Society," and "Why Join the John Birch Society" have been considered as statements of official Society beliefs and have been used as such.

Because the Society's leaders disclaim Welch's controversial "letter," The Politician, and Welch himself contends it has no

place in official doctrine, no attempt has been made to include it as a source of Birch belief. However, Welch has continued to expand and revise the original 1954 "letter" and uses it as an aid to recruiting.<sup>1</sup> It is available in many libraries and bookstores, should anyone want to examine it.

In order that the John Birch Society might be more fully understood, the times during which it originated and functioned should be recalled. Few periods in history have equalled the twenty years since the end of World War II in revolutionary change: Social, economic, scientific, and political demands have never been so great; thought and action have changed so rapidly that what appears to be a reality today may be clearly obsolete tomorrow. These are bewildering times: On the home front, many men remain unemployed despite the fact that thousands of good jobs go unclaimed; minority groups are growing increasingly vocal in their claims for a place in America; society often lags behind the rapid development rate of technology; farmers produce more than is consumed. World problems are even more complicated. International communism continues its tireless drive for world domination. The Cold War struggle with such an enemy is difficult. Stalemates like Berlin and Korea add to the frustration of the struggle. Continual trouble in the developing nations and complete communist control in China are hard to accept. The U.S. is involved in one conflict after another with no clear-cut victory in any.

---

<sup>1</sup>See Bulletin, June, 1963.



In such a situation we hear voices across the land questioning America's failure to meet the challenge of Communism. Can not the United States, the most powerful country even known, settle its problems at home and win its contests abroad? One of those who has grown increasingly alarmed during this period is one Robert Henry Winborne Welch, Jr. of Massachusetts. When the Republican, Dwight D. Eisenhower, continued the same basic foreign policy as his Democratic predecessor, the activist, Welch had had enough. He was certain that he knew what had gone wrong. His open concern finally led him to Indianapolis and a rendezvous with eleven disciples.

CHAPTER I  
THE BACKGROUND AND ORGANIZATION OF  
THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY

The Beginning

Indianapolis, Indiana, is often called the crossroads of America. Indianapolis, located on the White River near the center of one of the richest agricultural areas in the world, has a tradition as rich as the farmland surrounding it. The American realist, Booth Tarkington, called Indianapolis home, as did James Whitcomb Riley and Benjamin Harrison. Today, the "Indianapolis 500" is the city's prize. On December 8 and 9, 1958, this "crossroads of America" was the scene of a hotel meeting attended by eleven "influential and very busy men"<sup>1</sup> and presided over by a former Massachusetts candymaker. This meeting gave birth to the John Birch Society.

For two days, Robert Henry Winborne Welch, Jr., the Massachusetts candy-man, delivered a lengthy monologue while the "influential" men listened. Only short coffee breaks, lunch, and brief informal conversation between sections of the discussion interrupted the deadly serious presentation. Yet, it required two full days to set forth "the background, methods, and purposes of the John Birch Society."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Robert H. W. Welch, Jr., The Blue Book of the John Birch Society (Belmont, Massachusetts: By the author, 1961), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Mr. Welch discussed at great length the advance of Communism throughout the world and the United States. He explained his analysis of the existing political situation and outlined his plans for an organization to combat the threatening expansion of communism. This discussion was recorded and the Society's Blue Book is the transcript of that presentation.<sup>1</sup>

Welch decided that the organization should be named after John Birch, the subject of an earlier book, because ". . . John Birch possessed in his own character all of those noble traits and ideals which we should like to see symbolized by the John Birch Society."<sup>2</sup>

Near the end of his book, The Life of John Birch, Welch wrote:

We have built this sermon around John Birch for in one blade of grass lies the key to all creation, could we only understand it; and in the forces that swirled around John Birch lay all the conflict, of philosophy and of implementation, with which our whole world is now so imperatively concerned. Therein lay the significance of his life and death. Actually we must choose between the civilization, the form of society and the expression of human life, as represented by John Birch, and their parallels as envisioned by Karl Marx and his spiritual successors. There is no middle ground, at least for the foreseeable future; not because no middle ground is philosophically possible, nor because intelligent and humane beings could not prefer some middle ground, but because the Communists will not permit it.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>The Blue Book is the official statement of the Society's philosophy as it was outlined at the Indianapolis meeting. Because of its importance and repeated use all future references in this paper will be cited Blue Book.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 158.

<sup>3</sup>Robert H. W. Welch Jr., The Life of John Birch (Chicago: Henry Regnery Com., 1954), p. 75.

John Birch became the symbol, but Robert H. W. Welch was to become the force.

At the Indianapolis meeting Welch made clear his position in the struggle. After discussing the leadership qualities of such key conservatives as Barry Goldwater, William Knowland, and William Jenner and dismissing the whole political process with the phrase, "Put not your faith in politicians," he offered himself as leader.

I want to convince you, as I am convinced, that only dynamic personal leadership offers any chance for us to save either our material or our spiritual inheritance. I want to convince you, as I am convinced, that even under such leadership we have no chance unless the specific battles are fought as part of a larger and more lasting movement to restore once again an upward reach to the heart of man. And I have wished to make clear, what you were bound to be assuming already, that with whatever I have in me, of faith, dedication, and energy, I intend to offer that leadership to all who are willing to help me.<sup>1</sup>

Welch noted that this plea for personal loyalty was embarrassing for him, but that it was necessary because his personal leadership was the cement that would hold the Society together. "It is the cohesive force that reaches across passing doubts and agreements, welding temporary doubters and enthusiasts alike into one permanent body of men and women unshakably dedicated to the Society. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

Again, later on in the monologue, Welch made it known that it was he who would offer the "dynamic personal" leadership that was needed to move the Society toward its goals and purposes.

---

<sup>1</sup>Blue Book, p. 123.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. xiii, footnote 23.

I know in my own mind, beyond all doubt or question that without dynamic personal leadership around which the split and frustrated and confused forces on our side can be rallied, rapidly and firmly, we do not have a chance of stopping the Communists before they have taken our country. It is not that you would choose me, or that I would even choose me, against other possibilities. It is simply that, under the pressure of time and the exigencies of our need, you have no other choice, and neither do I.<sup>1</sup>

In the beginning the Society centered on two men; John Birch, "the Symbol," and Robert Welch, "the Founder." In order that the beliefs and programs of the John Birch Society may be better understood it is necessary to take a closer look at "the Symbol" and "the Founder."

### The Symbol

A review of the life of John Birch reveals a young man who from the beginning provided a center for controversy. The facts of his life before he reached Mercer College are characteristic of many reared in similar circumstances. We begin to see him emerge as a controversial figure in his activity with a fellowship group which organized to suppress a mild liberal movement at Mercer. This attack, leveled against five members of the faculty, including Dr. John D. Freeman, seventy-five year old head of the Christianity Department, was the first indication of the extremes to which John Birch was willing to go to promote his beliefs.

Over-all there is an indication of a religious zeal based on ordinary religious training and an extraordinary enthusiasm for his beliefs. Hence, "Saint Birch," as he came to be called

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 170.

by classmates at Mercer, became a fitting symbol for the Society founded by his biographer, Robert Welch.<sup>1</sup>

John Morrison Birch was born on May 28, 1918, in Landaur, India, where his father, George S. Birch, was teaching agriculture at Ewing Christian College and his mother was tutoring English. Both were in India as Christian missionaries representing the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. Because of his father's ill health the family returned to America when John was only two and one-half years old.

After living for a short time in Vineland, New Jersey, his mother's home town, the family moved to Rome, Georgia, where Mr. Birch taught at the Mt. Berry School. After moving repeatedly, the elder Birch tried to make a living at Birchwood, "a rundown farm with a dilapidated house" near Rome. Mr. Welch claims that "next to the education, religion, and character of his parents, the greatest single influence on John Birch, undoubtedly, was his life at Birchwood. . . ."<sup>2</sup>

John was a good student and graduated at the head of his class from Gore High School in Chattooga County, Georgia. He entered Mercer University in Macon, where again he led his class scholastically, and graduated with a B.A. degree in 1939, magna cum laude. From Mercer young Birch went to the Bible Baptist Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, to prepare himself for a Chinese mission.

---

<sup>1</sup>In 1954 Welch wrote the short biography of John Birch, who was shot down by a small force of Chinese Communist soldiers near Hsueh, China on August 25, 1945. The basic biographical data on Birch in this study is taken from this biography.

<sup>2</sup>Welch, Life of John Birch, p. 9.

John Birch's college days were anything but a peaceful period of serious religious contemplation; he was a man of action with ideas that did not always correspond with the orthodox. He was brilliant in his school work and had deep convictions topped with an evangelistic passion. When he believed a thing, he was absolutely unbending. This distinctive nature resulted in his leadership of the Fellowship Group and in the heresy hearing against the professors mentioned earlier. The teachers were exonerated of the charges, but not before being reproved for their conduct.<sup>1</sup>

Birch was not considered to be a hero by the Mercer student body. One of the placards on campus during the trial read "Lynch Saint Birch." The police had to escort the Fellowship Group from the campus the night of March 30, 1939, to provide for their own safety. The Mercer student newspaper urged the dismissal of the members of the fellowship. A petition advocating their expulsion was circulated among the students.<sup>2</sup> Yes, Birch was remembered well at Mercer. He was a top student. His scholastic record is still recalled along with the impression he left on those who worked with him. One classmate described him as ". . . an angry young man, always a zealot."<sup>3</sup> Another said, "He felt he was called to defend the faith, and he alone knew what it was."<sup>4</sup> A psychology

---

<sup>1</sup>In addition to Welch's book, the following article provides insight into Birch's days at Mercer. C. R. Daley, "The John Birch I Knew," Western Recorder, General Association of Baptists in Kentucky, (April 13, 1961), pp. 4-5.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, April 23, 1961, p. 64, has a good coverage of the Mercer case.

<sup>3</sup>Mark Sherwin, The Extremist (New York, St. Martin's, 1963), p. 55.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

professor said, "He was like a one-way valve; everything coming out and no room to take anything in."<sup>1</sup>

As a student, John Birch had taken on the controversial character which has become so characteristic of the society which bears his name.

By this time Frank Norris came to have a great influence on John Birch. It was Norris who convinced him that he should become a missionary to China. After earning his B.A. at Mercer, Birch followed Norris to his Bible Baptist Seminary in Fort Worth where he completed the two-year course in one year, mastering the Chinese language on the side. By June, 1940, the young zealot, was on his way to China as a Fundamentalist Baptist missionary. He was in China when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor.

When the United States entered the war he tried to join the army as a chaplain, but had difficulty because Norris's seminary was not fully recognized. Even so, by 1942 the war came to John Birch. He was taken one night by a native to a man who had "dropped from the sky." The guide led Birch to a small river boat where he found Lt. Colonel Jimmy Doolittle, fresh from the famous bombing raid on Tokyo. Birch was able to get Doolittle and a number of his men into free China.<sup>2</sup>

How does Doolittle remember John Birch and the experience they had together? "John Birch was one of the most pleasant young men I have ever met. . . . He helped us a lot with his know-

---

<sup>1</sup>New York Times, April 23, 1961, p. 64.

<sup>2</sup>Welch, loc. cit., p. 7.



ledge of the language and the territory. . . . Birch, himself, was trying to get out of China at the time and we just joined forces. . . . John Birch was a fine young man, but stories about his aid to a group of fliers downed in China have been exaggerated."<sup>1</sup>

The official data released by the army on John Birch is very sketchy. It includes five items: (1) he was decorated twice, (2) he was in behind-the-lines intelligence work in China during World War II, (3) he was killed on August 25, 1945, 10 days after the end of the war (the report does not say how he was killed nor does it mention Communists), (4) he was 27 years of age when he died, (5) he was a Baptist missionary in China before the war and was commissioned in the Army Air Corps after the fighting began.<sup>2</sup> Certainly a more detailed and official account of the death of John Birch could be produced by the Army.<sup>3</sup>

It is known that soon after his experience with Colonel Doolittle, Birch joined the unit that became General Claire Chennault's Fourteenth Air Force. While with Chennault, he had a fine record in air combat intelligence. In a Time article Chennault is recorded to have said, "Birch was the pioneer of our field-intelligence net."<sup>4</sup> A letter written by Chennault during this period throws further light on the success of John Birch in

---

<sup>1</sup>New York Times, April 15, 1961, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, April 15, 1961, p. 12.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Welch contends that the facts were suppressed by pro-Communist groups in the U.S.

<sup>4</sup>Time, April 14, 1961, p. 29.

this very difficult assignment.

Your recent secret mission in relation to intelligence matters, which led you extremely close to enemy territory, has been invaluable to the China Air Task Force. The successful accomplishment of this hazardous mission required fortitude, courage, and devotion to duty. The excellent manner in which you carried out this difficult duty is highly commended.

C.L. Chennault  
Brigadier General,  
A.U.A. Commanding<sup>1</sup>

It seems certain that John Birch was a very successful intelligence officer who performed his duties with great courage and resourcefulness throughout the war. His job took him continuously behind enemy lines. He radioed information to headquarters concerning the location of prime Japanese targets. He was in charge of the construction of three airstrips within enemy territory. In addition to several Chinese awards, he was awarded the Legion of Merit and a posthumous Oak Leaf Cluster.

Eventually he was transferred to the Office of Strategic Services and until the end of the war served at Sian in northern China. The commanding officer of the base, Major Gustav Krause, noted in his diary during this period: "Birch is a good officer, but I'm afraid is too brash and may run into trouble."<sup>2</sup>

Conditions in China after the war were very difficult. Pockets of Japanese, still fighting, were trapped throughout China. Welch estimates that there were close to three million Japanese on Chinese soil on August 25, 1945.<sup>3</sup> The exact figure

---

<sup>1</sup>Welch, loc. cit., p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Time, April 14, 1961, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup>Welch, loc. cit., p. 36.

is not known, but the confusion and disorganization was so great that many difficult missions were necessary. Captain Birch had volunteered to head a small party made up of American, Chinese, and Korean soldiers on one of these special missions. His group traveled by train until they were forced to go on foot because of a break in the track ahead. The group met a force of Communist guerillas who stopped them and demanded that the group turn over their equipment. As the scene has been reconstructed, Birch argued with the Communist officer who wanted to take their arms.<sup>1</sup> His choice was to bluff his way out of an extremely difficult situation. Insults and arrogance resulted. Birch was seized and shot after his hands had been tied. The Communists then bayoneted him repeatedly and threw his body on a junk pile.

Of course the events leading to the death of John Birch cannot adequately be reconstructed. This, at any rate, is one account.

Those who were in the area and knew Birch seemed to think he pushed his luck too far and died needlessly. Major Krause, now a Pasadena manufacturer, who had earlier noted in his diary that Birch "may run into trouble" felt that, "He brought about his own death. He didn't die the hero he was supposed to have died."<sup>2</sup> After reviewing the circumstances leading to the death of John Birch, Krause said, "In the confusing situation my instructions were to act with diplomacy. Birch made the Communist Lieutenant

---

<sup>1</sup>William T. Miller, "How the Chinese Killed John Birch," Life, May 12, 1961, p. 128. This account is the testimony of Lieutenant Tung, the Chinese Nationalist adjutant who was with Birch when he died. It was from this source that Welch reconstructed the death of Birch in his book.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, April 4, 1961, p. 18.

lose face before his own men. Militarily, John Birch brought about his own death."<sup>1</sup>

William P. Weiss, Jr., now a Los Angeles stockbroker, but in 1945 the O.S.S. officer who drew up the mission on which Birch was killed, replied to a question concerning the killing. "Certainly John was just as much a hero as any other American soldier who died for his country."<sup>2</sup>

Joseph Sample, a radio-T.V. executive from Billings, Montana, was in the same O.S.S. unit as Captain Birch. He summed up the event as follows:

The patrol had run into a force of Chinese Reds who were understandably disturbed by what seemed to them an unwarranted intrusion. Captain Birch chose to bluff his way out of a difficult situation. Harsh words led to insults and insults to arrogance.<sup>3</sup>

Had it not been for Robert Welch, the brutal murder on the Lunghai Railroad not far from Houchow would have been the end of the John Birch story, but Welch was captivated by the study he found, and the experiences of this boy's life he compared to the lines of O'Shaughnessy's great ode.

But on one man's soul it hath broken,  
A light that doth not depart;  
And his look, or a word he hath spoken  
Wrought flame in another man's heart.<sup>4</sup>

John Birch became the symbol, the "blade of grass," around which Robert Welch built his anti-Communist body. In both life and death he was a controversial figure. Perhaps, if he were

---

<sup>1</sup>Time, April 14, 1961, p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>New York Times, April 4, 1969, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>From the foreward to Welch, The Life of John Birch.

living, he would feel at home with those who make up the Society that bears his name.

With his death and in his death the battle lines were drawn, in a struggle from which either Communism or Christian-style civilization must emerge with one completely triumphant and the other completely destroyed.<sup>1</sup>

This was the "symbol" and the challenge as seen by Robert Welch.

### "The Founder" - Robert Welch

Robert Welch expressed the fervent hope that the John Birch Society would last for hundreds of years and be an influence for the temporal good and spiritual advancement of mankind for centuries. For his role as organizer and promoter he wanted no more than to be remembered as its Founder. Who is this "Founder?" How did he become so concerned about Communism? What is his background?

Like John Birch, Robert Welch had a rural Southern background. He was born December 1, 1899, on a farm in Chowan County, North Carolina.<sup>2</sup> He descended from Miles Welch who came to this country from Wales in 1720. He described his ancestry as being "full of farmers and Baptist preachers," but claimed to have broken through the intellectually restricting bonds of his Southern Baptist fundamentalist background over forty years ago. In discussing this background he said he "loved everything about it except the specific details of its dogma."

According to the information provided by the Society, Robert

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

<sup>2</sup>The basic material upon which this section on Robert Welch is based is from the autobiographical sketch found in the appendix of the Blue Book and from a more detailed biography printed in the U.S. Congressional Record, CVII (May 25, 1961) Appendix A, 3782.

Welch was a child prodigy. At the age of twelve he entered the University of North Carolina, receiving his B.A. at the age of sixteen and graduated with honors. From the University of North Carolina, Welch moved to Annapolis and spent two years at the United States Naval Academy.<sup>1</sup> In 1919 he moved to Boston where he enrolled in Harvard Law School for two years. As a student at Harvard he started a candy business which occupied so much of his time and energy that he dropped out of school in order to put his full effort into the venture. It appears he over extended his credit and consequently found himself in financial difficulties. Finally, it was necessary to turn all of his stock over to creditors and move to New York.

After several other business failures he returned to Boston and a job with his brother, James O. Welch, who had founded a successful candy manufacturing firm. He was made vice-president in charge of sales and advertising. While serving in this position he traveled to all parts of the country and was soon in close contact with key business leaders throughout the nation.

While working with his brother's firm he served for seven years on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Manufacturers, three years as regional Vice-President of the N.A.M., and two years as Chairman of its Educational Advisory Committee. He also served as chairman of the Washington Committee of the National Confectioners' Association. Mr. Welch has served as director of one bank, and as a director of several other corporations. In addition to his business activities he has been active in community functions and the Belmont School Committee.

---

<sup>1</sup> No explanation is given in any of the Birch literature as to why Welch left Annapolis after two years.

Certainly Robert Welch has had a distinguished business career, which has provided him with friendly contacts with business leaders all across the United States. These were important when Mr. Welch called his 1958 meeting in Indianapolis to form the John Birch Society.

Not only did Mr. Welch's business take him to all parts of the United States, but he made it a practice to use his vacations for world trips. In 1946 and again in 1948 Welch went to England, primarily to study the effect of the Socialist government on the British. In 1949 he took a month's flying trip around the world, spending most of the time in Asia. He also made trips to South America and to various countries in Europe. The year 1955 saw him once again in Asia where he arranged interviews with Chiang Kai-shek and Syngman Rhee, then President of Korea. In the fall of 1956 he called on Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in Bonn. The beginning of the morbid fear of communism, which is so characteristic of Mr. Welch, seems to originate in this period.

Robert Welch is a businessman, and businessmen know him best. Most of those who have written concerning him think very highly of his business acumen and all admire his dedication and ability to work. Don Gussow, acknowledged spokesman for the U.S. Candy Industry, in an editorial in the May 9, 1961, Candy Industry and Confectioners Journal, summed up the general feeling of Welch's business associates as they remember him.

We remember Bob Welch as an articulate, highly intelligent, imaginative and very much involved person. We do not recall Bob Welch taking the middle road on any subject. When Bob Welch became involved in a situation, he was fully and wholly involved. Almost literally bouncing with nervous energy, Bob Welch could

not remain sitting or standing in one position for more than a second. A compulsive worker, Bob Welch toiled almost around the clock. After a full, hectic, rat-tat-tat day in his office . . . Bob would rush off to deliver a talk before some political or community group, return to his office and, after a brief nap, go on with more work until the early hours of the morning. This was par for Bob Welch's working day course.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the seemingly serious nature of Mr. Welch, he is not without humor. In the biographical sketch of his life found in the appendix of the Blue Book which he wrote in the third person, he claimed "one wife, two sons, a Golden Retriever dog, and fourteen golf clubs--none of which he understands, but all of which he loves."<sup>2</sup> A business associate confirms this characteristic and recalls "Bob Welch as a gifted writer with a fine sense of humor. He could and did write humorous verse."<sup>3</sup>

In addition to his other activities he wrote what some claim to be one of the best and most meaningful books on salesmanship ever published. The Road to Salesmanship was published in 1941 by the Ronald Press Company. The book sold very well to businessmen throughout America.

Robert Welch took his first dip into the waters of active politics in 1946 when he offered to help Massachusetts Governor Bradford by sending out personal letters supporting Bradford to all the retail distributors who handled Welch candy in Massachusetts. Of course this kind of support is a politician's dream and Bradford grabbed for it. When he asked Welch to keep track of the cost, Welch said

---

<sup>1</sup>Quoted from U.S. Congressional Record, CVII (May 25, 1961) Appendix A, 3782.

<sup>2</sup>Welch, Blue Book, Appendix.

<sup>3</sup>U.S. Congressional Record, loc. cit.



he would take care of all the expenses of the project. Within a short time Welch moved a complete staff of secretaries plus all of the necessary office equipment into the campaign headquarters and announced he was ready for action. This staff prepared, typed, and mailed in the neighborhood of 60,000 letters over the next few weeks. After Bradford won the election, he offered Welch political favors for his help. Welch declined, saying it was enough that he had helped the men he wanted.

By 1950 Welch decided he would run for public office. He made a bid for the position of lieutenant governor in the Republican primary. His campaign was very forceful and very uncompromising. He became so involved and worked so hard that he was very near a nervous breakdown by the time it was all over. He was very straightforward and frank in his opinions and would not budge from a stated opinion. Rigid political strategy rarely elects a candidate and Welch was no exception; he came in second in a field of four.

In 1952 after his Asian visits, Welch wrote a book, entitled May God Forgive Us, dealing with the dismissal of General Douglas A. MacArthur. It was published by the Henry Regnery Company of Chicago and sold 200,000 copies in the first year of publication. During this period he also started publishing One Man's Opinion, which carried long detailed articles on Communism. This venture was done at his own expense and on his own time.

Welch was strongly in the Robert Taft camp and tried unsuccessfully to be elected a delegate to the Republican Convention in 1952. At his own expense he made twenty-five radio speeches for Taft during the campaign. He was very disturbed by the Eisenhower victory and now insists that the nomination was stolen from Taft by the "One Worlders"

who had made the deals necessary to get Eisenhower nominated. Despite this setback Welch was still involved on a lesser scale in conventional politics until 1958. He wanted to help an Arizona department store owner, with whom he agreed, in his senatorial race. "I took it upon myself to become a one-man finance committee for him (Goldwater) in Massachusetts. I raised around two thousand dollars in my state and sent it to him early in 1958."<sup>1</sup>

Welch was becoming more and more involved with his "extra-candy job." In 1954 he wrote The Life of John Birch and expanded the publication of his magazine. Soon he changed the name from One Man's Opinion to American Opinion. He was making speeches throughout the country and was writing stacks of pamphlets and tracts on Communism. By late 1956 he felt that he could not give up his outside political and pamphleteering ventures. Yet he couldn't continue to handle his sales manager job. He resigned from his post with the James O. Welch Company and announced that he would devote the rest of his life to fighting Communism.

For two years he studied nothing but Communism and became even more fully convinced that his "conspiracy theory" was true. He had lost all faith in the give-and-take of political activity as it was practiced by successful office holders. He was convinced that the way things were going the country would soon be under complete Communist control. A plan of action had to be developed and presented to the American people. The unchecked advance of Communist subversion in the United States was alarming; yet nobody

---

<sup>1</sup> Blue Book, p. 119.

was alarmed. Only "dynamic personal leadership" offered any chance to save the faltering nation. This conviction led Robert Henry Winborne Welch, Jr., to Indianapolis and the meeting with the eleven "influential and very busy men." He had a "Symbol," and he had a plan of action.

#### Plan of Action

After establishing the "facts" concerning the Society's beliefs, Welch offered his eleven friends a ten-point plan of action.<sup>1</sup> He explained that the first task of the Society must be to stop the American government from actively helping the world-wide conspiracy.<sup>2</sup> With this thought in mind the Society must influence the actions of men in high governmental positions. The best way to accomplish this was to awaken local leaders and destroy the apathetic attitude of the people.

With the proper leadership and the right program he argued, this could be done. Welch thought of himself as "the man on a white horse" leading the alert Americans in the battle against Communism; a battle which was political and educational, rather than military, but a battle, nonetheless, which would determine the course of history. The anti-communist forces, the man on the white horse, and the ablest men in America must be organized into freedom groups. With this type of leadership the work of a million men and women could be directed positively and efficiently. To such men Welch offered this program.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>The plan is found in the Blue Book, Sect. 4, pp. 71-112.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 75-76.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 76-77.

The ten point program is essentially indoctrination and a campaign for membership recruitment. The stated plan as outlined in the Blue Book includes the following points:

(1) "First we would establish reading rooms, somewhat similar to the Christian Science reading rooms, but small and inexpensive. . . ." <sup>1</sup> These reading rooms would be manned by volunteers and housed in inexpensive locations in order to keep the cost low. The rooms would serve as rental libraries, but with very strict limitations, "so as to avoid too much loss through Communist sabotage." The books provided would be from a selected list made available by Society headquarters.

(2) "Second, since getting the truth about both recent history and current events into as many hands and heads as possible is so important, we would see that the circulation of conservative periodicals was expanded. . . ." <sup>2</sup> The promotion would be of all worthwhile conservative publications. In addition to American Opinion, publications mentioned by Welch included National Review, "because it is aimed . . . at the academic mind; . . ." The Dan Smoot Report, because it is fairly short and is quite suitable to pick up for reading during fifteen minutes of waiting time; . . ." <sup>3</sup> and Human Events, which complements American Opinion. Welch hopes eventually to have these publications in every doctor's office, every dentist's waiting room and every barbershop in the country.

(3) "We should do everything we can to support, maintain, [and] increase the number of stations used, and widen the audiences of,

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 79

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

such radio programs as those of Fulton Lewis, Jr., Clarence Manion, and dozens of more localized broadcasters throughout the country."<sup>1</sup>

The main push in this area would be for the Society to encourage sponsors of these programs and to give public praise to those stations that carry such programs.

(4) "We would institute the organized planning and control to make full and effectively coordinated use of the powerful letterwriting weapon that lies so ready at hand."<sup>2</sup> Welch explained that an organized outpouring of mail would provide the "little man" on the conservative side with courage to join the fight. This tactic of the Society has been very successful and very controversial since the beginning in 1958.<sup>3</sup>

(5) "We would organize fronts . . . little fronts, big fronts, temporary fronts, permanent fronts, all kind of fronts."<sup>4</sup> The technique of operating behind fronts has been developed to a fine point by the Communists and Robert Welch makes no apology for using a tactic of the enemy. In the outline on the use of the front Mr. Welch gives many examples of what he has in mind by a front, such as A Petition to Impeach Earl Warren, Committee for Withdrawal of Recognition, and Please, Mr. President, Don't Go! This type of activity is considered very highly as a plan of action by "the Founder."

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 81

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 84

<sup>3</sup> The tactics used by the John Birch Society will be discussed in more detail in a later section.

<sup>4</sup> Blue Book., p. 86

. . . the possible use of petitions is fairly obvious. Goodness knows the Communists have proved their subtle value and effectiveness. We ought to out do the Communists at least two to one at that game.<sup>1</sup>

(6) "Another thing we should do . . . would be to start shocking the American people. . . ." <sup>2</sup> As Welch saw it, this shock treatment could be best accomplished by exposure in the manner of McCarthy. American Opinion would be used to drop one bombshell after another until the American people wake up to how they are being duped. Welch suggests an example to make this point clear.

There is the head of one of the great educational institutions in the East (not Harvard, incidentally) whom at least some of us believe to be a Communist, . . . with just five thousand dollars to pay for the proper amount of careful expenditure and undertaking of the magazine, I believe we could get all the material needed for quite a shock.<sup>3</sup>

Welch sees this shock treatment as necessary because the common man cannot recognize a Communist until he is flushed out into the open. The shock would make the people think and realize the true nature of the conspiracy.

(7) Point number seven is not easily described in a few words and Mr. Welch does not state it as clearly as he does the others; this is the use by the Society of speaker "baiters."<sup>4</sup> The Society should, he states, send persons with loaded questions to community talks and discussions given by individuals the Society considers dangerous. The persons would be sitting away from each other and show no connection with one another or the Society. This action

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 95-96.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp 103-108

would ruin the effectiveness of the speakers and cause people to have doubts concerning what they said.

(8) "We would line up a large list of speakers ourselves, all over the country. . . ."<sup>1</sup> These speakers would be willing to speak to small audiences with no charge for their time. They would be instructed to speak on a variety of subjects but not on Communism. The speaker would be very informative in a manner that would advance the Society's cause indirectly. This point of the program would aid in getting Society ideas into such groups as the P.T.A. and church study groups. Because most of these groups have little money, they would be happy to use free speakers.

(9) The ninth point on the action program as outlined by Welch is to advance the cause of the Society in other countries, but to remember that the safety of the United States is the Society's number one concern. This could be done by supporting anti-Communist government-in-exile and by providing leadership for national actions where Communism is threatening existing governments.<sup>2</sup>

(10) "Finally, and probably most important of all these courses of action, we would put our weight into political scales in this country just as fast and as far as we could."<sup>3</sup> This action is necessary, according to Welch, in order to reverse the gradual surrender of the United States to Communism. This political action would provide "forces outside of the straight political organization."<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 107-108.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 108-110.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 110

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

to exercise great influence on conventional political activity.

Again Welch patterns this strategy after one activity that is already being used. He is anticipating a conservative force to match The Committee on Political Education of the AFL-CIO.

As the Society has grown, a number of other areas of possible influence have developed. The headquarters keeps its members informed on new projects through its monthly bulletins; however the ten point program outlined by Mr. Welch at Indianapolis remains the basic creed as far as active projects are concerned for the Society.

One might find this program ambitious and fantastic for an organization just getting off the ground, but Mr. Welch is an "imaginative and very much involved person." How did he view the whole project?

Fantastic? Of course it's fantastic. But everything I am talking is fantastic. We are living in fantastic times and a fantastic situation. The alternative to sufficiently fantastic measures and efforts is a fate of fantastic suffering for our children, and the equally fantastic loss of a whole human civilization that has cost countless sacrifices, immeasurable labor, and an infinite number of noble dreams across centuries in building. We are in circumstances where it is realistic to be fantastic.<sup>1</sup>

This is the basic program. It does not stand alone. As the Society and its projects have grown so has its plan of action. Members are informed of new directions through the monthly bulletins issued throughout the year. Annually, these are bound into the White Book which becomes a lasting source of Birch doctrine.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 112



### Organizational Mechanics

With the man on a "white horse" mounted and the rudiments of the program outlined in the ten point plan of action, we turn to the organizational mechanics of the Society. It soon becomes very clear that the organization is to operate under authoritarian control at all levels; it was to be a monolithic body which could not be infiltrated, distorted or disrupted. There is to be no room for democracy because to Robert Welch democracy is "a deceptive phrase, a weapon of demagoguery, and a perennial fraud."<sup>1</sup> However, if this language is too severe Welch eases our mind by reminding us that there need be no fear of individual oppression because the Society is, after all, a voluntary association and such power as it exerts can be enforced only by persuasion. But it must submit to direction from the top, otherwise it would become a debating society (after the order of a democracy) and no debating society could ever hope to stop the Communist conspiracy. Welch said he had no wish to add another frustrated group to the many opposed to communism. As he saw it, these societies had become easy prey to the planned confusion of communism.<sup>2</sup> The Society would be protected by the man on the white horse, by a tough monolithic organization and by experts, such as Welch and J. B. Mathews, who could provide much needed direction.<sup>3</sup> Such were the organizational guide lines of the Society; such are the forces we observe from the beginning.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 161.

<sup>4</sup> Again Welch returns to the idea of the need for "dynamic personal leadership" and expresses the opinion that it is he who

The physical organization of the Society as outlined by Welch is very complete and would probably be considered very fine by administrative experts. The basic local organ is called a Chapter which is made up of "ten to twenty dedicated patriots."<sup>1</sup> Each chapter is instructed to meet at least once a month in the home of the Chapter Leader, who is appointed by either the Belmont headquarters or a Society officer in the field. The Chapter Leader is expected to be in continuous contact with the members of his group in order that material sent down might reach them with little difficulty.

The Society requires that dues be paid by its members. These dues are whatever the member wants to make them, with a minimum of \$24.00 per year for men and \$12.00 per year for women. (There is no stated reason why the dues are less for women.) The Chapter Leader is responsible for the collection of these dues, which he forwards to the headquarters in Belmont, Massachusetts. Where a chapter is not established in an area, the Society has arranged for what they call Home Chapters or individual membership.<sup>2</sup> A life membership is now available for \$1,000.00 for men or women. Life membership automatically covers membership to any local chapter and may be paid in two consecutive annual installments of \$500.00 each.<sup>3</sup>

---

must provide the direction for the whole Society. The immediate threat of Communism will not allow the luxury of organizational leadership. If there are any in the Society who cannot "feel the necessary degree of loyalty" to the Founder, they can either resign or the Society will put them out.

<sup>1</sup> Blue Book., p. 163.

<sup>2</sup> This type of membership was pushed in Utah by former Utah-Southern Idaho coordinator Reed Benson, because many people supported the Society, but for one reason or another didn't want to be identified with an active chapter.

<sup>3</sup> Information on dues is taken from an application for membership sent to this writer upon request from the home office of the John Birch Society.

The organizational position above the Chapter Leader is the area Coordinator, who receives a salary paid by the Society. It is his function to handle all organizational problems within his area and represent the Society in an official capacity on all matters of interest to the Society in his area.<sup>1</sup> The size of the area is dependent upon the number of chapters and the geographic location. Above the area Coordinators are Supervisors appointed personally by the Founder. Their position is that of Major Coordinator. These coordinators keep strict control on the local chapter operation and provide a direct connection between the headquarters and the individual members.

Everything moves from the top down. Founder Welch is the final authority because, as he explained at the Indianapolis meeting, this is the way the area leaders and the members alike think it ought to be.

The men who join the Birch Society during the next few months or few years are going to do so primarily because they believe in me and what I am doing and are willing to accept my leadership anyway.<sup>2</sup>

The idea of Welch's having the final word has never seriously been challenged, but lately there has been some talk by members that this should not be the case. A number are looking to the leadership of men like former California Congressman, John H. Rousselot. Others reject the idea of one supreme spokesman. Strong individuals like Fred C. Koch and Frank Cullen Brophey have at times been

---

<sup>1</sup> At the present time Mr. Garn E. Lewis, a former teacher, is the Coordinator of the Northern Utah-Southern Idaho Area.

<sup>2</sup> Blue Book., p. 161

critical of Welch's leadership. They believe the job is too much for one man and that the Society would be better off if Welch delegated more responsibility to others.<sup>1</sup>

The top administrative organ of the Society is called the National Council; it is composed of successful men in a variety of fields, primarily business, who share Welch's views on the threat of Communism, the proper position of government, and the role of the traditional political process. From the National Council, composed at the present of twenty-four members, four men are selected to serve with Welch on the executive committee. Although the identity of the eleven "influential and very busy men" who joined at Indianapolis has never been made public, it is reasonable to assume that they are among those listed on the National Council.

In the appendix of The Blue Book Mr. Welch describes the responsibility and position of the Council. Its function is three-fold:

(1) To show the stature and standing of the leadership of the Society; (2) to give your Founder the benefit of the Council's advice and guidance, both in procedural or organizational matters, and in substantive matters of policy; and (3) to select, with absolute and final authority, a Successor to myself as head of the John Birch Society, if and when an accident, "suicide", or anything sufficiently fatal is arranged for me by the Communists--or I simply die in bed of old age and a cantankerous disposition. And we believe that both the growth and the effectiveness of the Society will be greatly helped by the experience, ability, and resolute purpose of so strong a governing body.<sup>2</sup>

There are no elections in the Society. All positions are filled by appointment from the top, with Robert Welch as the ultimate

---

<sup>1</sup>J. Allen Broyles, The John Birch Society: Anatomy of a Protest (Boston, Beacon Press, 1964) p. 52

<sup>2</sup>Blue Book, Appendix.

sovereign. The Council is given the power to appoint the man who would succeed him, but there is no provision in any of the Society's publications for a replacement agreement.<sup>1</sup>

One of the functions of the Council was merely to "show the stature and standing of the leadership of the Society."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Welch obviously wanted the Council to provide prestige and respectability to the Society in order that it might make a good public impression. A look at the Council members does convince one that there are members of importance on the Council. Certainly the Council is made up of what most people would call successful and influential men.<sup>3</sup>

It is interesting to note that sixteen of the twenty-four members of the National Council are either active executives or former heads of business corporations. As Alan F. Westin points out in The Radical Right, none of these Birch leaders come from the large publicly owned companies, such as General Motors or Standard Oil. The business executives on the Birch Council represent companies with a family tradition or "self-made" companies, which have been developed into successful enterprises over the last few years.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to the business executives, there are five with, what could be broadly called, professional backgrounds on the Council,

---

<sup>1</sup> At the date of this writing nothing in the form of a threat on the life of Robert Welch has occurred from the Communists.

<sup>2</sup> Blue Book., Appendix.

<sup>3</sup> Mr. Welch included a list of these men in the ninth edition of The Blue Book, which is out of date when compared with the list on the official Society stationery of April, 1965. A list of the present Council can be had upon request from the Belmont office.

<sup>4</sup> Alan F. Westin, The Radical Right, Edited by Daniel Bell, (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1963), p. 249.

including a physician, two professors, and two attorneys. Two retired military officers and a distinguished member of the Catholic clergy complete the council.

Four members of the Council join Welch to make up the present five-man Executive Committee. This committee, along with an advisory board, which includes Reverend Billy James Hargis, Christian Crusade evangelist acts in a special advisory capacity on matters concerning the Society.

The executive Committee meets quarterly and appears to have the right to review and to approve Society releases to the members, including the monthly bulletins. Broyles reports that:

One of the Council members explained to me that the function of the Executive Committee was to "help Bob Welch to maintain the breadth of perspective to keep the Society functioning well." . . . The Council and its Executive Committee appear to have modified the leadership of Robert Welch to a rather substantial degree.<sup>1</sup>

There are no students of government, history, the political process, foreign policy, or international affairs on the Council.

The John Birch Society is an efficiently organized body with a direct chain of authority from "the Founder" down to each individual member. The hierarchy is not far removed from the membership because of the coordinators and the small local chapters. The Society's monthly publication, the Bulletin, provides the chapter members an up to date interpretation of world problems.

This eliminates any chance that members will be unaware of the Society's stand on any issue. The Bulletin also provides an agenda of action projects for each individual member. This organization

---

<sup>1</sup>Broyles, loc. cit., p. 61.

eliminates divided and confused factions and provides the "dynamic personal leadership" necessary in a struggle such as that in which the John Birch Society is engaged.

## CHAPTER II

### IDEOLOGY OF THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY

Because this study is centered on the ideology of the Birch Society it is necessary to define the term, ideology, in order to make its usage more meaningful throughout this study. Webster defines it as a system of ideas concerning phenomena, especially phenomena observed in social life; or the manner of thinking which is characteristic of a class or individual. Henry D. Aiken has traced an early usage to a little known French philosopher, Destutt de Tracy, who used it to describe the empirical analysis of the mind as it was developed by Locke in his Essay Concerning Human Understanding.<sup>1</sup> Aiken himself defines it as the manner in which individuals or groups view reality.<sup>2</sup> Marx and Engels described ideology as a form of consciousness which expressed the basic attitudes of a social class.<sup>3</sup> Raymond Aron employs the term as a reflection of all ideas or bodies of ideas accepted by individuals or groups without regard to their origin or nature.<sup>4</sup> W. Y. Elliot understands the term to mean a collection of rationalized concepts claiming to unlock the meaning of history or, at

---

<sup>1</sup>Henry D. Aiken, The Age of Ideology, (New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1956), p. 16.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>4</sup>Raymond Aron, Political Thought Since World War II, edited by W. J. Stankiewicz, (New York, Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), p. 4.



other times, to supply a magic formula for the control of history.<sup>1</sup> Being fully aware of the many interpretations of the term and realizing the inadequacy of a single definition, we nevertheless find it necessary to establish one of our own.

We cannot avoid the obvious conclusion that in many respects political ideology represents a substitute for religion. It has the symbols and slogans, the central truth concept, and the notion of infallibility found in religion. An ideology possesses ideals based on values that promise (if followed) a desirable future and at the same time provides the pattern for proper everyday behavior. The program of a group with an ideological base tends to include specified daily aims along with an ultimate millennium type goal. Thus, an organization operating within a stated ideology will have fixed programs of action which must always be closely correlated with the single eternal truth upon which all of its actions are based.

The organization that results from this kind of belief is usually monolithic and authoritarian in nature in order to insure the survival of the group. Outside influence must be kept out or the structure will crumble and fall.

A final characteristic of an ideology is that it demands man's loyalty. Loyalty and member support is often accompanied by a high degree of sentiment. Because of this presence of emotion, ideology is often supported by nonrational action

---

<sup>1</sup>A good general discussion on the meaning of "ideology" can be found in: W. J. Stankiewicz, (Editor) Political Thought Since World War II (New York, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1964) & Arthur Schweitzer, "Ideological Strategy," The Western Political Quarterly, March 1962, pp. 46-66.

explained in rational and logical terms.

Emotion, the idea of a single truth, symbols, slogans, a monolithic organization that provides a daily program for its members, authoritarian leadership that demands loyalty from those who wish to follow--these are the components of ideology. The beliefs, programs, and actions of the John Birch Society fit this definition.

The process of pinning down the actual beliefs of any group is extremely difficult. In any organization the converted members bring many of their personal ideas with them into the organization. Certainly this is true of the Birch Society. Yet, if a body feels it must operate from an ideological base, as the Birch Society does, its ideology must be determined by what its leaders have recorded as basic beliefs. Thus official publications must be examined in order that beliefs may be clarified. The discussion which follows is based on such publications.

### The Idea of Conspiracy

The dominating belief, which is undoubtedly the point that first attracts most of the new members to the Society, is the idea of an international Communist conspiracy which is gaining control of the nations of the world, including the major religious, economic, political, and social institutions of the United States. This conflict with Communism is the central issue of our time according to the Society. All other problems take a secondary position to the conspiracy and the Society's main concern is to save "true Americanism" from this takeover and start the movement back toward conditions as they once were.

As explained by Society spokesmen, the whole conspiracy is part of a three-step plan for world conquest put forth by Lenin soon after the Bolshevik Revolution. Lenin's three-step plan includes:

- (1) The conquest of eastern Europe.
- (2) The gaining of control over the land mass and the masses of Asia.
- (3) The encirclement and infiltration of the United States of America, whereby the Communists would gradually establish their control in and over "that last bastion of capitalism."<sup>1</sup>

According to Society evaluation of this program the first step of Lenin's plan has been accomplished, except for Greece. Number two is more than eighty percent complete, and their goals for the U.S. have now gone over the fifty percent mark. Considering the figures advanced by the Society, it would be safe to say that the Communists are now three-fourths of the way toward their goal of controlling the world.

How can this takeover occur so rapidly and attract so little attention from our government? The answer is obvious, and Welch explains it in simple terms in the July, 1960 Bulletin.

To the sober realist there is no slightest question now, as to where to look or what to look for, in seeking the most important key to the continuing Communist advance. That key is treason right within our government, and the place to find it is right in Washington.<sup>2</sup>

Welch is certain that Americans cannot see what is obvious because they will not face realities. The wishful thinking of most Americans causes them to excel even the Communists in accepting absurd explanations of the events of our day. According to the Founder,

---

<sup>1</sup>Stop, Look, & Listen, (John Birch Society Pamphlet), Spring, 1965, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Bulletin, July, 1960, p. 3.

our government, under the control of either dupes or politicians or worse, is following directions from Moscow and has nearly surrendered.<sup>1</sup>

How extensive is this well organized conspiracy? As Mr. Welch explained it to the men at Indianapolis,

This octopus is so large that its tentacles now reach into all of the legislative halls, all of the union labor meetings, a majority of the religious gatherings, and most of the schools of the whole world.<sup>2</sup>

The conspiracy is world-wide, and the Communists have taken over dozens of countries by gaining control of the key institutions mentioned above. According to the Spring, 1965 issue of Stop, Look, and Listen, the Communists have, since the end of 1945, enslaved an average of seven thousand people every hour, and their leaders believe that the end is now in sight. In the whole world only Western Samoa is relatively safe. It is rated at less than 10 per cent under Communist influence.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Welch, writing in American Opinion, January, 1962, let it be known how involved the United States was in the international conspiracy when he wrote:

The whole canvas deals with Washington's visible will to win this cold war--for the Soviets. Perhaps the most alarming thing about current history in the making is the way Washington has become a part of the whole international conspiracy of which it is now another mecca second only to Moscow. And we have seen on every side, in a hundred different manifestations, the unceasing efforts of our Government to carry out all programs and take all steps required to bring about the merger of the United States with Soviet Russia and all of its satellites into a one-world Socialist government. These are all plain facts incontrovertibly clear to anybody who will use the eyes, the intelligence, and the common sense God gave him.

<sup>2</sup>Blue Book, pp. 72-73.

<sup>3</sup>Stop, Look, & Listen, p. 1.

One of those who is willing to "search the dark and dangerous alley of conspiracy" is Thomas J. Anderson, a member of the National Council of the John Birch Society and publisher of Farm and Ranch Magazine. Anderson, speaking before the Freedom Club of the First Congregational Church of Los Angeles in early April, 1961, made it clear where he saw the roots for our failure to combat the Communist advance. As he explained it to his young audience, the whole problem is that our government is "very heavily" infiltrated with communists. He added fuel to the fire by echoing Welch's (The Politician) charge that former-President Eisenhower was a "dupe" of the international communists.<sup>1</sup>

This same Anderson has a recorded speech called Bi-Partisan Treason which is played at local chapter meetings. Two quotes from this record shed additional light on the Birch Society doctrine of international conspiracy. The first, "Our leaders are not fighting communism, they are promoting it!" The second, "I think we are being ruled by evil men; we can't depend on our leaders."<sup>2</sup> In Anderson's eyes there is no place to turn--the Communist blanket of control is everywhere.

Mr. Garn E. Lewis, the Northern Utah-Southern Idaho Coordinator, expressed the same concern over the failure of the United States government to cope with this conspiracy to an audience of Utah State University students on April 14, 1965. In fact, like Anderson, Mr. Lewis sees many of our elected

---

<sup>1</sup>New York Times, April 12, 1961, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Quotes taken from an article by Richard G. Bacon. "Why I Can't Join the John Birch Society," Look, November 3, 1964, p. 80.

leaders as actual co-workers with the Soviets in this alleged takeover. He talked of the "atheistic" conspiracy and views the United Nations as the leading agency used by the Communists for their purposes.

Another member of the Society's National Council, Revelo P. Oliver, a professor of classics at the University of Illinois, saw President John F. Kennedy as an agent of the conspiracy and suggested the President's loyalty should be investigated unless he got rid of the "political payoffs" in his administration. It was Oliver who later advanced the thesis that the assassination of President Kennedy was a result of Mr. Kennedy's falling behind the Communist time-table for American takeover. Although the Warren Commission's investigations have indicated that Lee Harvey Oswald was acting on his own and was not a part of any international group, Oliver has repeated his charge and appears to have a sizable number of supporters, including the leaders of the John Birch Society, who agree that the tragic death of the President of the United States was a part of the conspiracy.

Robert Welch, who has made it the practice to run reprints of "a few of the honest books of the period," in an American Opinion Series, wrote a letter on the inside front cover of the reprint entitled From Major Jordan's Diaries by George Racey Jordan. The letter illustrates Welch's position on the international communist conspiracy.

For years we have been emphasizing, in print and from the platform, the huge extent to which World War II was deliberately brought on by the scheming and lying and conniving of Stalin's agents for that purpose.

Once Stalin had got his war under way, the next great step was to bring the United States into it. And

in this most important undertaking he had the unremitting, cunneary [sic], and powerful assistance of Winston Churchill, of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and of all the vast coterie of Communists and sympathizers who manipulated American public opinion and political action.

Stalin was willing to bring the limitless horror and suffering of all-out modern warfare on hundreds of millions of people for the sake of two vital needs in Communist plans for global conquest. The first consisted of the direct, immediate, and tremendous advantages for Stalin of making the Soviets a wartime ally of the "Western" nations, and especially of the United States. The second gain comprised the sociological changes and the chaos, and the resulting opportunities for Communist agents in every country which Stalin knew the war and its aftermath would provide.<sup>1</sup>

Welch sees treason as the most important weapon of the Communists, treason within the national leadership of the country to be taken over.

Always and everywhere the Conspiracy uses native traitors, highly placed, as the agents through which to gain control of a government, and then its people. Putting the answer in the simplest possible terms, as to why the Communists have taken over dozens of countries, and are already so far on the road to taking over ours! The reason is treason!<sup>2</sup>

The fact that since 1955 there has not been a Congressional Committee to investigate communists in our federal government is seen as evidence that traitors are influencing the actions of the U.S. government. According to Welch these investigations have been stopped by executive orders directly from the President.<sup>3</sup>

The Birch Society sees this conspiracy as having had such a hold on our government for the past thirty-two years that the run on American banks and their closing during the early days of

---

<sup>1</sup>American Opinion Reprint, George Racey Jordan: "From Major Jordan's Diaries" (July 24, 1961), inside front cover.

<sup>2</sup>Stop, Look, and Listen, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

the depression were part of the great plot directed from Moscow. The Federal Reserve System as described by Welch in his 1958 open letter to Khrushchev was a realization of the fifth point of the Communist Manifesto which calls for centralization of credit in the hands of the state.

Since 1958 American Opinion has published a "Scoreboard," showing the Communist influence in the nations of the world. A comparison between the 1958 Scoreboard and the 1964 edition shows that, according to the Society, Communist influence and control has crept slowly up and continues on its gradual path toward its final goal. Only three nations of 137 listed showed a decrease in the percentage of communist control in 1964 as compared with 1963. Twenty-eight nations became more dominated by Communists in 1964 than they were in 1963. The remaining nations were unchanged as to the percentage that their governments were under the control of the Communists in 1964 compared with 1963.<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Welch feels that his Scoreboard has proven fairly accurate over the years. He feels that in some cases later developments have indicated that his scores for a particular year were too low. In no instance has he seen any evidence that any score was too high. The Society explains very carefully that these figures are not just something picked out of the air, but are the result of careful tabulation of information and opinion supplied by expert scholars and analysts on six continents.

---

<sup>1</sup>Taken from the 1964 Scoreboard released in Spring of 1965 by the John Birch Society. The complete Scoreboard is reproduced on page .



The Society sees this conspiracy as world-wide and never stopping in its advance toward world domination. A glance at the Scoreboard shows how extensive and complete the conspiracy is according to Robert Welch and others who "have been studying the problem increasingly" for the past few years.

Welch states that "the policies of the Kennedy Administration could be identified with the plans of the Communists." In fact he noted that even the "measures of the administration, which were specifically presented . . . as means of fighting Communism, were in fact helping the Communists and had been cunningly designed by somebody behind the scenes for that purpose."<sup>1</sup> The U. S. quarantine of Cuba under President Kennedy and the present U. S. buildup in Viet Nam are viewed by the Society as such measures.

Alas, there is little hope. The conspiracy has taken such a hold that not even a Robert A. Taft could control it. The complete helplessness of the situation is very apparent when Welch concludes that "It must be sadly noted and frankly stated that the conspiracy would not expect to suffer any by the substitution of Johnson for Kennedy. And this does not have to be the positive fault of either man."<sup>2</sup>

#### How to Stop the Conspiracy

How can this Communist conspiracy be stopped? How can the "Americanist" tradition of the United States be saved from the

---

<sup>1</sup>New York Times, December 25, 1963, p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

barbaric takeover designed in Moscow? Mr. Welch and the members of the John Birch Society see their "body" as the saving force.

As I see it, I am afraid you have just two alternatives. Either you, and tens of thousands like you, came into the John Birch Society and, without giving it the whole of your lives, still devote to its purposes the best and most you can offer, with money and head and heart as well as hands, or in a very few years you will, by force, be devoting all to the maintenance of a Communist slave state.<sup>1</sup>

The John Birch Society has accepted the challenge and has undertaken the active role of stopping the International Communist Conspiracy. The only thing that the Communists really fear is exposure and to expose them is the aim of the Society.

Stopping this conspiracy has been uppermost in Mr. Welch's mind since the beginning. He reminded his eleven friends in Indianapolis that

. . . it is the threat of the Communist conspiracy that brought us here. Stopping the Communists, and destroying their conspiracy, or at least breaking its grip on our government and shattering its power within the United States, . . . must occupy the front spot and most important spot in all of our thinking. It is the driving danger which should determine our thinking about almost everything else, and most<sup>2</sup> of our actions and time for the foreseeable future.

Welch is certain that if the Society fails in this struggle, the world will surely return again to a Dark Age under Communist control.

The plan that Welch advanced was the ten point program discussed earlier in this paper.<sup>3</sup> That is--establish reading rooms, circulate conservative periodicals, support conservative

---

<sup>1</sup>Blue Book, p. 168.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 169-170.

<sup>3</sup>See pages 22-25 of this study.

broadcasters, organize letter-writing campaigns, establish fronts, shock the American people into action, disrupt undesirable assemblies and speakers, provide free ~~spreaders~~<sup>speakers</sup> to organizations, extend Birch programs into other countries, and influence as much as possible the political elections of America. In order for this plan to function properly a "dynamic personal" leader must direct the operations. "It is the imminence and horror of this danger which drives me to so desperate a course as to offer myself as a personal leader in this fight, . . ."<sup>1</sup> Robert Welch, "the Founder," will direct the saving process.

#### Past Conspiracy Theories

The Birch idea of a conspiracy directed by outsiders is not new on the American scene; it has been with us at various periods since before 1800. The agitation that resulted in the Alien and Sedition Acts started with the belief that French Jacobinism was trying to subvert American institutions through its American agents. The fear was so broad that the law required no proof of guilt or formal charge. The President's discretion was enough to warrant prosecution. The best behavior and the noblest intentions could not insure immunity against deportation if the Executive so wished. The apparent fear of the conspiracy of that period becomes more evident when it is noted that those classified as aliens included friends of known aliens and that all aliens were considered enemies.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Blue Book, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup>James Schouler, History of the United States, (Vol. I New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1880), p. 405.

During the 1840's there was a sudden influx of immigrants to America following the failure of European revolutionary movements. Because of their numbers these new "Americans" were courted by the Democratic Party and became a source of political strength. Since most were Irish, the predominant religion was Catholic. Soon native groups appeared with "proof" that the whole influx of new people was part of a conspiracy planned by the Roman Catholic Church to gain control of America. A secret, fraternal organization called The Sons of '76 or The Order of the Star-Spangled Banner became the leader of this anti-Catholic movement. Its complete program was not made known to its members until they reached the highest level of officialdom in the association. Because their answer to questions concerning their organization was, "I don't know," they were tagged with the name "Know-Nothings."

Like the John Birch Society, the "Know-Nothings" saw a giant conspiracy but directed from Rome rather than from Moscow. "Leading Catholics were brought to bay in public controversies, the persecutions in all countries by the Catholic Church were recounted."<sup>1</sup> Americans were warned that these agents of Rome would "kindle the fires of the holy auto da fe' on the high places of our republic, and deluge our blooming plains with American blood."<sup>2</sup> The "Know-Nothings" developed little sayings and slogans by which they rallied their members. Its cardinal principle was the "Americans must

---

<sup>1</sup>Alexander Johnston, American Political History, (Vol. II, G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1912), p. 263.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 263.

rule America." Another of the "Know-Nothing's" favorite slogans was an order that George Washington was supposed to have issued on a critical occasion, "Put none but Americans on guard tonight."<sup>1</sup>

The Know-Nothings became more concerned with their political activities than with the Catholic conspiracy, dropped a part of their secret machinery, and took a more active role in traditional politics. They polled one-fourth of the total vote for president in 1856.

The American Protective Association (A.P.A.) was another organized movement that saw our country as the subject of foreign plots and conspiracy. Like the Know-Nothings, the A.P.A. was anti-Catholic and like the John Birch Society it saw itself as the savior of America from the "great conspiracy." Humphrey J. Desmond, in The A.P.A. Movement, states that the cause of this new anti-Catholic movement was the desire of the old-family Americans to maintain their social status.<sup>2</sup> Seymour Lipset supports this interpretation by pointing out that the publisher of many of the anti-Catholic A.P.A. pamphlets and books was also the publisher of the Social Register.<sup>3</sup>

The main A.P.A. argument was that Catholics were loyal to the Pope and thus to a foreign institution. The leaders of A.P.A. claimed that Catholics had no claim to the rights of citizenship in

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 261.

<sup>2</sup>Humphrey J. Desmond, The A.P.A. Movement (Washington, New Century Press, 1912), pp. 9-10.

<sup>3</sup>Seymour Martin Lipset, The Radical Right, Edited by Daniel Bell, (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1963), p. 311.

America. They explained that "Romanism" is a political system and that those who followed its policies were agents of the Vatican.

Like the John Birch Society, the A.P.A. looked mainly to well-established business people to provide the force necessary to stop the conspiracy. The statement that Robert Welch made to the eleven men at Indianapolis,

" . . . there is enough strength, enough money, enough intelligence, and enough patriotism in the vast business community of America, to form the nucleus that will stop, and destroy, the . . . conspiracy. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

Could as appropriately have been made to a meeting of the A.P.A. hierarchy in 1887.

During this same period, the farmer, plagued with adverse condition, became convinced that he was the victim of "some extrinsic baleful influence." Why should the Kansas farmer have to sell his corn for eight or ten cents a bushel when the New York broker was taking a dollar for the same bushel? The farmers who were to comprise the nucleus of the Populist movement saw "artificial barriers to consumption." They saw conspiracy against them in the form of "certain influences at work like thieves in the night," to rob hard-working farmers of their just reward.<sup>2</sup>

In this case the conspirator was not usually considered an agent of a foreign power. However, the charge that international bankers were the controlling force of production in the United States was often heard. Hicks concluded that the farmer saw railroads, the

---

<sup>1</sup>Blue Book, p. 177.

<sup>2</sup>John D. Hicks, The Populist Revolt, (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1931), p. 55.

trusts, and the money-lenders of Wall Street as the main agents of the conspiracy against him. The farmer's main fight was with those corporations which were concerned only with their own advantage without any consideration for the farmer.<sup>1</sup>

Another of the political groups which used the conspiracy argument was, the group led by Father Coughlin in the 1930's. Like the Populists, Coughlin saw a conspiracy of international financiers and Eastern bankers as the cause of the Great Depression. Coughlin attacked Jewish bankers and became anti-Semitic to the point that he shared the views of and became allied with Gerald L. K. Smith.

He turned finally from the bankers to "the conspiracy of the international, communistic, capitalistic Jew, . . ." but never from the idea of a giant plot designed to takeover America.<sup>2</sup> When his radio program no longer had a sponsor and was discontinued, he turned to the magazine, Social Justice. In its pages he praised Hitler and declared that "Germany was the innocent victim of a sacred war declared against her 9 years ago by the Jews." The conspiracy thesis was very evident in Coughlin's charge that the cause of World War II was "a Jewish-Communistic plot intent upon the liquidation of Americanism at home."<sup>3</sup>

Strange as it may seem, it was those on the left who were shouting conspiracy in 1946. The strained relationship between the

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>2</sup>The John Birch Society has been plagued with anti-Semitism charges, and certain members who harbored such feelings. However Welch himself seems free from anti-Semitism, and there is no evidence that the Society holds such views officially.

<sup>3</sup>Discussion of Coughlin is based on the following article: James P. Shenton, "The Coughlin Movement and the New Deal, Political Science Quarterly, LXXIII (Sept., 1958), pp. 352-373.

United States and Russia after World War II was seen by the far-left not as a conflict of nation-states, but rather as a "Fascist conspiracy." It was Henry Wallace in 1946 who was warning the nation and the American people that it was the "Nazis . . . running the American government." By 1948 Wallace was saying,

The two major parties had rotted, and Wall Street, the military clique, labor misleaders, "red-baiting" intellectuals, and even the churches had become part of a program to "betray" peace and progress. Unless the people rose and shook off this conspiracy, . . . the country faced an imminent Fascist takeover, and American foreign policy would serve only dictator regimes and the former Fascist nations.<sup>1</sup>

During the same period the "right" was dreaming of a Republican administration which would end American "defeats" at the hands of the internationalists. They saw either Robert Taft or General Douglas MacArthur, not Eisenhower, as the leader of America's movement in the "right direction." But the "modern Republicanism" introduced by the supporters of Eisenhower won out and the United States continued on the path of international concern and commitment.

The extreme right wing of both parties gained considerable strength during the late forties and organized to purge those they considered dangerous to the security of the nation. The weapons used by those who saw America slipping into the Communist pit were the House Un-American Activities Committee and the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Senate Committee on Government Operations.

This was the McCarthy era. McCarthy used the themes of doom and internal mistrust as a ladder to elevate himself as a symbolic

---

<sup>1</sup>Alan F. Westin, The Radical Right, p. 261.



figure and savior of the American way of life. His whole attack seemed aimed at providing a stage where he was the center of attraction. He used the Senate only as a base from which to operate with some authority. In three years he had an international reputation and a following of millions who looked with him for the Communist conspirators.

McCarthy's symbolic role lasted only five years--beginning in February of 1950, when he charged that the State Department was rife with Communists. With the advent of McCarthy the idea of our troubles being caused by false friends and traitors was again accepted by many. This idea of betrayal is the strong motivating force which has made McCarthy a near martyr to the present rightist groups who still see the same Communist takeover and the same American sell-out as the cause for U.S. difficulties.<sup>1</sup>

#### Review of Conspiracy Theory

The John Birch Society's concept of a giant conspiracy which, if allowed to advance unchecked, would take over the United States is not a new phenomenon. The few groups or individuals that are mentioned above illustrate that the conspiracy theory is as old as America itself. Only the foreign power pushing the conspiracy changes. Mention has not been made directly of such American movements as the Ku Klux Klan or the Black Muslims which also see con-

---

<sup>1</sup>A complete examination of McCarthyism can be found in Earl Latham, ed., The Meaning of McCarthyism, (Boston, D. C. Heath, 1965). For an inside view of the McCarthy hearing see Charles E. Potter, Days of Shame, (New York Coward-McCunn, 1965). Senator Potter, United States Senator from Michigan was a member of McCarthy's Committee.

spiracy as the cause of their ills. The always-present anti-Semites who usually attempt to attach themselves to other movements have not been discussed. Suffice it to say that historians can easily find evidence that the conspiracy betrayal antecedents of the Birch Society go as far back as 1798 in America.

### The Desirability of Less Government

The John Birch Society is very concerned over the Communist advance and the alleged influence of the conspiracy upon high U.S. officials. A look at their objectives as seen through the statements of Birch leaders, convince one that the Society is concerned with much more than the conspiracy. Robert Welch made this clear at the 1958 organizational meeting in Indianapolis. He said:

I have tried to establish fundamental and permanent objectives, much broader than the fight against the Communist conspiracy, because I am convinced that these ultimate long-range objectives are more important than the defeat of the Communist conspiracy.<sup>1</sup>

While serving in Congress, John H. Rousselot, National Publicity Director for the Society, inserted into the Congressional Record, June 12, 1962, a series of ten articles. These were an outline of the general beliefs and principles of the John Birch Society. Midway through article ten is found the following sentence which confirms and adds substance to Welch's statement quoted above.

But our struggle with Communists, while the most urgent and important task before us today, is basically only incidental to our more important long-range and constructive purposes.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Blue Book, p. 169.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Congressional Record, (June 12, 1962), CVIII, A4292. Here after Rousselot's ten articles will be referred to as Articles of Belief.

The ten articles of belief presented by Rousselot have been accepted by the Society as an official statement of belief. They are now reproduced and included in a packet sent by the Society headquarters to persons professing interest in the beliefs and programs of the Society.

A pamphlet, Stop, Look, and Listen, is also sent as a tool to explain the basic beliefs of the Society. The Spring, 1965, issue includes the following paragraph which further expresses the idea of a long range objective.

But our strength and effectiveness derive from our being far more than merely an anti-Communist group. We are basically concerned with constructive long range objectives, to which the rout and destruction of an ephemeral conspiracy of Communist criminals is really incidental.<sup>1</sup>

The Society has never outlined in detail just exactly what these long range goals are. By examining their literature and reading statements made by Society leaders, their political and social views on key questions of public interest can be determined. On the pages that follow will be discussed the beliefs and programs of the Society which go beyond the conspiracy theme.

"Our goals have been summarized as: Less government, more responsibility, and a better world." This statement is found in nearly all Society publications and is quoted often by speakers representing the Society.<sup>2</sup> Thus, one long range goal of the Society is to reduce the size of the <sup>CENTRAL</sup> government; a goal which seems to be

---

<sup>1</sup>Stop, Look, and Listen, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>See Blue Book, p. 127 & P. 162; Article Seven, Articles of Belief; and Stop, Look, and Listen, p. 4.

very much in line with the thinking of most modern conservatives.

Welch discusses his view on government in great detail in Section Six of The Blue Book. He advocates less government at every level--federal, state and municipal. He reasons that only by reducing government can true responsibility be restored to the individual. Government should not infringe in any way upon any area where an individual can provide for himself.

Based on the past experiences of man, Welch explains that certain general conclusions can be established concerning the position of government. He lists these conclusions in ten points.

(1) "First, government is necessary . . . some degree of government . . . in any civilized society."<sup>1</sup> Welch is often charged by his critics as being an anarchist, but this statement would seem to prove that criticism faulty. However, a little later on in the text Welch says, "The greatest enemy of man is, and always has been, government. And the larger, the more extensive that government, the greater the enemy."<sup>2</sup> This statement sounds like it is from a confirmed anarchist and is probably the basis for the critics charge. It is very difficult to determine which view is uppermost in Welch's mind.

Rousselot indicates that government is necessary, but that it should be limited and subject to close checks and balances. He fears the eventual takeover at all levels of government by the federal government in Washington. He advocates a very active program

---

<sup>1</sup>Blue Book, p. 129.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 138.

where initiative is assumed by small local governmental units. Critics could not accurately call the thoughts expressed in the Articles of Belief as anarchistic.

The over-all actions and statements of Society members indicate that they feel government is necessary and do not go so far as to be anarchistic. However, isolated statements display tendencies toward anarchy.

With the exception of number ten, Welch's other historical conclusions on the position of government have not become a major part of the Society's doctrine except as the point might be related to some other phase of their activity. A brief look at the remaining nine points is helpful in gaining a fair estimate of the Society's view on the position of government and economics.

(2) "Second, while government is necessary, it is basically a non-productive expense, an overhead cost supported by the productive economy."<sup>1</sup> This second point is nineteenth century economics; the idea of the overhead expense (government) expanding faster than the productive base (business) can support it traces clearly to pre-Keynesian economic thought.

(3) "Third, government is frequently evil."<sup>2</sup> Welch is fond of the statement by Lord Acton that great men, in politics, are almost always bad men. He sees all governments as being thoroughly dishonest.

(4) "Fourth, government is always and inevitably an enemy of

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 129.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

individual freedom."<sup>1</sup> It is self-evident that government is an enemy of freedom; the history of mankind shows government gradually restricting the rights and responsibilities of man.

(5) "Whatever must be done by government will always cost more than if it could be done by individuals or smaller groups."<sup>2</sup> Governmental action in any area outside the traditional protection function is bad. Government action in such areas as public welfare and public works is contrary to the whole philosophy of the proper function of government as it has developed throughout history.

(6) "Government, by its size, its momentum, and its authority, will not only perpetuate errors of doctrine or policy, . . . but it will multiply their effect, . . . as against the arithmetically cumulative effect of those errors if confined to individuals or smaller groups."<sup>3</sup> Governmental action on any matter gives the impression to the people that if it is sanctified by government it is truth. Welch explains that if man were left alone, he could determine truth through the use of common sense and everyday experience.

(7) As man advances to the point where he and his society are settled, government has the tendency to take over the management of the social affairs of the citizens including the total economy of the nation. Welch sees this as contrary to the American tradition of free enterprise. The free market could, through natural methods,

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 131.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

automatically adjust to the needs and ambitions of those who work through it. This natural law of supply and demand is broken by government intervention. Only chaos can result from such an intrusion.<sup>1</sup>

(8) "As a government increases in power, . . . it always has a tendency to squeeze out the middle class. . . ." <sup>2</sup> This was the case in the United States beginning with the "socialization of America" under Franklin D. Roosevelt.

(9) "The form of government is not nearly as important as its quality."<sup>3</sup> In this statement Welch seems to be echoing the statement made by Montesquieu that the form of government should correspond with the principles of government or the situation of the people being governed. Although, like Montesquieu, Welch has more positive ideas on the proper form of government than this statement would indicate.

(10) The tenth point is the most important of the generalizations on government. It is the sum total of the other points and closely coincides with modern American conservative belief. ". . . Neither the form of government nor its quality is as important as its quantity."<sup>4</sup> Welch sees the size of government as the key to many of the problems of the world. According to the Blue Book, a

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 132.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 133.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 134.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

foul corrupt government, like that of Nero, was far better for Rome than the more benevolent government of Diocletian or of Constantine. Why? Because it was not nearly so large and did not depend on the bureaucratic agents as did the governments of Diocletian and Constantine. "The increasing quantity of government, in all nations constitutes the greatest tragedy of the Twentieth Century."<sup>1</sup> The seriousness of this conviction becomes more evident when it is recalled that Welch also said:

Yet I had rather have for America, and I am convinced America would be better off with a government of three hundred thousand officials and agents, every single one of them a thief, than a government of three million agents with every one of them an honest, honorable, public servant. For the first group would only steal from the American economic and political system; the second group would be bound in time to destroy it.<sup>2</sup>

As far as the Society's views on government are concerned, it seems clear that they advocate a system patterned after what (they feel) our government was at the beginning of our national history. The long-range view of the Society on this matter is expressed (by Welch himself) in the Blue Book.

The purpose of the John Birch Society, as officially stated, will be to promote less government, more responsibility, and a better world. The purpose as unofficially described and discussed among ourselves will be exactly the same thing. Our short-range purpose, our long-range, and our lasting purpose, is to promote less government, more responsibility, and a better world. That says it all. It is, I think, simple, understandable, and all-inclusive as to the goals for which we should strive.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 136.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 162.



The method of attaining these objectives is educational action on the political scene. The plan of action (outlined earlier) is the instrument through which these objectives will be carried forth. The methods used to advance these goals will be discussed in a later section.

### Anti-Democratic Feelings

On all mail sent from the John Birch Society headquarters in Belmont, Massachusetts, is stamped a statement which has become one of the Society's cliches--"This is a republic, not a democracy --Let's keep it that way."

John H. Rousselot in his fifth article of the Articles of Belief says:

We believe that a constitutional Republic, such as our Founding Fathers gave us, is probably the best of all forms of government. We believe that a democracy, which they tried hard to obviate, and into which the liberals have been trying for 50 years to convert our Republic, is one of the worst of all forms of government.<sup>1</sup>

Nowhere is the anti-democratic feeling of the Society more clearly expressed than in the Blue Book.

And democracy, of course, in government or organization, as the Greeks and Romans both found out, and as I believe every man in this room clearly recognizes . . . democracy is merely a deceptive phrase, a weapon of demagoguery, and a perennial fraud.<sup>2</sup>

The Birch concept of democracy is part of the base for the Society's drive for the impeachment of Chief Justice Earl Warren. Welch claims Warren had "taken the lead in the drive to convert this

---

<sup>1</sup>Printed in U.S. Congressional Record, CVIII (June 12, 1962), A4292.

<sup>2</sup>Blue Book, p. 159.

country into a democracy." It is, in his mind, unconstitutional for leaders to treat the nation as a democracy. He often points out that there is nothing in the Constitution which said the United States was intended by the founding fathers to be a democracy.<sup>1</sup>

This anti-democratic attitude seems very curious coming from the spokesmen of a group calling themselves "Americanists." Throughout their school days, American history students have read of and talked about such movements, periods, and phases in American history as Jeffersonian democracy, Jacksonian democracy, democratic and artistocratic clashes in colonial America, Constitutional democracy, making the world safe for democracy, the role of political parties in American democracy. As early as 1831 the French aristocrat, Alexis de Tocqueville, traveled throughout America and was greatly impressed with the fact that Americans believed they had a special world mission as the champions of democracy and equality.<sup>2</sup> It seems very difficult to divorce America from a democratic tradition--unless we have been grossly misinformed about this tradition.

#### Authoritarian Concept of Leadership

The Society is clearly designed along authoritarian lines.<sup>3</sup> Welch has repeatedly expressed the desirability of one-man personal

---

<sup>1</sup>Taken from a Santa Barbara, California speech given by Robert Welch as reported in the New York Times, April 12, 1961, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Even though de Tocqueville himself was suspicious of American democracy and doubted it would work, he nevertheless, did report that the Americans believed themselves champions of democracy and equality.

<sup>3</sup>Welch never openly calls for authoritarian national government. In fact he cannot be treated as a critic of the structure or philosophy of government. His criticism is more often based on what is generally thought of as moral issues.

leadership and there is no doubt that it is he who will make the final decisions on Society policy. After declaring that the John Birch Society was to be a monolithic body and dismissing democratic methods as weapons of demagoguery, Welch offered himself as the man who would provide the leadership necessary to turn the tide in favor of America. With him in command "the John Birch Society will operate under completely authoritative control at all levels." The Society will "allow for honest differences of opinion . . . but whenever differences of opinion become translated into lack of loyal support, we shall have short cuts for eliminating both without going through any Congress of so-called democratic processes."<sup>1</sup>

With this type of authoritarian organizational concept, Mr. Welch is not only the founder, but also the guiding light. At Indianapolis he told his audience that "the men who join the John Birch Society . . . are going to be doing so primarily because they believe in me and what I am doing and are willing to accept my leadership anyway." As absolute leader he enjoys vast powers including the power to expel any member or chapter without stating the reasons and without any chance for a hearing or appeal. This is stated on the application for membership which is sent out by the Society to prospective members. It reads as follows:

I agree that my membership may be revoked at any time, by a duly appointed officer of the Society, without the reason being stated, on refund of the pro rata part of my dues paid in advance.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Blue Book, pp. 161-162.

<sup>2</sup>This statement is taken from an official application for membership form sent by the Society upon request. The full application is reproduced in the Appendix of this study.

Welch has used this power, but not extensively. The Society publications report that one lonely widow who "only wanted companionship" and one anti-Semitist have been dropped by the home office. Less than a dozen individuals had been dropped throughout the nation by 1961.<sup>1</sup>

Welch justifies the power he holds and the controls he has by pointing out that they are needed to prevent Communist infiltration of the Society as well as to keep hate-mongers, anti-Semitists, and racists out of the organization.

The authoritarian nature of the Society has been similarly defended by members and non-members alike. Thomas E. Woods, a Society member from Wichita defended the organization of the Society and the nature of its leadership structure in a letter to Senator Milton R. Young (R-N.D.). His explanation concerning the Society's method of government was:

There is no question about it--we are a private organization. But so are the Knights of Columbus, Masons, Elks, etc. Does this fact in and of itself militate against us?<sup>2</sup>

This defense is well taken inasmuch as the U.S. is full of authoritarian private organizations, operating in the fraternal or religious spheres of American life. No great notice is taken of their activities by those outside the organization. The criticism of the Society's authoritarian nature undoubtedly stems from those who are concerned and interested in the Society because of other actions or programs advocated by the body. Alarm is

---

<sup>1</sup>Blue Book, p. XV, footnote 27.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Congressional Record, CVII (April 12, 1961), 5608.

sounded because the Society operates in the political sphere rather than in the service or fraternal area of American life.

There is no conclusive evidence that Welch exercises dictatorial power in all matters. Members are free to leave or to refuse to comply with those programs which would require them to act in anyway contrary to the principles that guide their lives. The Blue Book declares that:

Our members are told specifically and emphatically in our bulletins, about once every three months, never to carry out any of our requests or to do anything for the Society that is against their individual consciences or even contrary to their best judgment.<sup>1</sup>

This being so, the charge that the Society is an organization run on Fascist lines and that Welch is another Hitler seems too severe.

Although not dictatorial, the Society is organized on authoritarian lines. Because of this character it has been a prime target for political critics from left to right. However, this criticism has not seemed to hurt the Society's recruiting. The authoritarian position of Welch as leader seems to be acceptable to those who chose to follow; members look to him as the Founder and accept him as an authority on the things they fear or do not understand.

Once the Catholic Church was regarded as a very active foe of communism, now many very religious and sincere Catholics look to the John Birch Society and Welch as Communism's arch enemies. A good example of this trend is revealed by letters from members of the Catholic Church received by such Catholic magazines as Extension and America. The following letter is typical of the expressions concerning Welch's position.

---

<sup>1</sup>Blue Book, p. xv. Footnote 27.

If America and the Holy Mother Church are to survive in the face of our Catholic Action, our Catholic President and too much of our Catholic press, we sorely need the John Birch Society to keep us from destruction. As long as good people continue to give God their first allegiance, as Robert Welch does, there is hope that our Lady's Son will be appeased and we will enjoy an era of peace.<sup>1</sup>

This type of testimony from a religious and sincere Catholic puts Robert Welch in fairly distinguished company.<sup>2</sup>

It is evident that Robert Welch is viewed by many as a savior whose prophetic leadership is trusted absolutely. With this type of leader there is no need for members to select programs or define Society position. There is no need for them to debate issues concerning the nation or the world. He who is at top can be trusted with all details.

The Birch concept of authoritarian leadership and its acceptance by Society members seems to be based on the idea that they have a monopoly on wisdom, on correctness, and goodness. The whole background of the birth of the Society is characteristic of a body which has determined that "the truth" has been revealed to it, truth that can only become a reality if shared with others and administered from the top by those who know. Those who follow will benefit from having access to such wisdom. As the John Birch Society sees it, the very powerful and persecuting enemy can be destroyed by instructing the "anxious and angry people" in "the

---

<sup>1</sup>Robert A. Graham, "The John Birch Society," America, CVI (December 2, 1961), p. 328.

<sup>2</sup>See the letters in the appendix for additional examples of how the Society is viewed as a saving force by some. Also see T. Thompson, "God Deserves Better," Christian-Century, October 4, 1961, pp. 1174-1176.

Truth" by those few who know.

The idea of an organization or an individual claiming a monopoly of wisdom and truth is not new. Much of the world's history has been directed by spiritual-savior type leaders. Four hundred years before Christ, Plato's disgust for democracy (he lost his beloved teacher, Socrates, at the hands of a democracy) caused him to long for an ideal state governed by philosophic statesmen who would rule knowing "the truth." Plato's "philosopher kings" provide the philosophical base for the charismatic authoritarian doctrines that have followed.<sup>1</sup> The Birch Society is based on such a doctrine.

Many of the characteristics of Fasciam can be found in the pronouncements of Robert Welch. The idea of "Fuhrership," or total control by one leader; the reliance on a small elite corps of zealots in key places; the use of fronts in order to get broader support; the concept of significant support from wealthy business people; and, of course, the idea of militant anti-communism are all consequential parts of the doctrine of Welch as well as of fascist thought. However, labelling the Birch Society fascist or Nazi is too extreme. There is no evidence of the idea of class or race superiority in the movement and members come from a variety of economic levels and ethnic backgrounds. There is talk of "Americanism" and of the "Americanist" view, but the extreme nationalism of Nazi doctrine does not exist in the Society. Authoritarian though it may

---

<sup>1</sup>Friedrich Nietzsche, the nineteenth century German philosopher, is a good example of a recent advocate of the superior leader doctrine. Nietzsche was also a believer in the conspiracy doctrine of history. His culprit was all of Christianity.

be, it does not support the cult of statism, nor does it advocate militarism to any great degree. At the present the ideology is too individualistic to be classified as fascist.

### International Relations

The Society views the United States' relationship with the nations of the world wholly as an anti-communist or pro-communist venture, depending on the action taken. Because of the nature of the "conspiracy" and the strength of international communism, the Society can support no foreign policy that is not geared to opposition of communism. All United States programs either advance the communist cause or else defeat it. Failing to recognize that there are matters of concern completely divorced from communism or the Soviets, other nations are viewed by Society members as either for or against the United States in its deadly struggle with Communism. There is no such thing as a neutralist nation; nonalignment is ridiculous; a neutral is a collaborator.

As long as a government is anti-Communist, it is supported strongly by Welch. He has no fear of dictatorship and has not hesitated to praise leaders like Salazar of Portugal, Franco of Spain, Trujillo of the Dominican Republic, and Bastista of Cuba, because they were staunchly anti-Communists. More recently he has supported the rebels of Katanga under Tshombe on the grounds that secessionist Katanga was anti-Communist. A Birch front was started over the situation in Katanga called, "American Committee for aid to Katanga Freedom Fighters." At least nine of the top leaders of the Birch Society were involved in this movement.



The Birch view on foreign affairs is strictly "American first." Even though there is an awareness by the leaders that it is no longer possible for the United States to conduct foreign affairs entirely on her own, there is a very evident longing for the good "old days" of isolationism. The Society expresses a serious fear that national sovereignty will be violated by alliances, agreements, or treaties which commit the United States to military or financial action in behalf of a foreign nation. Participation in the United Nations, if at all, should be confined to a public forum type presentation of our views on key issues.

By January of 1962, the Society instigated its drive to "Get the United States out of the United Nations and the United Nations out of the United States."<sup>1</sup> The war on the United Nations was launched officially in the January, 1962, Bulletin with the statement declaring that the time had clearly come to recognize the Fifth Communist International for what it really is, and to do everything necessary to break its closing grip on American freedom and independence. From its beginning the Society has been critical of the United Nations and all its programs including the Halloween and Christmas drives sponsored by the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF) which are aimed at funds to help feed some of the world's starving children. The Society claimed such collections were instigated by the Communists and used by them to relieve their own people.<sup>2</sup> The American Association for the United Nations claims

---

<sup>1</sup>Rousselot includes this aim in Article Four of his Articles of Belief.

<sup>2</sup>The Birch group distributed widely a reprint entitled, "Don't Send Me A UNICEF Card" which attacked the use of the funds received

these charges have no basis and are gross misrepresentations. The charges and challenges against the United Nations have been so frequent and so common that the AAUN has prepared and has ready factual information on the United Nations and its functions.<sup>1</sup>

Members of the Birch Society are unlikely to accept information prepared by individuals not connected with or supported by the Society. Hard-core members see this type of rebuttal as another tentacle of the "octopus of conspiracy." Their gospel is the word of Welch, and those who challenge his view are viewed very critically.

Society leaders and members regard it as a waste of time to make any attempt to negotiate with the Communists at any level and on any subject as is the policy in the United Nations. They feel that any negotiation will prove to be to the Communists' advantage. Because the final communist aim is "a completely amoral world," United States dealings with them should always be in opposition.

The Society's "front" organizations have been very active in their attempts to stop any official exchange between the Soviets and the United States. The Committee Against Summit Entanglements is one of the best examples of their opposition to dealing with the Soviets. Their aim was to keep President Eisenhower from meeting with Nikita Khrushchev in 1959. Their main program was a full-page newspaper advertisement with such nationally known names as Barry Goldwater, J. Bracken Lee, and William Buckley listed on either the Executive

---

through the drive. The past few years the Birch Society has printed their own cards at \$2.00 per dozen with no explanation of the use of the funds obtained from the sale.

<sup>1</sup>Full details concerning this matter can be obtained from the American Association for the United Nations, 342 East 46 St., New York 17, New York.

Committee or the National Board. Their efforts proved fruitless in this case--Khrushchev and Eisenhower met at Camp David and the Soviet Premier subsequently toured the United States.<sup>1</sup> However, Mr. Welch believed the project was not a complete failure even though Khrushchev did visit the United States. The increased efforts of the Society had a great deal to do with the fact that Eisenhower did not return the visit as planned.<sup>2</sup> The "increased efforts" included a call of action through the Bulletin to flood Washington with postcards, letters, telegrams, and phone calls protesting the President's plans for a return visit. The nature of this call is evident in the following instructions from Welch to the membership in the May 1, 1960, Bulletin.

We believe that one big final push, if dramatic enough and determined enough, can cause the powers behind the Eisenhower throne to decide that the time is not yet ripe for so drastic a step. And we believe that on our side, the time is ripe for patriotic Americans to take the initiative, in a firm and outspoken manner, instead of waiting to complain about what has happened to them after it has already happened. Therefore, fully aware of the harshness of what we are saying, and fully convinced of its justice and necessity, we are asking everyone of our members to send at once a post card, letter or telegram to the White House, reading simply as follows:

Dear President Eisenhower  
If you go, don't come back!

Sincerely,  
(Signature)<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Welch discusses the Committee Against Summit Entanglements in the Blue Book, page ix, footnote 14. A copy of the newspaper ad can be found in the Blue Book, page xi.

<sup>2</sup>Blue Book, p. x.

<sup>3</sup>Bulletin, May, 1960, p. 22.

In addition to the activities of the "front," Welch issued a memorandum to all the "Americanists" who had a radio audience or reading public urging them to use their media to aid in the battle.

The same type of attack has been advocated against key programs of our post-World War II foreign policy such as NATO, SEATO, Truman Doctrine, Marshall Plan and the Eisenhower Doctrine. Welch claims that the defensive spending of our nation is part of the Communist plan to wreck our whole economy and that these programs are part of the great hoax being carried on between Moscow and Washington. The positive character of these alliances and defensive measures are not factual at all, but are a part of what the Birch Society calls the "principle of reversal."

The "principle of reversal" is the method employed by the communists and others to deceive unsuspecting people. It works on the premise that you say one thing and mean exactly the opposite, or you create what you call an anti-Communist force like NATO which is really an agency of the "conspiracy." Another very common method of using the "principle of reversal" is through "catch phrases." For example, during the 30's Reds started such phrases as "I can't stand F.D.R., but we must stand by him because of his foreign policy." Welch feels that such phrases caused U.S. entry into World War II as a Soviet ally. More recently the "one-worlders" stole the G.O.P. nomination from Robert Taft in Chicago with the phrase; "I like Taft but he can't win." According to Welch, it was through this reversal principle that Eisenhower received the Republican nomination in 1952.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>If one literally followed the reasoning behind the "principle of reversal" it would be reasonable to claim that Welch is in reality a communist using anti-communism as a guise.

### Sum Up on Birch Concept of Foreign Policy

The Birch Society is basically isolationist. They do not advocate participation in an international organization such as the United Nations. Fearing a loss of sovereignty, they are equally opposed to defensive alliances and advocate United States withdrawal from all commitments of military forces in behalf of another country. They mistrust the Soviets and are convinced that little or no good can come from attempts to deal with them on a diplomatic basis. American policy should be one of decisive action, not idle talk, against the heads of communism in Russia and China.<sup>1</sup>

The Society also feels that military spending should be cut drastically, which seems somewhat out of place considering the rigid character of the policy they advocate. Wisconsin's Democratic Congressman, Henry S. Reuss is correct when he observed that "they want us to get rid of our allies, cripple our defense establishment, and then go to war with half the world."<sup>2</sup> Reuss's evaluation is probably too extreme. However, it seems certain the Birchers would

---

<sup>1</sup>The question must be asked, should we fear an exchange of views between our nation's leaders and the communist leaders? Our people would not become converted or corrupted through such an exchange. To say that our nation should in no way take part in world discussions with those who claim a Communist belief indicates that in the realm of ideas and conviction, the Communist dogma would prove stronger than our own. We should not become dominated by a fear that the principles of freedom on which this nation was founded will not stand examination and competition. These principles will not crumble upon contact with the communist doctrine.

<sup>2</sup>Henry S. Reuss, "Birch Bark, Birch Bite," Commonweal, March 9, 1962, p. 616.

prefer a return to a pre-twentieth century foreign policy.

### Domestic Affairs

The idea of "conspiracy," coupled with the theme of "less government" and "anti-collectivism," dominate the John Birch Society's concept of the proper role of government in domestic affairs just as they do in foreign relations. Consequently, the Society views with apprehension the actions taken by the United States government on the home front since Roosevelt and the New Deal. As mentioned earlier, Welch prefers a return to a type of government unaffected by the "one-world" idea which is moving the nation toward communism.<sup>1</sup>

The Society sees as a part of the "conspiracy" the gradual conversion of the United States into a socialistic nation, not unlike the Soviet Union as far as economic and political patterns are concerned. This secret change-over is directed by Moscow in ways that make it almost impossible for anyone but an expert to detect. Welch makes this aim clear by quoting from a directive of some of the largest American foundations.<sup>2</sup> The directive reads like this: "so to change the economic and political structure of the United States that it can be comfortably merged with Soviet Russia."<sup>3</sup> As Welch sees it, this type of directive is carried out by thousands of misguided citizens under the guise of "progressive-sounding" programs.

Welch in the Blue Book explains how the Soviets can direct U.S. domestic policy by citing the Sputnik flight of 1957. In his

---

<sup>1</sup>Blue Book, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup>Welch fails to name the foundations to which he refers.

<sup>3</sup>Blue Book, p. 30.

opinion, the most important Soviet accomplishment in the Sputnik flight was not the scientific prestige gained, but the control gained over the domestic policies of the United States. The greatly expanded government spending and the federal control that accompanies such increases; the higher and higher taxes; the unbalanced budget; the government control on prices, wages, and materials; the expansion of the bureaucracy; the greater centralization of power in Washington; and the new interest in education which led to federal aid are all socialistic results of Sputnik.<sup>1</sup>

This is just an example of how Welch and the John Birch Society see the conspiracy on the home front. Yet, they feel the battle isn't lost and that the trend can be reversed. Their concept of what the proper role of the American government should be concerning domestic policy can be gleaned from their program to combat the "international conspiracy." The "return to proper government plan" of the Society is a strong "anti" program geared around the repealing of much of the social and economic legislation of the past thirty years.

There follows a brief examination of the position taken by the Society on some important national issues: income taxes, welfare programs, the relationship of government to business, labor, and the Supreme Court.

#### Anti-Income Tax

The Society feels that the progressive income-tax created by the 16th Amendment during Wilson's administration was the first step

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 33-34.

in stifling individual initiative and starting the nation on the road to collective socialism. Any attempt at equalization sponsored by the government, as progressive taxation is, is disguised socialism and chops at the roots of the capitalism that made the country great.

The Society wants the income tax abolished and has a plan to do it; the income tax would be unnecessary if the government would abandon their collectivist activities in which they compete with private industry such as Tennessee Valley Authority and Bonneville Power. The plan to return to pre-income tax days is centered around what the Society calls the Liberty Amendment, a proposed amendment backed by a number of conservative organizations in addition to the Birch Society. The Liberty Amendment is actually an amendment to the 16th Amendment. In brief, it would call for the selling of all government agencies in competition with private industry or which critics feel could be better handled by private industry. After the sale of the agencies and after the private concerns were providing the service formerly handled by the agencies of the federal government, the income tax would be phased out of existence.<sup>1</sup>

No mention is made by the Society of private companies that are in a position to purchase a government agency, or what agencies should be included, or whether or not the agencies should be broken up and sold in smaller units, or the profit potential of some of the services that would be turned over to private concerns. Perhaps

---

<sup>1</sup>Garn Lewis called the Liberty Amendment the number three program being supported by the John Birch Society at the present time. Number one is the move to impeach Chief Justice Earl Warren and number two is to get the United States out of the United Nations.



such questions as these could be answered at some later date.

The Society leaders have a strong conviction that their program provides the framework by which the move back toward individual incentive and initiative is possible. The premature collectivistic trend would be reversed as other positive policies designed to return our system to "what it once was" were introduced.<sup>1</sup>

### Anti-Social Welfare Programs

The followers of Welch view with horror the steps that they claim the U.S. has made toward a merger with international Communism through the guise of social welfare. They are convinced that the "egg heads" who advised F.D.R. were advocates of one-world collectivism. During the Great Depression it was these liberal advisers that authored the social welfare programs that became part of the New Deal.

Thus such programs as social security, unemployment compensation, workmen's compensation, medical help for the aged, and public assistance of any kind are opposed by the Society. Government-provided security of any type is part of the planned takeover; people look to the government rather than themselves for help and thus become "dupes" to be used by the government. Many members feel that social help from the government follows the pattern of the income tax in destroying "incentive" and "initiative" of the

---

<sup>1</sup>It should be noted that income tax in America can be traced back to a 1646 Massachusetts Bay statute. See Roger Foster and Everett V. Abbot, A Treatise on the Federal Income Tax, Boston, Boston Book Co., 1895. Also see Edwin R. A. Selegman, "The Income Tax," Political Science Quarterly, IX (1894), pp. 610-612. James Madison, writing in the January 13, 1793, National Gazette, called for "the silent operation of laws, which without violating the rights of property, reduce extreme wealth towards a state of mediocrity, and raise extreme indigence toward a state of comfort."

people whose independent ancestors made this country great.

The Society offers no alternative for the social-welfare programs now in operation at the local, state, and national level. They only advocate immediate abandonment.

#### Government-Business Relationship

There is no question concerning where the John Birch Society stand as far as the relationship between government and business is concerned. The leaders of the Society agree that the best economic policy would be a return to the laissez-faire economics of the nineteenth century. They do not like the change that took place after the collapse of the economy during the great depression. The implication is that business leaders failed in their position as makers of the economy and the community. Because of this interpretation, government, through its economic advisers, provided the programs that directed the economic direction of the nation. The feeling is strong among the members that the economy of our nation should be returned to its traditional directors, the nation's businessmen.

The Society's view on the proper relationships between the business or producing phase of society and government boils down to the concept of individualism versus collectivism. This struggle could be called the key to their complaint against the trend in American government during the past thirty-two years. The Society wants a return to the days of rugged individualism. This is clear when statements by such leaders as Fred C. Koch, Frank Cullen Brophy, and Robert Love are evaluated.<sup>1</sup> While discussing the meaning

---

<sup>1</sup>See Broyles, loc. cit., pp. 44-61.

of the word "Americanism," Welch explained his feelings concerning individualism.

The true Americanist believes that the individual should retain the freedom to make his own bargain with life, and the responsibility for the results of that bargain; and that means are as important as the ends in the civilized social order which he desires.<sup>1</sup>

The "individualist" nature of the Society's ideology is a return to an earlier date when our nation was not faced with the complex domestic and international involvement, that a modern power is forced to confront. In this desire for a return to individualism and less government, the conservative desire for simplicity is evident: they long for a return to the period when a man could stand on his own two feet and take care of himself; for the good life away from the complex modern society and the ills that they claim are destroying individual "incentive" and "initiative;" for the days that are past--days that they did not know.

#### Anti-Labor Feeling of the Society

Related to the idea of a return to late nineteenth century economic policy and business-government relationship, is the Society's view of the power of the modern labor union. Although they are not as outspoken on this matter as they are on certain others, it is not uncommon in Birch literature to see such referencer as "the Reutherite Left" used in the same tone of opposition as the "international conspiracy."<sup>2</sup> In describing the use of the

---

<sup>1</sup>Blue Book, p. 138.

<sup>2</sup>Blue Book, p. 119.

"front," Welch suggested as an example "Women Against Labor Union Hoodlumism."<sup>1</sup> Remarks such as these indicate a less than positive concept of the position of America's labor organization.

Many of the Society leaders, including Edwin D. Dellard, Fred C. Koch, and Robert D. Love, are strong supporters of the "right-to-work" drive in the United States. Welch included the role played in "right-to-work" movements in the short sketch of accomplishments of Love and Koch in the biographical listing of the National Council of the John Birch Society. Most of the Birch-union conflict has been at the local level. For example, California labor leaders have had a constant battle with Birch anti-labor and "right-to-work" propaganda over the past few years.<sup>2</sup> The leaders of the Society express the opinion that labor unions have pushed too far and are under the leadership of power hungry men like Reuther and Meany. They equate the rising labor influence with the international conspiracy and seem to disregard organized labor's outstanding anti-communist record. The Society attacks Reuther more than any other union leader including James Hoffa. Broyles suggests that the Society is hostile to Reuther because he is the most active on the national scene and plays the biggest role in American politics and economics.

#### Anti-Supreme Court Feeling in the Society

Robert Welch declared war on Earl Warren and the position of the Supreme Court at the Indianapolis organizational meeting. At

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> AFL-CIO American Federationist, June, 1963.

that time he suggested as one of the "fronts" in point five of his ten point plan of action "A Petition to Impeach Earl Warren." The important of this drive is evident when it is noted that the Society gives top priority to "The Movement to Impeach Earl Warren." Welch feels that the Warren question is as fundamental and far reaching as the questions presented by Jay, Madison, and Hamilton in The Federalist Papers.<sup>1</sup>

What are the charges against Warren that cause the leadership of the John Birch Society to feel there are grounds for impeachment? Article III, Section I of the Constitution says that federal judges "shall hold their offices during good behavior." Welch feels that impeachment should be used to remove those who violate this basic constitutional requirement. Welch sees no need to settle the general question of what constitutes sufficiently bad behavior to call for impeachment. According to the accusers, the case against Warren is easy and clear.

Warren took the judicial oath as it was worded by an Act of Congress of 1948 which states:

I, Earl Warren, do solemnly swear that I will administer justice without respect to persons and do equal right to the poor and to the rich, and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all the duties incumbent upon me as Chief Justice according to the best of my abilities and understanding agreeably to the constitution and laws of the United States. So help me God.<sup>2</sup>

Welch feels that "there seems . . . to have been unquestionable,

---

<sup>1</sup>Bulletin, January 1, 1961, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>United States Code, 1958 Edition, (Washington, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, 1959), Title 28, No. 453, p. 4974.

deliberate, decisive, and repeated violation of that oath by Chief Justice Warren, . . .<sup>1</sup> Because of what "seems" a violation of that oath, Welch feels Warren should be impeached for misconduct in office under the "good behavior" clause.<sup>2</sup>

This serious charge is made against a man entrusted with one of the highest most honored positions in the United States. Yet, when quizzed as to the bases of these charges, Welch answers as though it didn't matter, "obviously we cannot give any extensive survey of that misconduct. . . ."<sup>3</sup> On another occasion when asked by a reporter if he thought Earl Warren was a Communist, Welch replied:

I have no idea. I have no way of knowing. We're not going to run down specific facts--that is the FBI's job--but we can draw an over-all conclusion.<sup>4</sup>

Welch does offer to "touch on just two or three of the most flagrant examples of misconduct." These include the May 17, 1954, Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka case which stirred up dissension. Warren's role in this case is part of a "greater conspiracy." Welch suggests that he was made Chief Justice for one reason--to assure that the Brown decision was made according to schedule.<sup>5</sup> The behind-the-scenes culprits in this "criminal highhandedness" were Gunnar

---

<sup>1</sup>Bulletin, loc. cit., p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>New York Times, August 5, 1961, p. 1.

<sup>5</sup>The Brown v. Board of Education case was a unanimous decision, yet Warren is singled out in the Birch charges.

Myrdal, a Swedish scholar, and a group of "American Communist-fronters" with whom the Swede worked.<sup>1</sup>

Welch is certain that the Warren Court is set on destroying the sovereign rights of the states of the United States and advancing the "one-world conspiracy." He charges that the members of the Court, following the "conspiracy" line, have disregarded their oaths and are attempting to wipe out the laws which hold America together. The aim of the Court, as seen by Welch, is to advance "the mobocratic democracy so feared by our Founding Fathers."<sup>2</sup>

The Society also feels the Court has failed the Americanist cause and has advanced the communist cause by ruling that the Bill of Rights applies to American left-wingers and Communists. But as Welch explained in the Supplement to the Bulletin for February, 1961, the push to impeach Warren was avoiding the argument that Warren has "continuously given aid and comfort, by his arbitrary and unsupportable decisions, to our Communist enemies," and was based wholly on Warren's violation of the constitutional provision for good behavior in office.<sup>3</sup>

The Society has considerable backing in its impeachment drive. In addition to the support of such allied groups as America's Future, National Economic Council, and We The People; the impeachment move has been strengthened by such conservative voices as columnist George Todt and Congressman Mendel Rivers. George Todt in his

---

<sup>1</sup>Bulletin, loc. cit., pp. 16-17.

<sup>2</sup>The complete Bulletin for January, 1961 is devoted to the impeachment charges.

<sup>3</sup>See February 1961, Supplement to the Bulletin, p. 14.

"View of the News" column in the Los Angeles Herald Express on February 10, 1961, supported the rights of Americans to bring charges against an official. He wrote that there must be something to the charges or more than 100 American patriotic societies would not have answered Welch's cry for support.

A Southern Democrat, Rep. L. Mendel Rivers of South Carolina, stood up on the floor of the House on March 22, 1961, and delivered a speech that not only supported Welch's Warren charge, but added fuel to the fire. After praising Welch as a man and as a patriotic leader, he charged Chief Justice Warren with being "unfit to fill his high position" and the "most inept poseur who has ever worn the robes of Chief Justice." Rivers declared that a "review of the decisions of the Warren Court establishes beyond a shadow of a doubt that while the interests of the United States have been grossly abused, the interests of our enemies have been handled most tenderly."<sup>1</sup>

Rivers sees Warren as a man who happened to have been the governor of California when the "Eisenhower regime" carried that state and was, thus, credited with delivering the state to the Eisenhower camp. His reward for such service, despite the fact that he had had no judicial experience, was the position of Chief Justice of the United States.<sup>2</sup> Rivers contends that proof that Warren is unfit to fill this high office is "attested to by his colleagues, whose dissenting opinions show that even his fellow Justices hold no high opinion of their chief's qualifications for his grave

---

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Congressional Record, CVIII (March 22, 1961) 4604.

<sup>2</sup>The appointment to office as political reward is as old as the nation itself and can hardly be called evidence of conspiracy.



responsibility."<sup>1</sup>

The "drive" to remove Warren from office has not let up since the beginning. In the Bulletin for January, 1964, Welch added three more reasons for impeachment based on the assassination of President Kennedy. (1) Warren was second only to Khrushchev in blaming the crime on an anti-Communist. (2) Warren has followed the Khrushchev line even after it was known that it was a Marxist who did the killing. (3) Warren has accepted the appointment for the commission to investigate the crime even though he was wrong all along. He failed to disqualify himself from a judicial body taking over the investigation of the murder and the forces behind it.

The evidence supporting the impeachment case seems very weak. Neither the Society spokesmen nor their supporters have clearly defined the Chief Justice's offense. The charge that Warren has failed to live up to the "good behavior in office" clause of Article III, Section 1, of the Constitution is hard to demonstrate. It is equally as difficult to establish a case on the argument that Warren has disregarded the "original intentions" of our founding fathers, for who is to say what those intentions were. The charge that the Chief Justice has failed to uphold his oath of office amounts to a charge of treason and treason is very narrowly defined in Article III, Section 3, of the Constitution. Until the

---

<sup>1</sup>U. S. Congressional Record, loc. cit. Again, split courts go back to the beginning of our history. There is no evidence that just because they disagree on the meaning of the Constitution that they feel those who are of a different opinion are not qualified.

Society produces more evidence than that Warren "has taken the lead in . . . converting the republic into a democracy . . ."<sup>1</sup> it seems that such an undertaking as impeachment of the Chief Justice of the United States should be removed from their priority list.

The United States does not have a tradition or any precedent of impeachment for political motives. Early in the history of this republic the impeachment trial of Justice Samuel Chase convinced Jefferson that impeachment was a "bungling way of removing judges." Another attempt, the most serious in American history, was the impeachment of Andrew Johnson which also failed. The abandonment of impeachment as a political device has been the general verdict of statesmen and historians to our present time. Certainly, it can be seen that the conviction of justices on charges not indictable by law would seriously hamper and perhaps destroy the role of the judiciary in our system. We seem to have learned that impeachment is not a good method to settle political or ideological conflicts.<sup>2</sup>

#### Birch Role on the Local Level

The Birch Society is usually thought of as a national organization concerned only with matters at the national level. However, the Society is very active on the local level as well, and their central thesis remains the same--the "international conspiracy" and the idea of "less government." Certain of the programs having

---

<sup>1</sup>Chester Morrison, "The Man Behind the John Birch Society," Look, September 26, 1961, p. 23.

<sup>2</sup>It is interesting to note that the Birch Society makes no complaint concerning Congressional investigating committees that invade the domain of the judiciary through legislative trials. For an account of the uses and abuses of the Congressional hearing see: Alan Barth, Government By Investigation, New York, Viking Press.

direct effect on the local level were discussed briefly in earlier sections of this study. But in order that a full view of the Birch ideology might be provided, a closer examination of their actions towards such local institutions as the schools, newspapers, city government, and the churches is pertinent.

#### Society Activities in Community Affairs

Local projects in which a Birch member takes active part, no matter what the issue, are defined as pro-American or anti-Communist. Those who are in opposition are thought of as "comsymps," just as on the national level. As soon as the conflict is so defined, the whole Birch ideology is involved and their plan of action goes into effect. The public is alerted and warned that such programs as fluoridation of the city's water supply or slum clearing projects are actually part of the greater move aimed at collectivism being conducted by the "international one-worlders."

The Birch programs on the community level are just as ambitious, or more so, than similar projects on the national level. On the local level the member is directly involved and finds himself actually in the thick of the fight. He is doing battle with a known "comsymp" just as Robert Welch is. It is he who is exposing the enemy. The conflict may be over the city's attempt to annex a former neighboring community or the suggested zoning for a new industrial establishment, but the evil opposed by the local Society member is part of the Communist subversive plot and must be fought as such.

The local member feels secure in his fight because the Home Office will provide him help and encouragement. To date, the Society has expressed its view on local topics from mental health programs to

fluoridation of water. For example, the February, 1960, Bulletin carried instructions to Society members on how to defeat fluoridation in their cities. The instructions concluded with this statement.

If you live in a large enough city, or if the Communists have been able to beguile a sufficiently large enough, powerful enough, and determined enough clique into supporting fluoridation, the above formula, alone, may not stop them.<sup>1</sup>

The fight against fluoridation becomes part of the Birch anti-Communist struggle. Similar directives have been issued on many issues that seem to be only local in nature.

The community involvement of the Society is closely connected with their basic ideology. They are opposed to an infringement on what they call "individual rights." The individual should be able to determine whether or not he wants to drink fluoridated water. The individual should take care of those in his family who are mentally unbalanced. The individual should determine whether or nor he lives in a slum and starves to death. If that is the best he can do, that is all he deserves. Government help only destroys individual "initiative."<sup>2</sup>

However, the Society doesn't want to go so far with their theme of individual rights as to allow the American people to decide whether or not they want to buy a straw basket made in Yugoslavia. Or they wouldn't go so far as to just accept the individual's

---

<sup>1</sup>Bulletin, February 29, 1960, p. 13. In the July Bulletin of 1960, page 11, announces the defeat of fluoridation in three San Francisco - Bay counties with great pride.

<sup>2</sup>The complete idea of slum clearance is as Professor Hans F. Sennholz, Head of the Economic Department at Grove City College and

judgment on buying a bookstand from Montgomery Ward which happened to be made in Tito's Yugoslavia.<sup>1</sup> The Communist influence in the production of a movie like Spartacus, based on "a novel by Howard Fast (!); the screenplay by Dalton Trumbo(!); . . .; the executive producer (and hero) is Kirk Douglas . . ." <sup>2</sup> is too great for the individual to evaluate on his own. All of these, plus many other matters concerning the "American" in local communities across the United States, are strongly attacked through the Bulletin. Some of the methods used to combat these local evils of the giant conspiracy will be discussed in the section on Tactics and Methods of the John Birch Society.

#### Birch Activities in Education

The nation's schools are of prime concern to the leaders of the John Birch Society. They believe that our schools are playing their role in the "conspiracy" by corrupting the young people of our country with "collectivist" propaganda. The general view expressed by the Society concerning the schools of America is that they are agencies for "brainwashing" run by "left-wingers."

Again, as in other areas of public concern, the Society feels that in education, America has departed from traditional methods of the "great era" of America's past. Birch members see our schools,

---

an editor of American Opinion, explains it, a part of the "one-world dreamers" plan for collectivism. Here is his reasoning:

The Welfare State . . . seeks to solve the slum problem through housing projects that breed new slums. Thus government housing is slowly substituted for privately owned homes, and socialism advances another step. . . . Hans F. Sennholz, "Slums and Mansions," the Freeman, January, 1960, p. 57.

<sup>1</sup>Bulletin, June, 1969, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup>Bulletin, December, 1960, p. 17.

on all levels, in the hands of incompetent liberals who follow the "one-world brotherhood" line. They claim these so called progressives have completely failed to teach the "fundamentals," but rather concentrate on "collectivist brainwashing."

According to spokesmen, the institutions of higher learning are cohorts with the executive and judicial branches of the Federal Government in the active drive for a "collectivist" nation. One Society member claims there are only three "safe" colleges in the United States. (He fails to list them.)<sup>1</sup> The Society's leaders are especially harsh on Harvard. Welch claims "you can find a lot more Harvard accents in communist circles today than you can find overalls."<sup>2</sup> The feeling is strong among Society members that the "collectivist germs" picked up by students at American universities are one of the greatest threats to "Americanist" tradition and ideals.

The Society has been very active on the secondary and elementary levels of education. They feel it is their patriotic duty to cause a return to the "real fundamentals." They want to throw out all that is called "progressive" in education and return to the pre-John Dewey days of the "three R's." The return to McGuffey Readers and "patriotic history" is among their educational goals.

Mary Anne Raywid in her book The Ax-Grinders points out that four of the six reviewers of the highly conservative America's Future Textbook Evaluating Committee are leaders of the John Birch

---

<sup>1</sup> New York Times, April 13, 1961, p. 11. Report of Welch speech before 6,000 young people in Los Angeles. Speech sponsored by the Freedom Club of the 1st Congregational Church of Los Angeles.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Society.<sup>1</sup> With Birch leaders in a position where they will be heard, such as non-official, but influential textbook censors, their influence can become very significant in education circles.

Early in the Society's history Welch called for members to join the local Parents-Teachers Association and strive for key positions within that organization.<sup>2</sup> Now the Society is looking to positions of more power within the educational circle. The National Education Association is aware of the renewed Birch effort in the field of education. In a letter answering a request for the NEA view of the John Birch Society dated April 9, 1965, Mr. Edwin W. Davis, Associate Secretary for the National Education Association, offered the following reminder:

As you probably know the John Birch Society has expanded a great deal in 1964 and 1965. In the education field we find that they are concentrating not only on PTA but more recently on school boards, superintendents, and textbooks.<sup>3</sup>

What is the Birch belief as far as education is concerned? How does this belief tie in with their basic ideology? They want a return to an era of good schools concerned with fundamentals and not with "international brotherhood." They advocate a limited curriculum based on the traditional subjects. They are strongly against the modern move to consolidate districts, but look to the good days of small local schools. Until this return can be made, they feel it is their patriotic duty to provide a "counter-brain-

---

<sup>1</sup>Mary Anne Raywid, The Ax-Grinders, (New York: (Macmillan Company), 1962), p. 153.

<sup>2</sup>See American Opinion, September, 1960.

<sup>3</sup>Letter from Edwin W. Davis, Associate Secretary for National Education Association, Washington, D.C., April 9, 1965.

washing" to offset the liberal "collectivist" educational trend. These educational beliefs tie closely to the complete Birch ideology. The idea of anti-collectivism and the international conspiracy are both key concepts of the Birch Society's programs on education.

The Society's anti-communist plan of action is easily extended to include an attempt to influence the direction of American education. Considering their strong stand on individualism in other areas of their doctrine it is interesting to note the Society's rejection of the individual's capacity to battle with ideas. Concerning education, as is the case in so many situation regarding the action of the Society, the leaders expound the "truth." The members accept and follow the doctrine as it is uttered by "The Founder" and his disciples. This is much easier than thinking and then having to determine what action is best. It is even easier for "rugged individualists."

### Civil Rights

In addition to their active role at the local level in attempting to influence such common community centered programs as education and city improvement, the Society has expressed its views on such issues as the civil rights movement (which has become a national issue) and the failure of the press to print the "truth."

Welch in discussing the Communist advance cited the civil rights move in the South as part of the plot started in 1928 aimed at converting the Dixie states into a Negro Soviet Republic. Since the plan was not moving fast enough, the Federal Government has taken steps to speed the Communist design along.<sup>1</sup> Welch feels the civil

---

<sup>1</sup>Robert Welch: "The Time Has Come," Pamphlet published by the John Birch Society, Belmont, Massachusetts, 1964, p. 2.



rights legislation has been a strong collectivist advance and has destroyed the "rights of individuals, the laws of our states, and the Federal Constitution."<sup>1</sup>

The Society has had a running battle with much of the nation's press since the beginning in 1958. They have expressed repeated criticism of the press for failure to print the "truth." They regard the directors and reporters of the nation's communication media as being overwhelmingly liberal and anti-Birch.<sup>2</sup> According to Broyles, many members feel the nation's press does nothing more than follow the "line" established by the Daily Worker. Society leaders claim the press is nothing more than "leftist propaganda agents."

Since several leading American papers ran studies on the Society and its activities during the early 1960's Welch has been very critical.<sup>3</sup> It is the Society's view that these articles were mere echo's of an earlier article by the People's World, a San Francisco Communist paper.

Actually Jack Mobley's Chicago Daily News article dated July 26, 1960, and two articles by Hans Engh in the Santa Barbara News-Press on January 22 and 23 of 1961 preceeded the People's World article of February 25, 1961. Thomas M. Storke's nationally "quoted" editorial in his Santa Barbara News-Press appeared on February 26,

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note that a common liberal complaint has been that the mass media is controlled by Conservatives.

<sup>3</sup> The most noted of these reports include Jack Mobley: Chicago Daily News, July 26, 1961; Stanley Mosk and Howard H. Jewel; New York Times Magazine, August 30, 1961; and Gene Black, Los Angeles Times, March 5-9, 1961.

1961. The so-called "copy of the People's World" by Time hit the newstands on April 10, 1961.<sup>1</sup> Welch discredits the News-Press coverage of the Society by calling it an "anticipation" of the People's World article and by pointing out that Santa Barbara is the headquarters for the Fund for the Republic. In addition the University of California branch at Santa Barbara "is probably the most 'Liberal' of all the branches of that institution." Any way you want to look at it, a press attack on the Society can be traced to the greater forces of the "international conspiracy."<sup>2</sup>

#### Sum Up of Birch Influence on the Local Level

Birch Society members are active people. They are involved with issues in practically every stage of American life. Their influence is exerted very positively because of the central ideology to which all conflict is tied. The theme of the "conspiracy" and the active "anti-collectivist" expression provide a hard core syllogism upon which all action has a logical base. From this logically sound base the Society engages in the necessary conflict in order that their "truth" might prevail. The conflict may be local, national, or international in nature. Birch members see it at any level as part of the "conspiracy."

#### Birch Influence on Religion

The ideology of the John Birch Society has a religious synthesis which gives it a saving character. This area of the Society doctrine

---

<sup>1</sup>The Time article was the first to call wide national attention to the John Birch Society.

<sup>2</sup>Bulletin, May 1, 1961, p. 9.

will be discussed in detail in Chapter Three. However, in addition to this "build a better world" phase of Birch doctrine, the religious institutions of the United States become subject to the Society's "fundamental truths" and, consequently, find that they have a responsibility, along with the press, the teachers, the business leaders, and the community leaders, to uphold the "Americanist" principles as defined by Welch and the Society spokesmen. This is a responsibility in which, according to the Society, they are failing miserably.

The united organization of the major Protestant denominations, the National Council of Churches, has been the number one target of Birch propaganda. The National Council of Churches has a record of liberal views in such areas as education, economics, civil rights, and politics. In addition, the National Council advocates world brotherhood and what is commonly called the "social gospel." The National Council is strong in their belief that God's children are found in every nation and in every race. They teach that it is God's will that all men are entitled to the necessities of life and an equal opportunity for political and economic freedom.

It is clear that the programs and ideals of the National Council of Churches clash with the "anti-collectivist" doctrine of the John Birch Society. When such an organization fails to agree with the "fundamental truths" expressed by Welch and his followers, it becomes subject to the subversive charges and is seen by the Society members as an agent of the "conspiracy."

Robert Welch declared war on the major Protestant denominations in Indianapolis when he told his "eleven friends" that:

. . . fully one-third of the services in at least the Protestant churches of America are helping the trend. (towards communism) For the ministers themselves are not true believers in the Divine Names or the Divine History and Divine Teachings to which they give lip service as they go through their conventional motions on Sunday mornings. Some have merely watered down the faith of our fathers, and of theirs, into an innocuous philosophy instead of an evangelistic religion. Some have converted Christianity into a so-called "social gospel" that bypasses all questions of dogma with an indifference which is comfortable to both themselves and their parishioners; and which "social gospel" becomes in fact indistinguishable from advocacy of the welfare state by socialist politicians. And some actually use their pulpits to preach outright Communism. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Welch, the wise "Founder," not only sees this failing in Protestantism, but in the major religions of the world--Catholicism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and Judaism. All faiths are removing themselves from the sacred fundamentals.<sup>2</sup>

Once the Society has established the "truth" that the nation's churches are acting as agents of the "international conspiracy," the whole ten point plan of action and all of the organizations of the Society start working to remove the menace. The results of such action have been felt across the nation. The rector Rev. Dr. Charles D. Kean of the Episcopal Church of the Epiphany in Washington, D.C. claims the discord spread by the Birch Society and its allies has caused more confusion in American churches than any issue "since the fundamentalist-modernist controversy of the 1920's."<sup>3</sup> J. Edgar Hoover echoes Dr. Kean's concern and says that "unfounded charges

---

<sup>1</sup>Blue Book, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Louis Cassels: "The Rightist Crisis in our Churches," Look, April 24, 1962, p. 40.

against America's clergyman" hurt the very religious institutions "which stand on the front line in the fight against Communism."<sup>1</sup>

The National Council of Churches is very concerned over the harsh attack on it and its member churches. They are aware that the churches are only one target, and for the most part, a secondary target. The primary target is the philosophy of government accepted by the majority of Americans and the idea of democracy upon which it is built. The churches become involved because of their teachings that religion permeates all dimensions of life.

Welch cannot accept the doctrine of "social responsibility" under which the major Protestant denominations are now operating. In his mind, the feeling expressed by the National Council of Churches that they are responsible for the social problems of today is synonymous with socialism or communism. Thus, starting on the local level and moving right up through national church association, the American religious organizations are cut down by the Birch anti-communist forces with such charges as "the largest single body of communists in America is in our Protestant clergy." Or, as Welch warned an audience of 6,000 at Los Angeles's Shrine Auditorium, "Protestant ministers do not become Communists--but Communists do become Protestant ministers."<sup>2</sup>

Welch explains that Communists are infiltrating the Protestant ministry because that is the "last place where Americans would look

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Los Angeles speech by Robert Welch report taken from news-ticker report of the event as it was reported to Congress by Sen. Gale McGee, (D-Wyo.) U.S. Congressional Record CVII, (April 12, 1961) 5607.

for them." Of course, the experts who lead the anti-Communist John Birch Society know where to look. Welch claims there are about 200,000 ministers in the United States and close to 7,000 of them could be called "comsymps." The other 97 percent, according to Welch, are afflicted with the same gullibility that claims most Americans.<sup>1</sup>

#### Organized Religious Support for the John Birch Society

The Birch concept of the truth in religion, like politics, education, or community service is based on fundamentalist beliefs. Thus their idea of the "true" religion is found in the views of the ultra-conservative wing of the Catholic Church and the gospel taught by Protestant sectarian fundamentalists. Those who support this type of religious philosophy are attracted to the whole Birch program of anti-communism, as well as the conservative thoughts on economic, social, and political matters.

Welch has always had a conservative member of the Catholic hierarchy on the National Council. At the present time Father Francis E. Fenton, a priest from Bridgeport, is serving on the council. Father Richard Cardinal Cushing of Boston has spoken highly of Welch and his anti-communist society, as had Father Richard Ginder, former member of the Birch National Council. However, the leading Catholic publications such as Pilot, Catholic World, and America have all come out very strongly against the Birch Society, not so much because of its goals, but because of its tactics and methods.

The Society gets its greatest religious support from such organizations and individuals as the American Council of Christian Laymen,

---

<sup>1</sup>Christian Science Monitor, April 11, 1961. Report of speech by Robert Welch in Dallas, Texas.

Christian Freedom Foundation, Dr. Carl McIntire, and Billy James Hargis and his Christian Crusade. This group represents the emotional fundamentalist wing of Protestantism. The evangelistic type of approach is very effective in the business of anti-communism. Robert Welch, though not as emotional as most of his religious allies, is an evangelist in the sense that his followers feel the nature of the crisis and recognize the saving force of the Society he represents.

#### How Serious is the Communist Influence in American Churches?

The best available sources on the seriousness of the communist threat in the nation's churches are releases by the FBI and the scholarly works of authors such as Dr. Ralph Lord Roy, a Methodist minister. Roy is the author of Apostles of Discord and, more recently, Communism and the Churches. The latter was written after a six-year study under a grant from the Fund for the <sup>REF</sup> Republic. Dr. Roy's conclusion:

"... since 1930, there has been as estimated total of well over 500,000 ordained clergymen in the United States. Of these, the proportion who have been affiliated with Communist efforts in any way whatever has been exceedingly small--perhaps slightly over one per cent. The number who have been Communists, or persistent fellow travelers, has been minute."<sup>1</sup>

Roy adds that the total number of communist clergymen in the nation never was over 75 and that, today, twenty-five may remain.

William G. Sullivan, chief inspector of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and an expert on the domestic Communist problem, claims

---

<sup>1</sup>Cassel, loc. cit., pp. 44-46.

"any allegation is false which holds that there has been and is, on a national scale, any substantial Communist infiltration of the American clergy."<sup>1</sup> Sullivan has had a recent assignment, personally given by J. Edgar Hoover, to follow Robert Welch's speaking tour with a tour of his own in order that the people will not become alarmed at Welch's unfounded statements and charges.<sup>2</sup>

#### Sum Up on Birch and Church

The Boston Pilot, official archdiocesan paper for the area, demanded that Welch produce the names of the 273 "Comsymp priests" he claimed were functioning across the United States. The Pilot offered to print their names. Welch finally confessed that he had no facts to support the charge, but "just pulled the figures out of a hat." Bishop Gerald Kennedy, leader of the Methodist Church in Southern California and Arizona, also challenged Welch by direct telegram to produce names of Communists among the 734 Methodist ministers in his area and promised immediate action. Bishop Kennedy reminded Welch that he should get specific or else admit he didn't know what he was talking about. Welch has never responded to the Bishop's telegram.<sup>3</sup> Another Methodist bishop, Richard C. Raines of Indianapolis, followed the example of his fellow Christians and demanded that Welch "come forward" and name the supposed 35 Indiana Methodist pastors who were "pink." To date Welch has failed to respond.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Broyles, loc. cit., p. 127.

<sup>4</sup>Cassels, loc. cit., p. 44.



The Birch attack on the nation's churches goes on. When demands are made for evidence, Welch explains that the situation is too serious and the communist takeover too near to allow for detailed documentation of charges. Action is what is needed, not documentation. Members and those who are afraid have little doubt that Welch and his "experts" know what they are talking about. The supporters of the Birch line have little or no doubt that "the Founder" knows the real situation and is proclaiming "the truth." They just follow and act.

### CHAPTER III

#### IDEOLOGICAL BASE OF THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY

##### The Birch Society as a . . . Help to Build a Better World

The John Birch Society has become a religion to many of its members. It has been accepted as the means of salvation and, as such, is looked upon for guidance, comfort, and strength. Many members place the Society as a sacred first on their list of responsibilities--even before home and family.<sup>1</sup> The principles describing the philosophy of the Society are to many members the closest thing to the Ten Commandments of God in modern language; the program provides a source of eternal, saving truths. Welch has become the source of "truth" and, if not a Savior, certainly a John the Baptist preparing the way. This is as Welch planned it. He promised to provide his followers a meaningful religious base upon which they all could agree.<sup>2</sup> The result is an ideology that is in fact a religion.

Section Seven of the Blue Book provides the religious base for the John Birch Society. The base is built on the foundation of faith. The foundation is a faith that will not violate the tradition of the past and yet be "so deep that it can inspire martyrdom." As to where this faith is to be found, Welch again returns to the source of the whole Birch program for the proper testimony of faith. Who is better able to speak the truth on religious foundations than Robert Henry Winborne Welch? Who is better able to provide the program for a better world?

---

<sup>1</sup> See letters in the appendix

<sup>2</sup> Blue Book, p. 63.

Welch provides the religious synthesis in order that the "new morality" which he feels the Society stands for will be expressed and will serve to unite the membership in their great undertaking. After explaining that he is following the thought of Emerson, "that it is the outlook of genius to feel what is true of yourself is also true of all mankind," the "Founder" describes his "bedrock of faith." Faith has two keystones: a doctrine of God and a doctrine of man. The doctrine of God is expressed by Tennyson in one line: "For I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs."<sup>1</sup> The second keystone is an answer to the question: What is the one increasing purpose in Tennyson's line? Welch again turns to a line the poet, Harry Kemp, provides for the description of the doctrine of man. "Thou hast put an upward reach in the heart of man."<sup>2</sup> This second keystone has become Welch's theme and actually is the key to the "bedrock of faith." This was clear when he told his Indianapolis audience in 1958 that "to make us truly religious, we do not need to know anything more about God, man, and man's relationship to God than is given by a reverent understanding of that line."<sup>3</sup>

Welch's position in this "religious synthesis" is clear when the full message of the Blue Book and additional Society publications are considered. He will not only provide the "dynamic personal leadership" for organizational and political matters, but he will be the "prophet" who will give directions concerning Tennyson's "one increasing purpose" and explain in what direction one should "reach." The task is enormous

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 146.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 149.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 153.

and "the Founder" has little religious background, but he is confident and asks very reassuringly ". . . what firmer foundation can we possibly need for the faith on which to build our new age and with which to inaugurate the dream that is coming to birth?"<sup>1</sup>

Birchism is religion. It is a call to the "saving truth." It is a program seen by its supporters as the way to bring "the lost sheep back into the fold." It is a program calling for true believers. It is a promise of a better world. Birch doctrine is an organized plan headed by a man who, multiplied by thousands, is trying to shape the world in his image.<sup>2</sup> This is religion and Birch members use it as such.

Welch occupies the position of the religious leader who has the charismatic quality to see and hear with his inner eyes and ears the things that the ordinary man does not sense. The ordinary member can only understand these things after they are revealed to him by the leader whom he accepts as having prophetic ability.

The doctrine that results from this religious base has caused the Society to develop as a cult which zealously proclaims the idea of "unchanging truth." The belief that they possess the "truth" leads to the theory of the religious tradition of attempting to stop the processes of change. This characteristic is evident by the rigid body of dogma based on what appears to be logical doctrine.

This type of religiously-based ideology has the capacity to inspire in the Birch faithful a near fanatical zeal. They zealously follow the

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 153

<sup>2</sup> This thought is borrowed from Eric Hoffer, an American philosopher who said a true believer is a "man who, multiplied by thousands, is shaping the world to his image."

the instructions from headquarters and seldom doubt the "truth" as it is expounded. At times they may feel the methods are a little harsh, but the very faithful remember the "bedrock of faith," the promise of a better world, described in the Blue Book, and go to work on suggested projects. This is the same type of faith that in past history has caused armies to march, missionaries to burn, and converts to sacrifice worldly belongings. It is also the same type of faith that has allowed demagogues to influence and to rule.

Welch's "religious synthesis" is a gospel that teaches its followers that salvation is possible only through dedication, renunciation, and sacrifice. The religious man who follows this strict doctrine gains his reward by following the program of the agency that promises salvation-- the John Birch Society. Such a man is not motivated by understanding or discussing ideas, but rather by his desire for a saving promise. This the Birch program offers; not through any joint collectivist action, but by calling the individual to follow a solitary path to salvation. This provision for a religious base for a society is a recognition of the principle of man's desire for a saving force, a principle that has been recognized by theologians and ideologists for centuries.

The idea of a "re-birth" based on "the truth" is evident throughout Birch doctrine. The authoritarian nature of the Society, the tone of the monthly warnings and calls to action in the Bulletin, as well as the single-minded dedication of the faithful members are all build on this religious base. True members seldom doubt the "word" as it comes from the Belmont headquarters. When Birch doctrine does not correspond with the thoughts expresses by other sources, members never question which source has "the truth." They just follow the Birch

"gospel." Like Soren Kierkegaard once said, "man wants salvation, not information."<sup>1</sup>

### The Birch View of History

The facts of history never change. But different men can look at these "never changing" facts and see many different things. Voltaire claimed each historian must decide for himself what the facts were rather than merely repeat the stories he found in old history books. Hegel determined that history must be viewed in relationship to the world as a whole. A number of nineteenth-century historians took a positivist view of history; they looked at history and saw general laws which governed the events that took place in the day-by-day adventures of men. History is a science governed by the same type of principles as physics or chemistry. If man could determine the nature of the general laws of history, he could determine the present and future paths which history will follow.

Robert Welch is a believer in this positivist view of history. He views history as simply a series of different causes which produce results, just as in the cause-result relationship in the exact sciences. His history is the study of a series of living organisms called civilizations. He draws an analogy between the life of a man and the life of a civilization. This analogy is accurate enough to establish an exact time ratio of twenty years of a civilization to one year of a man's life. Taking seventy years as the average life expectancy of a man, it can be determined that a great civilization will last for about fourteen hundred years. Thus the civilization of Western Europe,

---

<sup>1</sup> Aiken, Age of Ideology, p. 230.

which "arose out of the ashes of the Roman Empire of the West,"<sup>1</sup> produced the highest level of human development during the last half of the nineteenth century A.D. But a civilization does not automatically live through its natural life cycle, nor does it just die when its time is finished. The comparison of man and civilization includes the many possibilities that can cut short or extend the life of a living being. He explains that:

An individual human being may die of any number of causes, but if he escapes the fortuitous diseases, does not meet with any fatal accident, does not starve to death, does not have his heart give out, but lives in normal health to his three score years and ten and then keeps on living—if he escapes and keeps on doing so, he will eventually succumb to the degerative disease of cancer. For death must come, and cancer is merely death coming by stages, instead of all at once. And exactly the same thing seems to be true of these organic aggregations<sup>2</sup> of human beings, which we call cultures or civilizations.

Welch concludes that inner disease often hastens the fall of great civilizations. Rome, for example, was dying of internal disease a hundred and seventy-five years before the actual fall. The internal disease was Diocletian's collectivism. The Empire was so weakened by this "collectivist cancer" that it became easy prey for the invaders who moved into the Empire from the North. The same "collectivism" destroyed Greece. The United States has become victim to the same disease that afflicted Europe in its old age. In the case of the U.S., the disease hit several hundred years before the "life-span" of this great civilization had expired. In fact, in Welch's analogy the

---

<sup>1</sup> Blue Book, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

United States at the present is compared to a "healthy young man in his late teens," who can expect to die a premature death unless he changes his ways.<sup>1</sup>

How did the "cancer" get started in such a strong and growing organism at such an early age?

. . . basically, because of too long and too close an association with a parent that was dying of the disease; that was old enough and weakened enough for the virus to be rampantly active throughout this parent's whole environment.<sup>2</sup>

The nations of Western Europe represent the parent of which Welch refers. These "collectivist" nations guided the U. S. into World War I and by so doing ". . . put (this) healthy young country in the same house, and for a while in the same bed, with this parent who was already yielding to collectivist cancer."<sup>3</sup> Since that day, under the leadership of such men as Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon<sup>6</sup> Johnson, the United States has remained in the disease infested house of those who seek "collectivist" solutions to world problems. Birch historians see America as having been exposed to "collectivist cancer" by trusted governmental authorities--even presidents of the United States. This willful exposure, added to the active spread of the virus by the "Communist conspirators," makes it very questionable whether or not the United States can recover from a disease so far advanced.

But all is not lost. The general paths of this organic history can be changed; the cycles of history can be adjusted, both for better

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



and for worse. As Rousselot explains the Birch philosophy, it has been these changes which determine whether or not man has improved his conditions or allowed them to deteriorate. Thus history "is largely determined by ambitious individuals (both good and evil) and by small minorities who really know what they want."<sup>1</sup> The John Birch Society is an active minority that knows exactly what it wants. As such, it can direct the change that will save the inherited tradition of greatness that is America's. The program of the John Birch Society is designed for this saving purpose.

Because the course of history is dependent upon the actions of single individuals or small active groups, Welch feels that any historical happening can be traced to such actions. The results of these actions are considered by him to be pre-determined and intentional. Thus, if events prove desirable, someone is to be praised and credited. However, if anything goes wrong, someone is always to blame. Things don't just happen; they are caused.

Welch's view of history is based on the writings of Gibbon and Oswald Spengler. Spengler, a twentieth-century positivistic philosophy of history, wrote a two volume study, The Decline of the West. He saw history as a succession of self-contained cultures that follow one another like the seasons of the year. Although all cultures are different, they have the identical life-cycle. The cycle begins with barbarism. This period is followed by one in which political organization develops along with the arts and sciences. The third stage of the cycle is the classical period, which is followed by

---

<sup>1</sup> Articles of Belief, article four.

decadence and a return to a new barbarism. Once in the final stage, nothing new emerges; the culture is dead.<sup>1</sup> Spengler sees no affiliation of cultures and determined that the growth of individualism is the triumph of naturalism. Collectivism or affiliation contribute to the decay of the final cycle of a culture.

From Gibbon's The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Welch takes his "lessons of history." These lessons show a close parallel to the present situation in the United States with that in Rome prior to its fall. According to Gibbon and Welch, the factors that led to the fall of Rome were the bureaucracy of big government supported by taxing those who were able and had the "initiative" to be successful in their undertakings. Rome came to depend upon mass political support only through welfare programs and free entertainment. Eventually government programs destroy the individual "initiative" and the financial responsibility of the citizens. Without the support of those who produce, the cultures collapse and die.<sup>2</sup>

The application made of these historical interpretations in connection with the positivist program of the Society is clear. The members see what appears to be the obvious parallel between the situation in which the United States finds itself and the conditions of earlier fallen cultures. They are greatly concerned about stopping the almost inevitable fall. The member's concern, coupled with the ability of the Society leader's to understand the "truth" in these

---

<sup>1</sup> See R. G. Collingwood, The Idea of History, (New York: Oxford Press, 1946) pp. 181-183, for a short coverage on Spengler's philosophy.

<sup>2</sup> See Broyles, loc. cit., pp. 140-141; for discussion on Welch's concept of the "lessons of history."

"lessons of history," provide a strong foundation for the activist, saving program outlined in the Blue Book and kept current in the monthly Bulletins.

Welch fails to report that there are many philosophies of history equally as valued as those he accepts. In fact, both Spengler and Gibbon have long been challenged by competent historians and hold little prestige among today's scholars. Certainly history must be more complex than the simplistic analysis of Spengler and Gibbon.<sup>why?</sup> Montesquieu's attempt to explain the characteristics of a culture by reference to geographical location was the same type of simplistic view of history. Pascal's statement that if Cleopatra's nose had been a little longer the whole history of the world would have taken a different path is an extreme example of the positivistic view of history. Only when these positive simple philosophies are joined with the many other possibilities do they become important in historical thought.

Welch's historian, Oswald Spengler, makes a statement in his introduction to The Decline of the West that is important for anyone who believes he has the final truth to remember. "There are no eternal truths. Every philosophy is the expression of its own and only its own time. . . ." <sup>1</sup> Speaking of the scientific approach used by philosophers, and the idea that a final answer can be found through the adoption of the right system based on a scientific approach, Spengler adds, "nothing is simpler than to make good poverty of ideas by founding a system, and even a good idea has little value when

---

<sup>1</sup>Oswald Spengler, The Decline of the West, (New York; Alfred A. Knopf. 1939), p. 41.

enunciated by a solemn ass."<sup>1</sup>

The Welch philosophy of history provides a base upon which Birch ideology can be attached. Robert Welch presents it in a logical and clear manner. He re-creates his historians, Spengler and Gibbon, as individuals of prestige whose reputation is not known only because the "collectivists" will not allow it. The Birch Society determines the "facts" of history from a Spengler-Welch cyclical interpretation. The present condition of the United States, as they see it, is easily tied to their accepted philosophy.

The Birch philosophy only has merit as long as it is considered as a debatable supposition and not as a certainty. As soon as they offer their philosophy as the basis for certainty, it becomes an irrational, rather than a rational, doctrine. There exists no established principle upon which sure knowledge of the past is based. Voltaire was aware of this when he called for each historian to decide for himself "the facts" of history. Morris R. Cohen reminds his readers that "each age develops new conceptions of the essence of history."<sup>2</sup> Spengler was aware of the tentative nature of history. Most current historians would join those mentioned in pointing out that for a philosophy of history to be rational, it must be considered only as a hypothesis subject to modification or even destruction when competing tentative theories produce additional evidence. This Welch forgets. He merely states the "truth" of his and Spengler's thesis and attacks the more optimistic writings of Arnold J. Toynbee as the work of a "mactricious [sic] hack" who supported by "inter-

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> See Morris R. Cohen, The Meaning of History, (LaSalle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing Co., 1947), p. 18-31. (discussion on skepticism in historical writing)

national socialist, with the Fabians and Labor Party bosses in England taking the lead. . . ." <sup>1</sup> He charges conspiracy at any who attempt to find fault with his views. Again the charismatic nature of the man and his position becomes evident. His philosophy of history is established by him and accepted by Society members as a certainty. There is no ground for debate.

---

<sup>1</sup> Blue Book, pp. 42-43.

## CHAPTER IV

### EVALUATION OF THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY

#### Tactics and Methods of the Society

In attempting to analyze the organic ideology of the John Birch Society it is necessary to return to Welch's plan of action and examine the tactics and methods that have been used to promote the beliefs and programs set down at the time. A characteristic pattern of tactics and techniques has developed since that December day in 1958 that in general follow certain points of the original ten-point plan of action.

John H. Rousselot claims that of all the falsehoods that have been so widely and deliberately circulated about the John Birch Society, the charge that they are "willing to condone foul means for the sake of achieving praiseworthy ends"<sup>1</sup> is the most civiously untrue. Rousselot goes on to point out that it is the method of the Communist that the end justifies the means, and he adds that "this very ingredient of amoral brutishness will help destroy them in the end."<sup>2</sup> He also states that the Birch program operates completely within the realm of social respectability.

The fact remains that the bulk of criticism against the Society comes as a result of their methods and not their professed beliefs. In fact, many responsible conservatives share their beliefs. However, they do not share the extreme methods which the Society employs to advance those beliefs. They cannot accept the Welch advice to "out-do the communists" in front organizations and letter campaigns.<sup>3</sup> The evidence is clear that on the

---

<sup>1</sup>Rousselot, Articles of Belief, Article III.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Blue Book, p. 94.

local as well as the national level, ~~members of the John Birch Society~~ have actively accepted and promoted the dangerous Machiavellian theory that the end justifies the means.

An impressive number of American periodicals have had articles on the Birch program as it is carried out by the members. Look, Newsweek, Life, Time, the Atlantic as well as the liberal Nation, Progressive, and Reporter have all carried documented articles on the Birch Society and related organizations. A number of the nation's leading newspapers have also attempted to objectively report the Birch activities. The San Francisco Chronicle, Los Angeles Times, and the New York Times have offered continual coverage. The Western Political Quarterly and the Journal of Social Issues have provided more scholarly and complete coverage of the Birch tactics. A true profile of the Birch Society may be better seen by examining a few of the reports that have been made by those who have studied the tactics and methods used by the Society members across the nation.

One of the most powerful techniques used by the Birch group is writing letters. Any person or group that becomes critical of the Society or in any way operates in a manner contrary to Birch beliefs becomes subject to a flood of letters. Xerox Corporation discovered that when they sponsored six ninety-minute television specials on the U.N. that they were subject to such an attack. Welch suggested in the Bulletin that members hit Xerox with fifty to a hundred thousand letters of protest.<sup>1</sup> Xerox officials estimate that about 2,100 Birchers answered the call with close to 12,000 letters. The letters were not persuasive in character.

---

<sup>1</sup>See report on incident in Saturday Review ILVII (October 3, 1964) p. 29.

They did not follow the traditional moderate pattern of correspondence. They displayed fear, hate, and contempt and often nothing more than a single threatening statement. Xerox Corporation acknowledged all letters and informed the writers that the U.N. programs would be carried by ABC and NBC.<sup>1</sup>

Although Welch disclaims any connection, Birchers are continually charged with using the tactic of the (anonymous) telephone call. Ordinarily the call is late at night and no more than a one word, "Communist" or on occasion the respondent may hear an inflammatory torrent of charges concerning matters over which he had no idea that he had offended anyone. Pastors, teachers, editors, congressmen, housewives and anyone else who crosses the Birch path, knowingly or otherwise, may find themselves the enemy and as such the object of such tactics.<sup>2</sup>

One tactic employed by the Birch organizers is called a "card party." This technique is used against businesses that are knowingly or unknowingly selling merchandise manufactured in Yugoslavia or some other iron curtain nation. The tactic is simple. The Birch members merely (move) into the store and scatter post card size slips around the merchandise. The card informs the customer that the (owner) buys from the Communists. The pressure usually causes the store to cancel orders from Eastern European nations rather than face a possible loss in customers.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>The Birch reaction to these charges is recorded in the Bulletin, May 1, 1961, p. 13. Welch informed his followers to believe absolutely nothing unless it is unmistakably confirmed by his office.

<sup>3</sup>Arnold Forster & Benjamin R. Epstein, Danger on the Right, (New York Random House, 1964), pp. 24-26.



Birch workers try to infiltrate established and respected organizations and service groups such as the P.T.A., church groups, fraternal organizations, and other social groups.<sup>1</sup> They attempt to gain positions of influence on school boards or county library boards in order that their doctrine can be pushed into the educational institutions. They attempt to get their literature in respectable bookstores and where they are not successful they open up their own stores.

One of the most effective tactics the Birch Society uses in presenting its messages is by way of the audiences of right-wing commentators like Dan Smoot and Clarence Manion. Birch arguments are heard repeatedly on the radio and often on television at little or no cost to the Society. These programs are sponsored by ultra-conservative businessmen with large bank accounts.<sup>2</sup>

It is difficult for moderate young Republicans in California to accept Rousellot's statement that the Birch Society operates in the manner of traditional political organization. Harry Keaton, former president of the California Young Republicans, found that in January of 1963, the Birch Society, with paid staff workers, organizers, and scores of "recruits" had taken over the Young Republicans by packing election meetings and infiltrating Republican clubs and organizations throughout the state. Robert Gaston, a young Bircher, won control of the young Republicans through such methods. He was also aided by the endorsement of the then Birch Western States co-ordinator, former

---

<sup>1</sup>Ernest Dunbar, "The Plot to Take Over the PTA," Look, Sept. 7, 1965. pp. 27-31.

<sup>2</sup>National Council of the Churches of Christ, Bureau of Research and Survey Information Service, October, 10, 1964, pp. 7-10.

Congressman Rousselot.<sup>1</sup>

Keith Patterson is an individualist, a traditional characteristic of a Westerner. He operates radio station KYME in Boise, Idaho. Early in 1963 one would have found it very difficult to convince him that Birch tactics were conducted on the high level that they claim. Just prior to a Robert Welch visit to Boise, Patterson expressed his views on the Society through a brief radio editorial. He soon found that he and a number of his choice sponsors were subject to a fierce vicious attack. Letters and anonymous phone calls hit him from all sides. He lost a number of sponsors who received such notes as "your sponsorship of Keith Patterson makes my credit card curl" or "how long have you been sponsoring a communist?" The Birch followers had found an enemy. His crime was that he disagreed with the Birch view. Yet, Patterson is strong and he continues to speak his mind through his personal editorials.<sup>2</sup> Patterson was able to maintain his position in face of the Birch tactics. William Botwright, editor of the Contra Costa Times, lost his job under a similar, but more extensive attack. Botwright challenged the actions of Dr. Drummond J. McCunn, superintendent of the Contra Costa Junior College District. McCunn's great concern over what he called "subversive action" by the "collectists" in education led him to censor and denounce most school programs and instruction tools in his district. Botwright challenged McCunn's association with the John Birch Society as well as his sources for better

---

<sup>1</sup>The Birch invasion of California Republican assembly is described in an article in Look, July 16, 1963, pp. 19-25.

<sup>2</sup>The Patterson-Birch Conflict was first reported by Julius Duschka in the Washington Post. Senator Gale McGee (D-Wyo.) requested Duschka's article be recorded in the U.S. Congressional Record CIX (May 21, 1963) 9087-9088.

schools, which included a pamphlet by Mervin K. Hart, an anti-Semite lieutenant of Gerald L.K. Smith and Manhattan chapter leader for the John Birch Society.<sup>1</sup>

An organized storm of letters and phone calls hit the Times and Botwright. Some just claimed he was soft on Communism, others bluntly called him a "Marxist Communist." Botwright responded by writing an editorial stating that the Times would not be bullied into silence. The editorial never hit the stands. Jim Hughes, the newspaper's manager, telephoned Times owner, Dean Leshner, who killed Botwright's article. When Hughes also killed an exclusive story the editor had uncovered connecting McCunn with the purchase of ninety copies of a challenged English text, Botwright resigned immediately.

Due to strong community support and the help of the San Francisco Chronicle which printed on the front page the story of Botwright's being forcefully denied the right to report, Contra Costa College board refused to give up under extreme pressure from the Birch led attack. McCunn was finally dismissed on charges that ranged from changing students' grades to racial and religious prejudice and using school funds to pay postage for Anti-Communist propaganda. This Birch backed upheaval is just one of scores concerning education that have been reported across the nation.

Drury Brown, the Republican editor of the Blackfoot (Idaho) News is another American who certainly questions the methods used by those

---

<sup>1</sup>This incident was fully covered in Progressive, November, 1962, pp. 26-28. Also Look, September 25, 1962. The right-wings attempt to control U.S. schools is the topic of Jack Nelson and Gene Roberts, Jr. The Censors and the Schools. (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1963)

who follow the Birch line. When he stepped out of his house one morning and found a red swastika painted on his car door, the tires slashed, and sugar in the gas tank, he was shocked and concerned. He became more concerned when he received a number of anonymous phone calls. One lady said, "Last time, it was your car; next time, it will be your home." Mr. Brown's crime was that he supported Representative Ralph Harding, a young Democrat, who had challenged the Birch Society and Ezra Taft Benson's support of it on the floor of Congress. Throughout the 1964 campaign, which Harding lost, he and his supporters were plagued with threats and charges from those who claimed Harding had gone too far in his Benson criticism.<sup>1</sup>

The October, 1963, issue of the Ladies Home Journal included a short story by James Clavell entitled "The Children's Story." The theme of the story was of the Orwell type and the Journal thought it had a strong warning against subversion. Robert Welch didn't. He expressed his feelings concerning the story in the Bulletin and suggested that the Journal be made aware that the story was "un-American." Within a short time the Journal was "aware." They received over 2,300 letters on the Clavell story. Of that number 1,371 repeated Welch's Bulletin statement word for word. Many wrote they hadn't read the story, but added statements such as the one from a lady in Idaho, "I know full well that I should be tremendously displeased with its message."<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>See Blackfoot News, coverage of 1964 election. A good article which includes the Blackfoot incident as well as a number of similar experiences in Frank Church, "Conspiracy USA" Look, January 26, 1965, pp. 21-23.

<sup>2</sup>Editors report on the incident in Ladies Home Journal, April, 1964, p. 15.

The letters were harsh, extreme, cruel, and unfair. One person suggested the Journal's name be changed to the "Ladies Home Worker." Another charged "your say is nauseating garbage." Several suggested the Journal should pack and "go home to Moscow." Others suggested that the editors be deported. One lady charged that the editor must be "some kind of degenerated moron."<sup>1</sup>

The First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints had some serious questions on the tactics used by an official of the Birch Society during the winter of 1962-1963. Reed Benson, son of former Secretary of Agriculture and Mormon apostle, Ezra Taft Benson, was put on the Birch payroll as Coordinator for the Mountain States in October of 1962. Among his first efforts was an attempt to tie the Birch program to the Mormon Church. Any connection with the Church in Utah would provide a powerful front, since close to 70 percent of Utah's citizens are Mormons. The younger Benson was charged with using <sup>by 1962</sup> Sacrament meetings, Mutual Improvement Association meetings, firesides, and other church functions to promote Birch doctrine. The Church leaders reacted by issuing a strong statement on the official Church stand concerning politics in general and the John Birch Society in particular. The statement stressed that the Church deplores "the presumption of some politicians, especially officers, coordinators and members of the John Birch Society, who undertake ~~(the)~~ align the Church or its leadership with their partisan views." The statement continued by encouraging members of the Church "to vote

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

according to their own convictions." The Presidency of the Church then added the warning that "no one should seek or pretend to have our approval of their adherence to any extremist ideologies." The official statement ended by urging all Church officials to refuse all applications for the use of church buildings or Church functions to promote political ambition.<sup>1</sup> Birch tactics were called to account, but not before they had noted some gains. Reed Benson claimed that during the period he was Mountain Coordinator membership tripled in Utah. *from 10 to 30*

The above mentioned cases concerning Birch methods are just a few of the many that have been reported in leading American newspapers and periodicals.<sup>2</sup> They do not represent extreme and isolated cases. The cases described are typical, not only as to the methods used, but also as to the issues involved. In general the methods are in keeping with the plan of action outlined in the Blue Book. However, Welch also uses a number of other techniques not mentioned at Indianapolis.

Among these additional methods of attacking the enemy, is the old technique of associating the enemy with undesirable groups. A favorite tactic of the Society against those who are most critical of them and their programs is to list a long list of names and then list a so-called communist organization in the same paragraph or thought

---

<sup>1</sup>L.D.S. - Birch controversey is discussed by Senator Frank Moss of Utah in U.S. Congressional Record May 28, 1963, Vol. 109, p. 9071; Rep. Ralph Harding of Idaho U.S. Congressional Record; Sept. 25, 1963, Vol. 109, p. 18125-18127; Senator Wallace F. Bennett of Utah in U.S. Congressional Record, August 6, 1963, Vol. 109, p. 14171. The official statement by the L.D.S. First Presidency appeared in the Salt Lake Tribune on March 21, 1963.

<sup>2</sup>See Bibliography of periodicals for additional articles on tactics.

pattern. This leads to an implication that all on the list belong to the organization. Similar to this is the technique of proving a person a communist by naming a long list of organizations that are labeled "red" and then showing that the person being attacked belonged or was associated with one of these groups sometimes in the past.<sup>1</sup>

On occasion Welch is much more direct in his charges. For example, on the inside cover of the July-August, 1963, issue of American Opinion, Welch explained to the members how to spot a real communist. " . . . You see, a Communist must, axiomatically carry a card, or be a friend of Senator Kuchel's or some other give-away like that . . . " This is an open shot at Senator Kuchel of California, one of Washington's leading spokesmen against the John Birch Society.<sup>2</sup> In addition to this "slam" in American Opinion, Kuchel has been subject to thousands of hate letters that have called him everything from a "pink" and an "anti-Christian" to a "damn liar." Many of the letters were one line charges such as; "who translated your recent speech from Russian into English?" or "And pooh-pooh to you, too- you, Socialist, you." Another simple message suggested that Senator Kuchel "peddle (his) filth in Russia."<sup>3</sup> Kuchel became an enemy because he spoke out against what he called the "fright peddlers." The Senator's first speech was not aimed solely at the Birch Society. He was concerned with a number of groups who

---

<sup>1</sup>See Bulletin. This type of association is used repeatedly by Welch in his controversial "letter," the Politician.

<sup>2</sup>Among the most outspoken critics of the Birch Society in Washington are Sen. Kuchel (R-Calif); Sen. Milton R. Young (R-N.D.); Sen Stephen Young (D-Ohio); Sen. Gale McGee (D-Wyo); Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho); former Congressman, Rep. Ralph Harding, (D-Idaho); Rep. Cameron (D-Calif); Sen. Jacob Javits (R-N.Y.).

<sup>3</sup>Comments taken from Kuchel speech recorded in the U.S. Congressional Record CIX (May 28, 1963), 9684-9699.

were blowing the U.S. controlled war games in Georgia commonly called "Operation Water Moccasin" into a Communist invasion; an invasion directed by a Russian general operating through the United Nations. When Kuchel offered documented proof that the charges were not true and actually had no base at all except that 124 foreign military officers from such "anti-American?" places as Canada, Great Britain, Guatemala, Spain, Thailand, and Turkey were observers of the counter guerrilla exercise conducted by the United States Army, he became a "dupe" and an enemy.

Senator Milton Young, a highly-regarded moderate Republican, received the same type of treatment from the Birch tacticians when he opposed a move in North Dakota to offer an amendment to abolish the federal income tax. At the time he offered the opposition, Young had never even heard of the Society. It didn't take him long to find out what their program was after he was declared an enemy to the "Americanist" cause and became the subject of a Birch letter campaign. Young finds it somewhat difficult to understand the charge that he is "Pink" and willingly or unwillingly serving the cause of communism. But as he continues to study the tactics and the goals of the John Birch Society, he is finding that such un-documented charges are common.<sup>1</sup>

~~Conducting national essay contests on patriotic topics or matters~~ concerning the nation is an American tradition. Yet, a national contest based on the subject "Why Impeach Earl Warren" seems somewhat foreign to the accepted tradition. Yet, the Birch Society conducted

---

<sup>1</sup>Young's experience is reported by New York Times, April 18, 1961, p. 24. Young's view of the conflict with the Birch Society is found in U.S. Congressional Record CVII pp. 3446-3447 (March 8, 1961).



such a contest "to stir up a great deal of interest among conservatives on the campuses."<sup>1</sup> The contest had a few peculiarities that should be mentioned. It seems somewhat strange that "good men and women" with lofty goals would suggest that those who entered this contest use pseudonyms if they desired. It seems equally strange that the sponsors of a national contest would promise that no mention of the college attended would be made when the winners were announced.<sup>2</sup> But the contest was conducted and the winner of the \$1,000 first prize was announced as Eddie Rose, a part time student from Los Angeles. In his essay he recommended impeachment for Associate Justices Hugo Black, William O. Douglas, and William J. Brennan, in addition to Warren.<sup>3</sup>

Another example of a tactic used by the Birch Society that seems to debunk Rousselot's claim that they will not condone foul means for the sake of achieving their goal, is the use of the assassination of President Kennedy as a tool to aid their membership drive. The same John Rousselot who proclaims the virtues of the Birch group explained that the "terrible national tragedy," was well-timed for the Society's goals. "We were going to kick off the expanded nationwide membership program at the beginning of the year, . . . we just moved up the starting line a bit."<sup>4</sup>

The number one organ of the 1963-64 membership drive was a full page advertisement featuring the assassination of the President of the

---

<sup>1</sup>New York Times, August 5, 1961, p. 1

<sup>2</sup> See Bulletin, November, 1961, p. 7. The impeachment movement including the contest is discussed repeatedly in the Birch Society's White Book for 1961.

<sup>3</sup>Time, February 16, 1962, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup>Newsweek, December 30, 1963, p. 17.

United States. The ad was entitled, "The Time Has Come" and first appeared the middle of December, 1963, in such first line American papers as the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Los Angeles Times, Salt Lake Tribune, the Oakland Tribune, and the St. Louis Globe Democrat. The advertisement has since been placed by the members in local newspapers throughout the United States.<sup>1</sup>

The John Birch Society claims to be something new in history as far as organization and goals are concerned. They claim to be a body striving for the goals of "less government, more responsibility, and better world." Somehow the idea of taking over the leadership of a local P.T.A. and then using that organization to advance Society doctrine doesn't seem like the program of a group with such lofty ambitions. Nor does it seem proper to attempt to advance Society purposes by condemning Senator Kuchel; or Senator Young; or Congressman Harding without proof, in fact without a case. Their crime was that they disagreed. This seems too much like the vigilante tactic of guilt without trial to be a method of "truly good men and women" whose aim is a "better world."

Perhaps such tactics are legitimate. It is possible that they are merely tools that are being used by an organization whose aim is to "raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair." It may well be, as Welch claimed, necessary to shock people into awareness of the conspiracy that is all about in order to save them. Perhaps Welch is right when he charges his followers to "beat the Communists with their own tactics." Somehow the methods used by the

---

<sup>1</sup>The advertisement is reproduced in full in the appendix of this study.

Birch Society don't fit into the pattern one would expect from a group that claims to be "something new in history--a body of truly good men and women, of religious ideals and humane consciences, . . ." whose goals have been summarized as, "less government, more responsibility, and a better world."<sup>1</sup> The fact is that it is the tactics used by the Society to advance these imposing objectives that result in the harsh criticism and condemnation that it has received.

### The Strength of the John Birch Society

A 1961 California report on the John Birch Society described Birch membership as being composed primarily "of wealthy businessmen, retired military officers, and little old ladies in tennis shoes."<sup>2</sup> This evaluation may have been accurate in 1961, but it seems quite certain that it would no longer be valid. While recent surveys indicate that a number of the far right groups are losing strength and that many have collapsed, the John Birch Society has had a continual gain in activities as well as in membership over the past few years. The organization and program outlined at Indianapolis have proved effective. More and more the Birch program is being spread and made more attractive by emulous young men such as Reed Benson and former Congressmen John Rousselot. Such spokesmen elevate the prestige and strength of the body.

---

<sup>1</sup>Stop, Look, and Listen, p. 4.

<sup>2</sup>Stanley Mosk and Howard H. Jewell, "The Birch Phenomenon Analyzed," New York Times Magazine, August 20, 1961. This article was based on a report for the Governor of California by Attorney General Stanley Mosk and Asst. Att. General Howard H. Jewell. The report was also inserted in the U.S. Congressional Record, CVII (August 15, 1961), 15869.

Welch's administrative organization must be mentioned when considering the strength of the Birch group. It has proven sound and very efficient. The step by step direct line of authority is a very effective chain of command. The small chapter units allow Welch close contact with the individual members. Each member is made to feel that he is a vital link in the anti-communist fight. Monthly memos are filled out by each member and sent by the chapter leader to Belmont. These memos report the members role in the "fight." This organization is the tool through which Welch's ideas and programs are multiplied rapidly into action throughout the villages and cities of America.

Total Birch membership is not known. The Society does not publicly announce the number in their group. Estimates run from 20 thousand to well over 100 thousand. Actual membership is probably somewhere between the two figures.<sup>1</sup> It is known that the members are widely distributed throughout the nation and are especially strong in areas with a fundamentalist tradition like Southern California, Texas, and areas of the South. These members provide the strong financial base upon which the Society operates. Annual dues income in 1962 was over \$700,000 which was \$200,000 over 1961. Sales of Birch literature and donations added perhaps \$300,000 more, giving the Society a working budget of near one million dollars. As of 1962, over 40 staff workers were employed in the home office. In addition, there were 35 fully salaried co-ordinators and 70 part time co-ordinators in the field. The staff payroll was close to

---

<sup>1</sup>In 1962 Alan F. Westin estimated membership at sixty thousand. Weston, loc. cit., p. 240.

\$12,000 a week.<sup>1</sup> The latest estimates suggest that in 1965 the Society will operate on an income in the neighborhood of two million dollars.

The Society is continuing its long range projects against the United Nation, against Earl Warren, against local school officials and the P.T.A., against water fluoridation, against taxes, and against merchants who sell goods from Eastern Europe. But it is also attempting to present itself as an organization made up of individuals of sound character with lofty aims. Since 1963 much emphasis has been placed on the importance of appearing as a sound body of respectable people of substance and standing.

During this same period it was also organizing to attract other right-wing groups. By October, 1964, Dr. Arthur Larson, chairman of the Council of Civic Responsibility had linked twelve ultra-right organizations directly to the John Birch Society through top officers or principal financial supporters of each organization.<sup>2</sup> Larson sees

---

<sup>1</sup>Financial figures are taken from Alan F. Westin, The Radical Right, p. 240, and financial statements filed annually with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as reported in the New York Times. Westin estimated Birch 1962 income \$600,000 higher, but the \$1,000,000 seems fairly accurate. The Birch report to members is included periodically in the Bulletin. This report does not deal in exact dollars and cents, but is informative. See Bulletin for December, 1961, pp. 15-19.

<sup>2</sup>The National Council for Civic Responsibility is an organization backed by 80 distinguished Americans from business, religion, science, law, labor, education, and public affairs. It includes persons identified with both political parties. The stated purpose of the Council is to systematically inform the American people, through the mass media, "the truth about the John Birch Society and related radical reactionary . . . groups, and about the mistatements on public issues and personalities that they are spreading on a rapidly increasing scale." Dr. Arthur Larson is chairman of the Council. He served the Eisenhower Administration in a number of key positions. He is an expert on international law and is at present, Director of the World Rule of Law Center at Duke University.

a coordinated policy directed by a sort of interlocking directorate resulting from this consolidated leadership.<sup>1</sup>

This consolidated right-wing "trust" provides strength far beyond the limited prejudices of a small fringe group. Dr. Larson reports that there are over 7,000 radio and television broadcasts weekly in all 50 states that are being aired by groups connected to the Birch Society. The propaganda programs sponsored by the twelve related groups cost upwards of \$20,000,000 a year.<sup>2</sup> A large part of this money comes from substantial business enterprises that sponsor programs presented by members of this group.<sup>3</sup> Thus the Birch Society adds to its strength through an alliance among other right-wing groups which in turn are in alliance with strong business concerns.

It is on the local scene where the full strength of the Birch Society has been exercised most successfully. For example, in Florida a new state law requires each high school to offer a course in Americanism versus communism. Among the recommended instructional materials is literature prepared by the John Birch Society.<sup>4</sup>

The Houston area has been strongly influenced by Birch programs. The schools use the film, "Communism on the Map" extensively. Often the film is accompanied by comments by a known spokesman for the John

---

<sup>1</sup>The twelve groups that Larson sees tied to the John Birch Society, their programs, and their connection are reproduced in the appendix of this study.

<sup>2</sup>National Council of Churches, Bureau of Research and Survey, "The Radical Right," Information Service, October 10, 1964.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., pp. 8-9.

<sup>4</sup>A number of such cases are reported in a leaflet entitled "Rightwing Retreat from Freedom" issued by the National Council of Jewish Women in 1961-62.

Society or a related group. A number of "objectionable" books have been removed from Houston public, school, and college libraries because of Birch pressure and influence.<sup>1</sup>

The Birch influence has extended into every school in Texas through an organization, Texans for America, spearheaded by a wealthy rancher, J. Evetts Haley. This group shares many of the same goals and many of the same members with the John Birch Society. Beginning with the 1962 school year, every history text used in the Texas public schools conformed to the ideological ideas of the Haleyites. That is, any texts dealing 'favorably' with the United Nations, the New Deal, social security, federal income tax, George Marshall, or Tennessee Valley Authority have been excluded from the list of acceptable history books in Texas.

The full strength of this group is realized when it is observed that the accepted textbooks adopted by the Texas Education Agency treated with favor the memory of Joe McCarthy, General MacArthur's role in wanting to bomb China during the Korean War, Calvin Coolidge, and "patriotic wars." In addition the accepted texts used "republic" to describe this country. The word "democracy" was not used in connection with American history. Laissez faire was treated as the only system of "American economics" in the accepted texts.

In addition to the ban on history texts, the Texas group led by Haley is fighting all student exposure to such American authors as Carl Sandburg, Jack London, Lincoln Steffens, Upton Sinclair, Ernest Hemingway, Henry Steele Commager, Theodore Dreiser, Eric Goldman, and Allan Nevins. This campaign goes so far as to exclude any mention

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

in the bibliographies of textbooks, of the works of these and other writers.<sup>1</sup>

Examples of this same type of strength and influence can be found throughout the country at the local level. Both the National Education Association and the Parent-Teachers Association have issued strong warnings to their members to be prepared for Birch-led moves to take over local school organizations. The National Education Association has also issued warnings to school boards, superintendents, principals, and textbook committees.

On the political front the Birch organization has shown signs of strength but has also suffered its greatest setbacks. It seems quite apparent that they do not possess the strength or the program to compete openly in the American political arena. Their successes have been gained through fronts or by operating behind the scenes.

The closest the Birch Society has come to occupying a position of political strength on the national level was their active support of Barry Goldwater in 1964. They claim that their political approach "motivated by fundamental hopes and fears of religious intensity"<sup>2</sup> provide a program of strength far beyond that of traditional politics. Welch claims that members proved so helpful that it was a repeated observation that "a Bircher is worth a hundred ordinary workers."<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>This information as well as a complete coverage of the Birch strength in the educational field is found in part five of a six part article by Fred J. Cook, in the Nation. Fred J. Cook, "The Ultras" Nation, June 30, 1962, 596-601. Two good books which provide a general coverage of the critics who influence the public schools are: Mary Anne Raywid, The Ax-Grinders, (N.Y. MacMillan, 1962), and Jack Nelson and Gene Roberts Jr., The Censors and the School, (Boston, Little, Brown & Co. 1963).

<sup>2</sup>Stop, Look, and Listen, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



Both the Birch leaders and the supporters of Ralph Harding claim that the Society played a major role in the defeat of the Democratic Congressman from Idaho by a Conservative Republican, George Hansen. When it is remembered that Harding was a firm Johnson supporter and that Johnson carried Idaho quite easily, the claim may have merit. A complete study would be necessary to determine to what extent the Birch group aided in Hansen's victory.

Perhaps the greatest political show of strength was their capture of the leadership of the Young Republicans in California. But this was done by typical Birch tactics rather than traditional political methods. In Congress they have supporters like Utt of California and Rivers of North Carolina. But they lost two valuable California seats held by announced members Rousselot and Hustand in the 1962 election. Consequently, they have no real voice in official Washington.

In Michigan they infiltrated and started gaining control of the newly formed conservative association immediately after it was organized. Those in control dispersed and formed a new organization called the Conservative Federation which vowed to keep radical elements out and maintain a position of respectability in the conservative movement. Also in Michigan, Richard Durant, the vice-chairman of the 14th District Republicans, renounced his membership in the John Birch Society when Governor Romney called him to task. Durant had been the best-known Bircher in Michigan and had provided the Society with a claim to a position of respectable political leadership in that state.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Barbara Holliday, reporter for the Detroit Free Press has studied the Birch Society in Michigan very extensively. The cases mentioned are taken from an address by Barbara Holliday to the National Education Association Convention in Detroit on July 4, 1963.

Probably one of the best singular tests on the political strength of the John Birch Society took place in North Dakota during the fall of 1961. After the death of Republican Congressman Hjalmar C. Nygaard, a special election was called to fill the vacant seat. John W. Scott, a wealthy farmer with full and open Birch support and a well-financed campaign, was defeated overwhelmingly by the regular Republican candidate, Mark Andrews. He also ran behind the Democratic nominee, John Hove. Scott received only 5,773 votes out of the 92, 536 cast.<sup>1</sup>

The North Dakota special election allows us to see in cold figures an example of Birch strength in actual members. It is not great. Senator Milton Young expressed an important point when he observed after the special North Dakota election that "only a small minority has been making all this noise."<sup>2</sup>

The fact that small numbers can make a big noise was re-emphasized in Phoenix. The United States Day sponsored by the Birchers in Phoenix to conflict with the United Nations Day in November of 1963 drew only 378 persons to a free program. The next day Senator Javits, an internationalist and a liberal, drew over 1,700 at \$1 apiece to hear his United Nations speech.<sup>3</sup>

However, more recent events may indicate that a different interpretation of the Society's political influence may be needed. The efforts of a number of leading Republicans to obtain an official party statement divorcing the Republican Party from any direct

---

<sup>1</sup>See Newsweek, Nov. 4, 1963, p. 34-35, for a coverage of the special election.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

connections with the John Birch Society resulted in only a general statement against all extremists and no mention at all of the Society by name. John Rousselot applauded the statement and called it splendid. Mary McGrory, Washington reporter, called it an eyeball to eyeball meeting with the Republicans blinking. A condemnation of Robert Welch as irresponsible was as far as the party was willing to go. Perhaps they held back because of the need for money and the realization that a number of the sources of that money are sympathetic with or even supporters of the John Birch Society. However, it is a fact that the Society exercised enough influence to ward off an official denouncement of them by the Republican Party.

The fact remains that the Birch group has shown strength mainly on the local level on matters local in nature. They have caused teachers to be fired, water to go unfluoridated and sponsors to drop certain television and radio programs. They were successful in keeping the slang dictionary out of certain public schools in California.<sup>1</sup> They have had great influence on textbook selection in Texas and lesser success concerning textbook control in other areas. They have exerted enough pressure on some department stores to stop the selling of goods imported from Eastern Europe. They assisted in a move which convinced a transcontinental airline to abandon a plan to have the insignia of the United Nations on its planes.

The Birch Society has lacked the strength to successfully accomplish goals concerning like matters when the organization under attack would not yield to their pressure. The 1964 Xerox case mentioned earlier is

---

<sup>1</sup>See Saturday Review, September 30, 1961, p. 30 for an account of "Dictionary of American Slang."

a good example of a Birch program that failed. The Xerox people, unmoved and unafraid, carried through with their sponsorship of the United Nations program despite the Birch attack. The Birchers eventually backed down. / The U.S. Rubber Company in 1963 supported the United Nations and became subject to a similiar Birch attack. The company held its ground, and the Society dropped the onslaught.

Certainly at this stage the Birch Society could not be classified as a force of sufficient strength to operate within the bounds of traditional politics. The examples given earlier indicate that Birch political activity runs a close parallel to the losing efforts of Robert Welch in Massachusetts during the 50's. Therefore, shows of strength have come through the use of unconventional tactics rather than the traditional. Their connection with "Big Money" people may result in more political influence in the future; only time will tell.

It may be said with assurance that the Birch Society has considerable financial strength both in money controlled directly by the Society and in support which comes from associated groups and the wealthy business interests which support these groups. This consolidated group also provides a wide coverage for Birch ideas and programs. The influence and stature of the Society has increased with the addition of young men with the reputations and connections of John Rousselot and Reed Benson. Rousselot serves as National Publicity Director and Benson recently opened a new office within walking distance of the White House as the Washington area coordinator.

In the near future it appears that the real Birch strength will remain at the local level, concerning local matters. They will be heard on the national scene because of their vocal character, but there is no indication that the Society, operating under its present

ideology and using the tactics now employed, will exercise any significant or lasting influence upon the mainstream of American politics.

#### America's Opinion of the John Birch Society

Such matters as individual experience, education, religion, family background, means of livelihood and scores of other influences cause a person to express his opinion in the manner that he does. Thus what seems clear and true to one may be viewed by another in an entirely different light even though both are concerned with the same subject. A consensus is rarely found in any evaluation. Yet there is a real value in examining stated opinions. If the different evaluations are recorded, examined, and compared, certainly a better understanding of the subject being considered should result. With this thought in mind, a brief section containing recorded statements, evaluations, and opinions regarding the position of the John Birch Society in the American system should prove helpful in formulating a competent opinion.

There is little difficulty in finding scores of statements on the John Birch Society, both pro and con. The man on the street has frequently written to his local newspaper editor regarding the Society. National leaders in religion, government, business, and labor have not been silent. Those in education have issued their judgments. Journalists and editors have written often. A number of national leaders of the Republican Party have been among the most vocal; many are in opposition, others in firm support. The same is true of Democrats. A small percentage of the many opinions that have been issued appear in the paragraphs that follow.

Senator James O. Eastland (D-Miss.) is chairman of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, a committee strongly supported by

the Birch Society. In answer to inquiries asking the subcommittee's position on the John Birch Society, Senator Eastland issued a form letter stating that the subcommittee cannot endorse any organization officially. He then added his own evaluation of the Society. "The John Birch Society . . . is known to be a conservative and anti-Communist organization. . . . We are happy to state that it seems to be, from our records, a patriotic organization."<sup>1</sup>

Another ranking Democratic Senator feels entirely different about the John Birch Society. Senator Stephen M. Young (D-Ohio) is among the most outspoken critics of Robert Welch and the organization that he heads. In an August 15, 1963, Senate address, Young stated that "the Fascist John Birch Society and others like it are as serious a threat to our security and way of life as internal communism." Young then said that he was willing to go even further and adds that "the radical right today is an even deadlier threat to our democratic traditions and institutions than are American adherents to communism."<sup>2</sup>

Earlier, in an April 4, 1961, article in the New York Times, Young used more vivid terms to describe the Birch leader and his program. He stated that "any mercenary demagogue has the right to express opinions, though discredited, unfounded, and false" but then described the Society's leadership as "Right-Wing crackpots" who "would undermine the very foundations of American democracy." Young claimed "these radicals of the Right have been practicing character assassination without regard for the truth." His final evaluation

---

<sup>1</sup>Nation, April 1, 1961, p. 274. Also reported in New York Times, March 21, 1961, p. 8.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Congressional Record CIX (August 15, 1963), 15178.

was that "they are the Know-Nothings of the twentieth century."<sup>1</sup>

Russell Kirk, one of the foremost spokesmen for the conservative point of view, sees Welch as "a nice man" who uses his own money, and believes what he says, but who has gone to extremes. Writing in America, Kirk had this to say about Robert Welch:

But Robert Welch, never prepared for the role of political leader, is remarkably ignorant of the nature of the Communist conspiracy which he incessantly denounces; and the sound of his own words has led him to the verge of what Burke called "metaphysical madness!"<sup>2</sup>

Kirk adds that "since he founded his Society, he has done more to injure the cause of responsible conservatism than to act effectively against communism."<sup>3</sup>

Kirk is joined in this analysis of Welch by such noted conservatives as William F. Buckley, Barry Goldwater, Fulton Lewis Jr., and Walter Judd. Judd feels Welch lacks the judgment necessary to lead an effective anti-Communist move. Goldwater has repeatedly urged that Welch resign his position of leadership in the Society. Lewis has been equally as critical of Welch's direction of the Society. None of these condemn the Society as such but only Welch's leadership.

The editors of National Review, after explaining that they were not pushed into opposition to Robert Welch by the "Liberal juggernaut," summed up their opinion of "the Founder" by joining with the recognized conservative spokesmen mentioned above in stating that "Robert Welch

<sup>1</sup>New York Times, April 4, 1961, p. 18. Young's Birch thoughts are well presented in the Saturday Evening Post, January 13, 1962, p. 6-7.

<sup>2</sup>America, February 17, 1962, p. 643-644.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 644.

is damaging the cause of anti-Communism."<sup>1</sup>

One of the Birch Society's most prized endorsements is that of Richard Cardinal Cushing, Archbishop of Boston. This is the same Cardinal Cushing who offered the prayer at President Kennedy's inauguration. The endorsement was in the form of a 1960 note to C. M. Crawford of Los Angeles. The note was used as a Birch advertisement in Southern California.

It reads:

Replying to your recent letter, I beg to advise you that I do not know of any more dedicated anti-Communist in the country than Robert Welch. I unhesitatingly recommend him to you and endorse his John Birch Society.<sup>2</sup>

Cardinal Cushing confirmed his endorsement of Welch at an April dinner at Stonehill College. However, the Cardinal issued a strong denouncement of the Birch group in 1964 when informed that they contended that President Kennedy aided the Communist movement. He later announced that he had been misled into condemning the Society and offered to allow Welch to print his letter of apology in the Bulletin. It is interesting to note that the editors of the Pilot, the official publication of the Boston Roman Catholic Archdiocese which Cushing heads, feel that the "John Birch Society movement, with all kinds of good intentions allowed, is unbalanced, excited, and definitely out of focus." The Chicago Archdiocese's newspaper, New

---

<sup>1</sup>A conservative view of Welch is reported in National Review, February 13, 1962, pp. 83-88. Wm. F. Buckley Jr., Editor of National Review, has been critical of Welch, on methods and unfounded charges. A more recent National Review evaluation can be found in National Review, Octo. 19, 1965.

<sup>2</sup>Nation, April 15, 1961, p. 314. See also New York Times April 6, 1961, p. 16 and Christian Century, May 6, 1964, p. 596.



World, edited by Reverend William F. Graney joins the Pilot in opposition to the Society. Graney feels that the present pasting the John Birch Society is taking in print is deserved and fortunate.

There is little evidence of any substantial Jewish support of the views expressed by the Birch Society. Rabbi Emmanuel Rackman, honorary President of the Rabbinical Council of America expresses the opinion that "the United States is confronted with serious dangers from the narrow Fascist-like and bigotist Birch Society."<sup>1</sup> Rabbi Robert I. Kahn of Houston is equally critical of Welch and claims the Society operates on "frantic fears" and that Welch has no ideal other than his own "poorly concealed bid for personal power. . . ." The leaders of the Rabbinical Council of America are of the opinion that it is essential for the Attorney General's office to conduct a full scale intensive investigation of the Society and its programs.

The Reverend Dr. Charles R. Ehrhardt, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Phoenix expressed the opinion of most of the leaders of the leading Protestant sects, when he told his December 17, 1961, congregation that "anti-communism has become a god in the lives of those who do not have the true God as their Lord."<sup>2</sup> The National Council of Churches echoes this evaluation and has spent a great deal of time and money to refute the doctrine expounded by the Birchers and their associates. But the fundamentalist Protestant groups are among the most avid supporters of the Birch program and ideals. The charge "of widespread Communist infiltration" makes sense to them.

---

<sup>1</sup>New York Times, April 19, 1961, p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Louis Cassels, "The Rightist Crises in Our Churches," Look, April 24, 1962, p. 42.

They have viewed with distrust the efforts of the National Council of Churches to adapt their faith to the social problems of modern times. The transition seems to them to be a movement toward socialism or communism. They support those who join them in this concern.

The nation's columnists and editorial writers are as split in their evaluation as are the politicians and religious leaders. Lucius Beebe, in a San Francisco Chronicle column dated March 18, 1963, reported that "no group or organization in the history of America politics or public life has been subject to such a prolonged, concerted, malicious, mendacious, determined, and hysterical smear at the hands of supposedly responsible publicists as the John Birch Society." Beebe adds that many people "see in the alleged subversion attributed to the Birchers what used, once in the almost forgotten past, to be known as plain American patriotism." Two months later a sister California newspaper, The San Jose Mercury, supported Senator Thomas H. Kuchel's (R-Calif.) Senate blast at the Birch Society and related groups. The editorial concluded with an "amen" to the Senator's words, "they (the Birchers) are anything but patriotic. Indeed, a good case can be made that they are unpatriotic and downright un-American. For they are doing a devil's work far better than Communists could do."<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that the editors of the San Francisco Chronicle, which ran Beebe's pro-Birch column, joined Senator Kuchel "in his rejoinder of 'nuts' to this paranoid nonsense." The Chronicle challenged additional Senators and Congressmen to "stand up and declare

---

<sup>1</sup>San Jose Mercury, May 6, 1963, Editorial page.

themselves."<sup>1</sup> One of the most favorable newspaper coverages of the John Birch Society was that of George Todt in the Los Angeles Herald Examiner during the fall of 1962. Todt reported that he admired Welch's fight against Communism and Fabian socialism but could not accept his unfounded charges against Eisenhower, Dulles, and Nixon. Todt, like Beebe, reported that "some of the worst examples of slander and libel ever directed against citizens of this nation have been hurled thoughtlessly at the John Birch Society."<sup>2</sup>

Few newspaper people have openly endorsed Welch or his organization. A number of writers, like Todt, disclaim any connection but firmly defend the position taken by the Society on key issues. The liberal periodicals such as Nation, New Republic, and Progressive have openly condemned Welch's group. The leading magazines controlled by religious organizations such as Commentary, Christian Century, and America are equally as firm in their condemnation. Of the three leading weekly news magazines, Time and Newsweek have been critical, while U. S. News and World Report has been silent. William Buckley's very conservative National Review has been as harsh on Welch as any. William S. White sees the Birch-type Rightist movement as another "temporary boil on the body politic" caused by the pressures of modern times. White is certain that the "healthy, conserving processes of American life will

---

<sup>1</sup>See United States Congressional Record CIX (May 28, 1963) 9692.

<sup>2</sup>Todt's editorials on the John Birch Society were placed in the U.S. Congressional Record, CVIII, (October 30, 1962), A 7909, A 7911, A 7919.

push the sore off" if only those seeking a sensation will not spread the "infection."<sup>1</sup> Alan Westin feels the Birchers represent a second round of opposition to the U. S. bipartisan policies in world affairs.<sup>2</sup> Henry S. Reuss joins the spokesmen of both parties as rating the Birchers as "something between, or combining, an un-American threat and an un-funny joke."<sup>3</sup>

With the exception of Goldwater's flirtations and Ezra Taft Benson's kind words, few major political figures have wished to be identified openly with the Society.

Richard Nixon endorsed the Los Angeles Times editorial stand against the Birch Society in a letter to the editor. He added that "one of the most indelible lessons of human history is that those who adopt the doctrine that the end justifies the means inevitably find the means becomes the end."<sup>4</sup>

The late President John F. Kennedy discussed the Society briefly in a Los Angeles speech on November 18, 1961. He called the Birch Society a "discordant voice of extremism" and then warned:

There have always been those fringes of our society who have sought to escape their own responsibility by finding a simple solution, an appealing slogan or a convenient scapegoat.

Men who are unwilling to face up to the danger from without are convinced that the real danger comes from within.

---

<sup>1</sup>Alan F. Westin, "The Deadly Parallels," Harper's, April, 1962, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>Henry S. Reuss, "Birch Bark, Birch Bite," Commonweal, May 9, 1962, p. 617.

<sup>4</sup>New York Times, March 19, 1961, p. 51.

They look suspiciously at their neighbors and their leaders. They call for a man on horseback because they do not trust the people. They find treason in our finest churches, in our highest courts and even in the treatment of the water.

They equate the Democratic party with the welfare state, with socialism and socialism with communism. They object quite rightly to politics intruding on the military--but they are anxious for the military to engage in politics.<sup>1</sup>

The Birch Society is a firm supporter of the FBI and feels its anti-Communist fight should be expanded. They like to quote from J. Edgar Hoover. Yet, J. Edgar Hoover does not have fond feelings for the Society's "self-proclaimed" superior understanding of communism and how to fight it.<sup>2</sup> Hoover warns that the Birchers make the very mistake the Communists are so careful to avoid. They "concentrate on the negative rather than on the positive. They are merely against communism without being for any positive measures to eliminate the social, political, and economic frictions which the Communists are so adroit at exploiting." Hoover then requests that those who advocate such measures review recent history and he reminds us that "both Hitler and Mussolini were against communism. However, it was by what they stood for, not against, that history has judged them."<sup>3</sup>

No official spokesmen can be found for any of the recognized associations dealing with education that openly support the John Birch Society. The American Federation of Teachers sees the John Birch

---

<sup>1</sup>New York Times, November 14, 1961, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Louis Cassels "The Rightest Crises in Our Churches" Look, April 24, 1962, p. 42.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

Society as a threat to American liberties. Their leaders have evaluated personalities rather than issues and presented propaganda rather than information."<sup>1</sup> The PTA has been a prime target of the Birchers from the beginning. PTA leaders have been on the alert and have prepared to fight attempts to use the organization for purposes other than for which it was established. The PTA has a proud democratic tradition and resents Birch authoritarian tactics. The local chapters have been encouraged by the national office to appoint a committee to study the Birch Society and then report to the members concerning it.<sup>2</sup>

The only official governmental examination of the Society was conducted by the California Senate Factfinding Subcommittee on Un-American Activities at the request of Mr. Robert Welch.<sup>3</sup> Senate President pro Tempore, Hugh M. Burns, served as Chairman of the bi-partisan investigation team comprised of five Senators. The factfinding committee gained its information from documents, interviews, closed hearings, and other typical investigative procedures. On June 12, 1963, it presented its report to the President of the Senate, who in turn presented it to the Senate body.

The conclusions of the subcommittee proclaimed the Society "to be a Right, anti-communist, fundamentalist organization." The report

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> Information concerning P.T.A. programs can be obtained from National Congress PTA, 700 North Rush Street, Chicago.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Welch is perfectly willing to have his organization investigated officially by a subcommittee of either the house or the Senate. In fact he has welcomed such an investigation on occasion. Although many legislators, including Rousselot and Hiestand, have advocated a complete examination, no serious move in that direction has been made at the National level.

indicated that the Society was dominated by Robert Welch, but that it was not secret or fascist in its organization. The investigating team concluded that the accusations that it was fascist and secret could not be supported by evidence.<sup>1</sup>

The Efficiency Research Bureau conducted a private investigation of the John Birch Society in Orange County, California, and came up with the conclusions very similiar to those of the Senate subcommittee. It concluded that personal prejudices were brought into the Society by converted members and were not a part of their doctrine. They determined that the Society was an anti-Communist movement open to anyone interested in joining or attending meetings.<sup>2</sup>

The opinions given in the preceeding pages indicate very clearly the truth of what was said in the beginning of this section. An evaluation of any subject is merely an opinion based on one's own views and interests. In this case the subject has been an organization called the John Birch Society, the opinions mentioned were those of intelligent, learned people. Yet, what seemed clear and true to some was viewed by others who are just as wise as being repugnant and out of line. There is no consensus, only opinion.

---

<sup>1</sup>Twelfth Report of the Senate Fact Finding Sub-Committee on Un-American Activities, California Senate, 1963, p. 62. The complete report can be obtained for \$1 from American Opinion, Belmont, Mass. or from the State of California. The California Senate Fact Finding Sub-Committee on Un-American Activities is re-examining the Birch Society as of 1965. At the time of this study the findings have not been published. This investigation is not receiving the publicity from the Birch Society that the 1963 Report received. This report should be available from the State of California soon.

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Congressional Record, CVIII (June 14, 1962) A4453.

## CONCLUSION

This study has been an attempt to examine objectively the ideology of the John Birch Society. It has concentrated on the stated beliefs and known actions of the Society. No open or biased attack has been intended. Questions have been asked when they seemed pertinent. Defense of the Society has been offered when it seemed deserved. Expressed opinions (pro and con) have been recorded. This conclusion is a final word and an additional evaluation.

Political criticism is legitimate and desired in the American system. Policies concerning such areas as federal welfare programs, the United Nations, agriculture programs and foreign policy are by no means final. They must be subject to continual examination. Conservatives, as well as liberals and moderates, agree on this. But criticism should be conducted within the framework of civic responsibility. To use the tactics of the enemy in the name of Americanism is out of place. When a group resorts to such actions, it removes itself from political respectability and becomes a part of what Theodore Roosevelt called the "lunatic fringe" of society. This the John Birch Society has done.

It is not the basic beliefs of the John Birch Society which place it in the radical camp, but it is rather the methods and supporting ideology that have developed to advance those beliefs. Respectable conservative thought concerning collectivism, simple government, foreign relations and the role of government in agriculture is not essentially different from that advanced by the Society. For example, Otis Chandler, publisher of the conservative Los Angeles Times, is very critical of much of our government policy, yet his paper was among



the first to repudiate Welch. David Lawrence, editor of U.S. News and World Report, is a conservative critic, but he has offered no support to Robert Welch. Henry Hazlitt is as anti-Keynesian as Welch, yet he wants no connection with "the Founder." Former New Dealer, Raymond Moley, agrees with the Society on many subjects but does not wish to be identified with them in any way. Wilhelm Ropke, well-known German professor of economics, supports Welch's anti-collectivist and anti-Keynes beliefs and advocates simple government supported by pure capitalism.<sup>1</sup> The list of respectable conservatives who share many of Welch's views could be extended to cover pages. Yet, none are supporters of the Birch Society or its program. Why?

The difference lies in the approach in advancing those beliefs. Responsible groups work through the accepted political system. They offer alternative policies and criticize through rational open discussion. The Birch group and its many allies not only oppose government policy, but they denounce the accepted political system. They see conspiracy and treason as reasons why their views are not accepted. They cannot see that trouble and failure can come from sources other than traitorous leaders. They see the world as black and white; any conflict is a conflict between good and evil. Because they claim a religious-like truth, they will not accept the suggestion that they may be wrong. Thus they take their ideology out of the rational, responsible area of debate and place it in the irrational, irresponsible sphere of untenable doctrine. This is pseudoreligion. This is political fanaticism.

---

<sup>1</sup>Ropke's thoughts are recorded in Wilhelm Ropke, Social Crisis of Our Times, (Chicago; University of Chicago Press, 1950.)

Welch is a dramatist employing crisis as a means to advance his aims. His followers provide an audience ready to co-operate with the hero of the production. Like the crowd at a western movie, they become emotionally involved but always look to the hero to speak and lead and act and solve the dramatic difficulties. And like the movie star in light clothes and mounted on a white horse, the retired candyman appears at just the right moment to champion the cause--be it water fluoridation, infiltration of the local PTA or attacking Earl Warren. One asks how can so many follow? History is full of such followings.

Perhaps it is as Barbara Holliday suggests: Birchism is a state of mind.<sup>1</sup> If so, we are all guilty on occasion of a degree of Birchism. When we look for scapegoats or spread half-truths, we are guilty. When we become impatient with the democratic process or become intolerant and see no merit in the views of others, again we are guilty. When we allow fear to motivate our every move and look for a fixed vocabulary to express prejudice, we are looking for Birch-like solutions. If we were to allow these feelings to dominate our actions, we could easily slip into the stage audience of the Robert Welch production. Fortunately, most people do not allow these feelings to dominate their actions. The Birchers do.

An organized activist program, easy solutions to difficult problems, possession of a religious-like truth which offers a saving plan under a dynamic charismatic leader, plus a claimed understanding of the true threat of communism--this is the Birch appeal. Many

---

<sup>1</sup>Address to National Education Association Convention at Detroit, Michigan, July 4, 1963.

reach for it. Those who are afraid find it very appealing to look to the wise leader who claims to understand true danger and offers himself and all that he has so that others might be saved. Those who have lost faith in their government or religion find comfort. A number of self-made rich, who oddly enough accumulated their wealth during the very years which Birch doctrine condemns as the period in which the free-enterprise system was destroyed, provide money and support to oppose the "evils" in Washington. In addition the Society is supported by many well-meaning people who for some reason feel abused and long for the "good old days." In most cases Birchism provides a home, a belief, and a plan of action for those looking for a simple salvation from the complex problems of today.

Americans have in the past had little regard for Birch-like ideological doctrine in politics. American political parties are not rigid or ideologically based. The United States political tradition is a blend of common sense and a desire to win. Political changes are made without revolution. Adjustment to the constant social and technical change is made without disposing of the system. This is impossible when men are tied to a rigid, Birch-like ideology.

There have always been groups who would change things by placing political action and organization in ideological camps, but the majority has never accepted such doctrine. It is a credit to the American system that it has always tolerated such extremism. It is an additional credit that its open-democratic nature assures the eventual repudiation of fanaticism.

The Birch idea of an easy solution to difficult problems must be challenged. Simple answers do not exist. It is impossible to trace all problems to one source. It is equally impossible to find

the solution in a single monolithic organization which claims to know the "truth."

Should not we question Welch's technique of making charges without documentation? We must insist on sources and not accept as true the extreme charges against our country and its leaders without positive proof. Upon reading Birch publications, one feels that it is possible that Welch is convinced his writings should be treated as scripture. If this is so, we must remind the "Founder" that Mohammed credits Allah and the Biblical prophets write "thus saith the Lord."

We must reject the idea of government based on idealistic concepts of imagism. The idea of a saving few, made up of exceptional individuals, must not be accepted. Such imagism has led to modern concepts like that of the "master race," and our experience with Hitler is too recent to think of that.

We must examine our relationship with the federal, state, and local government. We must evaluate our views concerning the churches and the schools. We must audit our feelings concerning such organizations as labor unions, farm groups, and business associations. Most of all, we must examine our relationship as individuals with each other. If we have lost faith in the integrity of our fellow citizens as well as the organizations that conduct the affairs of our nation, what do we have to recommend our system to others. If being anti-Communist results in this type of fear and division should not we ask more as proof of the worth of an organization than merely "it is anti-Communist?"

We must examine American history and critically interpret its meaning. We must not accept without study the opinionated views of

self-proclaimed experts.

We must examine the Birch condemnation of democracy as a "weapon of demagoguery." We must insist that Mr. Welch explain the place of Thomas Jefferson, the Declaration of Independence, Bacon's Rebellion, Andrew Jackson, Walt Whitman and forty million immigrants in American history in relationship to his oft-spoken divorce of democracy from America. If he can provide such an explanation, perhaps it will seem logical to hate and fear today's leaders who advocate extending to all the rights and privileges enjoyed in much of the past by the selected few.

Today's democrats must challenge those who would end democracy and look for each solutions to current problems from a man on a white horse. We must recall Jefferson's warning when confronted by the anti-democrats of his days. "Sometimes it is said that man cannot be trusted with government of himself. Can he, then, be trusted with government of others? Or have we found angels in the form of kings to govern him?"<sup>1</sup>

We must question the idea of absolutism which is the root of Birch thinking. We must not allow fear or difficult times to cause us to turn to a self-appointed charismatic leader who claims to have the "truth" and offers himself as the "savior" of mankind. Just as Aristotle rejected Plato's "philosopher kings," so must we reject one who speaks ex cathedra today.

We must remind Mr. Welch, his followers, and his allies that Birch truths are not necessarily American truths. For centuries

---

<sup>1</sup>Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., The Age of Jackson, (New York, Mentor 1964) pp. 191-192. Abridged edition of 1945 publication of Little, Brown & Co., Boston.

certain individuals have occupied themselves with defining the final truth. A few have claimed to have found it. But of the few there is not even a modest number who are in agreement as to their findings. There is not a single claimed truth which is not denied by someone who is equally as wise as the one who proclaims it. Thus when one discusses truth, he is not dealing with a fixed formulated matter but rather with a relative thing which, in fact, is an ethical truth only upon the individuals or groups that claim it.

What of the future? Although all indications are that the John Birch Society is growing and becoming more active, its future is not assured. Those who look for a man on a white horse usually have an eye for a greater man on a more magnificent steed. Such men as ex-senator and ex-Presidential candidate, Barry Goldwater, and National Review's William Buckley, are asking Mr. Welch to resign as head of the Birch Society in order that conservatives might be viewed in a better light. Goldwater has started his own Free Society group and has welcomed Birchers. Buckley has repeatedly challenged the tactics of Welch in his conservative magazine. Only time will determine the fate of the Birch group and their place in the conservative camp.

No matter what the fate of the Birch Society, history reminds us that, as always, we will hear derogatory statements and charges concerning our government and our leaders. We will always hear ominous warnings about the downfall of America. We will continue to see evidence among some of doubt, misgivings and lack of confidence in the future of this nation.

As Americans facing the difficult problems of today's complex world, there is reason for great concern; but there is no reason for despair. Of course we must recognize the vast problems of our day and

challenge them, but we must refuse to be among those who lose faith and then search for others as the cause of that lost faith. Let us not be among those whose only contribution is negative--to complain, to condemn and destroy. Let us build on the positive. Is not this America's tradition?

Finally we conclude this study with the admission that Robert Welch, the Founder, is inadequately treated here. We have presented the philosophy and the actions of the Birch Society without any effort to analyze the Founder himself or to account for his personal commitment to the cause he serves. His own explanation is presented; his mission is to oppose the Communist conspiracy everywhere he encounters it. But for students interested in a more thorough investigation of personal motives this will not satisfy. We reported that he undertook his task after a successful business career, after several trips abroad, after some attempts in politics, and after a period of serious study. We cannot oppose any man for serving his convictions, nor can we oppose him for his dedication to a cause. We can be critical of the cause itself; a cause which we have found to be distorted by Mr. Welch's failure to adjust the picture in his mind to the real world outside. We have found his approach to foreign and domestic problems for the most part irrational and fabricated. He has shunned the burden of the statesman and the politician. He prefers his present role as a man on a white horse sitting in judgment of everyone who fails to accept his explanation of events. He has not the time nor the disposition to grapple with the real problems of our time. His is a call for a general rightness leaving him no time for useful criticism of governmental policy. With this appeal he is drawing off a political following who like himself have not the disposition to grapple with any but the illusory things.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### John Birch Society Publications and Reprints

- American Opinion. Belmont: The John Birch Society.
- Draskovich, S. M. The John Birch Society is a Threat to Whom?  
Belmont: American Opinion Reprint, n.d.
- Eastland, James O. The Supreme Court's "Modern Scientific Authorities" in the Segregation Cases, Belmont: American Opinion Reprint, 1955. (Speech of James O. Eastland in the Senate of the United States, May 26, 1955.)
- Monthly Bulletin. Belmont: The John Birch Society, 1962 to date.
- Rousselot, John H. "Beliefs and Principles of the John Birch Society,"  
U. S. Congressional Record, 87th Cong. 2nd Sess., 1962,  
CVIII, A4292.
- Stop, Look and Listen. Belmont: The John Birch Society, 1964.
- Welch, Robert H. W. A Brief Introduction to the John Birch Society,  
Belmont: The John Birch Society, 1962.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Blue Book of the John Birch Society, Belmont: The  
Author, 1961.
- \_\_\_\_\_. Republics and Democracies, Belmont: American Opinion  
Reprint, 1961.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The White Book of the John Birch Society, 1960. Belmont:  
The John Birch Society, 1960.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The White Book of the John Birch Society, 1961. Belmont:  
The John Birch Society, 1961.

### Books

- Bell, Daniel (editor). The Radical Right, Garden City, New York:  
Doubleday, 1963.
- Broyles, J. Allen. The John Birch Society; Anatomy of a Protest,  
Boston: Beacon Press, 1964.
- Dudman, Richard. Men of the Far Right, New York: Pyramid Books, 1962.



- Ellsworth, Ralph E. and Harris, Sarah M. The American Right Wing, Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1962.
- Forster, Arnold and Epstein, Benjamin. Dangers on the Right, New York: Random House, 1964.
- Janson, Donald and Eismann, Bernard. The Far Right, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1963.
- Nelson, Jack and Roberts, Gene, Jr. The Censors and the Schools, Boston: Little, Brown, 1963.
- Overstreet, Harry and Overstreet, Bonaro. The Strange Tactics of Extremism, New York: Norton, 1964.
- Raywid, Mary Anne. The Ax-Grinders, New York: Macmillan, 1962.
- Roy, Ralph Lord. Communism and the Churches, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1960.
- Sherwin, Mark. The Extremists, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963.
- Suall, Irwin. The American Ultras, League for Industrial Democracy, 1962.
- Walker, Brooks R. The Christian Fright Peddlers, Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1964.
- Vahan, Richard. The Truth About the John Birch Society, New York: Macfadden Books, 1962.

### Articles

- "American Political Extremism in the 1960's," Journal of Social Issues, April, 1963.
- "Americanists," Time, March 10, 1961, pp. 21-22.
- Bacon, Richard G., "Why I Can't Join the John Birch Society," Look, November 3, 1964, pp. 76+.
- "Bark of the Birch," Newsweek, November 4, 1963, pp. 34-35.
- Barrett, G., "Close-up of the Birchers Founder," New York Times Magazine, May 14, 1961, pp. 13+.
- "Birch Bark," Newsweek, April 24, 1961, pp. 43-44.
- "Birch Society Adopts New Guise," Christian Century, January 1, 1964, p. 5.
- "Birch Society's Two Faces," Christian Century, October 6, 1965, pp. 1212-1213.

- "Birch View of J. F. K.," Newsweek, February 24, 1964, pp. 29-30.
- "Birchers Have a Birthday Party," America, October 23, 1965, p. 457.
- "Bouquet for Buckley," Christian Century, August 25, 1965, p. 1028.
- Brant, I. "Anti-Communist Hoax," New Republic, May 28, 1962, pp. 15-18;  
June 4, 1962, pp. 17-20.
- Buckley, William F. "Goldwater and the John Birch Society," National Review, November 19, 1963, p. 430.
- Buckley, William F. "Uproar," National Review, April 22, 1961, pp. 21-243.
- "Cardinal Re-endorses Birch Society," Christian Century, May 6, 1964, p. 596.
- Cassels, Louis, "The Rightist Crisis in our Churches," Look, April 24, 1962, pp. 40-50.
- Chmaj, B. E. "Paranoid Patriotism; Radical Right and the South," Atlantic, November, 1962, pp. 91-97.
- "Christmas Story: UNICEF Christmas Cards and the John Birch Society in California," Newsweek, December 21, 1964, p. 30.
- Coffin, Tristram. "The New Know-Nothings," Progressive, December, 1961, pp. 9-13.
- Cogley, J. "They're Trying to Tell Us Something," Commonweal, May 31, 1963, pp. 270-271.
- "Comrades and Kooks," Newsweek, June 4, 1962, pp. 24-25.
- "Conspiracy on the Right," New Republic, November 28, 1964, pp. 3-4.
- "Conspiracy, U.S.A.," Look, January 26, 1965. (Articles by Sen. Frank Church, David R. Macey, Patricia Swank, and Donald Robinson.)
- Cook, Fred J. "The Ultras," Nation, June 30, 1962, pp. 586-589.
- Crawford, Kenneth. "Sick, Sick, Sick," Newsweek, August 32, 1964, p. 32.
- Dunbar, Ernst, "Plot to Take Over the P.T.A.," Look, September 7, 1965, pp. 27-31.
- "Enemy Within; Los Angeles County Young Republics," Nation, December 16, 1961, p. 482.
- Engl, H. "John Birch Society," Nation, March 11, 1961, pp. 209-211.
- "Exploiters of Grief," Newsweek, December 30, 1963, pp. 16-17.

- Fangmeier, R. A. "Return to the Cradle," Christian Century, November 1, 1961, pp. 1316-1218.
- Freedman, J. "Birch Tree Grows," Library Journal, February 1, 1966, pp. 624-628.
- "Friends of Lee Oswald," National Review, March 10, 1964, pp. 183-185.
- "Going Public," Newsweek, March 8, 1965, p. 26.
- Graham, R. A. "John Birch Society," America, December 2, 1961, pp. 324-326.
- Harris, T. G. "Rampart Right Invades the G.O.P.," Look, July 16, 1963, pp. 19-25.
- Hoffman, P. "Police Birchites: the Blue Backlash," Nation, December 7, 1964, pp. 425+.
- Hofstadter, Richard. "The Paranoid Style in American Politics," Harper's, November, 1964, pp. 77-82+.
- "John Birch Society," America, April 15, 1961, p. 140.
- "John Birch Society," Commonweal, April 14, 1961, pp. 68-69.
- "John Birch Society," Life, May 12, 1961, pp. 124-128+.
- "John Birch Society," New Republic, April 10, 1961, p. 8.
- "The John Birch Society and the Conservative Movement," National Review, October 19, 1965, pp. 914-920+. (a symposium.)
- "John Birch Versus the P.T.A." Nation, February 15, 1965, p. 156.
- Kirk, Russell and Masse, B. L. "Birchites," America, February 17, 1962, pp. 643-647.
- Knebel, F. "G.O.P. Attacks the John Birch Society," Look, December 28, 1965, pp. 74-76.
- Kuchel, Thomas H. "A Plot to Overthrow America!" New York Times Magazine, July 21, 1963.
- Leonard, George B. "What is an Extremist?" Look, October 20, 1964, pp. 33-37.
- Liebling, A. J. "The Candy Kid," New Yorker, May 20, 1961, p. 156+.
- Lipset, Seymour M. "Social Stratification and 'Right Wing Extremism,'" British Journal of Sociology, December, 1959. (Reprinted in pamphlet form by the Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California)
- "Livy's Ghost; Republican Party and the John Birch Society," Newsweek, December 27, 1965, pp. 26-27.

- "Mr. Welch Annoys His Brethren," Nation, February 3, 1962, p. 90.
- Morris, W. "Cell 772, or Life Among the Extremists," Commentary, October, 1964, pp. 31-39.
- Morrison, C. "John Birch Society," Look, September 26, 1961, pp. 23-27.
- Mosk, S. and Jewell, H. H. "Birch Phenomenon Analyzed," New York Times Magazine, August 20, 1961, pp. 12+.
- "No Comfort for Birchers," Time, December 24, 1965, p. 12.
- O'Gara, J. "Creeping Birchites," Commonweal, May 4, 1961, p. 142+.
- "Painful Outburst; Michigan's Republican Convention," Time, September 7, 1962, p. 17.
- Peel, Roy V. "The Wackacobi: Extremists of Our Own Time," Western Political Quarterly, September, 1963.
- "Pleasantville's Unpleasantness," Time, March 20, 1964, p. 44.
- "Poor Karl Mundt, Poor G.O.P.," Nation, October 25, 1965, p. 261.
- "Question of Robert Welch," National Review, February 13, 1962, pp. 83-88.
- "Report to Our Readers: Concerning Letters on Children's Story," Ladies Home Journal, April, 1964, pp. 15+.
- "Republicans Blast the Birch Society," Christian Century, October 13, 1965, p. 1244.
- "Responsibles: Council for Civic Responsibility vs. Front Organizations," National Review, November 3, 1964, pp. 942-944.
- Reuss, H. S. "Birch Bark, Birch Bite," Commonweal, March 9, 1962, pp. 616-618.
- Shayon, R. L. "Birchbark Curtain; John Birch Society Bulletin Urging Protest Against U.N. Television Specials," Saturday Review, October 3, 1964, p. 29.
- Shayon, R. L. "Looking at the Birchers," Saturday Review, August 14, 1965, p. 41.
- Stolley, R. "Birchers Settle in Washington Headquarters," Life, July 18, 1965, p. 43.
- Storke, T. M. "How Some Birchers Were Birched," New York Times Magazine, December 10, 1961, pp. 9+.
- "Storm Over Birchers," Time, April 7, 1961, pp. 18-19.
- Strout, C. "Fantasy on the Right," New Republic, May 1, 1961, pp. 13-15.

- "Subversion of the Right," Christian Century, March 29, 1961, pp. 379-380.
- Thompson, T. "God Deserves Better," Christian Century, October 4, 1961, pp. 1174-1176.
- "Turnabout: California Republican Assembly," Newsweek, March 11, 1963, p. 28.
- "Welch's New Bid for Power; Drive to Repeal the Civil Rights Act of 1964," Christian Century, August 18, 1965, p. 1004.
- Westin, Alan F. "Deadly Parallels: Radical Right and Radical Left," Harper, April, 1962, pp. 25-32.
- Westin, Alan F. "The John Birch Society: Fundamentalism on the Right," Commentary, August, 1961, pp. 93-104.
- "Why They Crucify," Christian Century, April 12, 1961, pp. 443-444.
- Witcover, J. "We Birchers Are Trained to Look for Patterns," New Republic, May 8, 1965, pp. 8-9.
- Young, S. M. "Speaking Out; Danger on the Right," Saturday Evening Post, January 13, 1962, pp. 6-7.

#### Documents

California. Legislature. Twelfth Report of the Senate Factfinding Subcommittee on Un-American Activities. Sacramento, California, Senate of the State of California, 1963. (Also issued as an American Opinion Reprint.)

U.S. Congressional Record. Vol. CVII, 1961.

\_\_\_\_\_. Vol. CVIII, 1962.

\_\_\_\_\_. Vol. CIX, 1963.

\_\_\_\_\_. Vol. CX, 1964.

\_\_\_\_\_. Vol. CXI, 1965.

#### Other Sources

Anti-Defamation League, "The John Birch Society," Facts, November-December, 1961. (See also articles in A.D.L. Bulletin, June, 1961 and April, 1962.)

Bass, Jack. "A Depth Study of the John Birch Society," Columbia, S.C. Record, November 6-8, 1963. (available in reprint form.)

- Baxter, David. "The John Birch Society," Extension, July, 1961.  
(Published by the Catholic Church Extension Society of the U.S.A., Chicago)
- "Birch Society Receipts, 1962," New York Times, July 30, 1963, p. 32.
- Blake, Gene, "The John Birch Society," Los Angeles Times, March 5-9, 1961.
- Chander, Otis. "Peril to Conservatives," Los Angeles Times, March 12, 1961.
- Freedom House, Statement on the John Birch Society, May 1, 1961.
- Grove, Gene, "Inside the John Birch Society," New York Post, May 22-June 1, 1961.
- Holliday, Barbara, "The John Birch Society in Michigan," Detroit Free Press, August, 1962. (a six part series)
- Lanker, Bud. "John Birch Society," Phoenix, Arizona, Arizona Journal, April 29-May 4, 1962.
- Mabley, Jack, "Strange Threat to Democracy," Chicago Daily News, July 26, 1960.
- National Council of Churches, Bureau of Research and Survey, "The Radical Right," Information Service, October 10, 1964.
- National Education Association of the United States, "The John Birch Society," Defense Bulletin No. 88, April, 1961.
- Todt, George, "George Todt's Opinion," Los Angeles Herald-Express, February 1961. (six articles)
- Welch, Robert H. W. Meet the Press, v.8, N32, September 6, 1964.
- Welch, Robert H. W. The Politician, Belmont: The Author, 1963.  
(As mentioned in the introduction this book was not used in this study. However, it has been republished and Birch members are encouraged to read it. Therefore it is important for students of Birch philosophy.)

## APPENDIXES

.....

Appendix A

Two letters written by members of the John Birch Society which illustrate the religious-like feeling that many members have toward the Society. These letters are taken from The Time Has Come, a Birch Society publication.



*Business Address*  
82 N. Main St., Carbondale, Pa.  
Phone 282-4280

Frank W. Gaydosh

*Home Address*  
R. D. 2, Uniondale, Pa.  
Phone 679-3311

MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON US, if we forget  
The objective of Soviet Communism is  
to enslave the World!

January 3, 1964

The John Birch Society  
Belmont 78  
Massachusetts

Gentlemen:

As a businessman, I have always tried to anticipate and prepare for all the risks connected with my home and business.

I carry fire, windstorm damage and liability insurance on my home.

I can carry workmen's compensation, comprehensive liability, fire and theft insurance on my business.

I have life insurance in event that I die to take care of my family.

I have a retirement policy to take care of me when I'm too old to work.

I have prepared for all eventualities except one.

A friend of mine in Cuba had all the above coverage and yet he lost everything. He didn't have the most important insurance in the world TODAY! ANTI-COMMUNISM INSURANCE

I am not going to make the same mistake as my Cuban friend made. As of today, I am buying ANTI-COMMUNISM INSURANCE.

While there are other good companies selling ANTI-COMMUNISM INSURANCE, I think the best is THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY.

I am enclosing my check for One Hundred (\$100.00) Dollars as my January ANTI-COMMUNISM INSURANCE payment and will continue to send at least \$100.00 per month until further notice.

# 37179 - JAN 8 1964

Yours for God and Country,

CITIZEN'S CODE OF CONDUCT

Enc. check

"I will never forget that I am an American Citizen, responsible for my actions, and dedicated to the principles that made my country free. I will Trust in God and in the United States of America."

Frank W. Gaydosh

10 Wright Place  
Scarsdale, N.Y.  
December 29, 1963

JAN 2 1964

Mr. Robert Welch  
Belmont 78, Mass.

Dear Mr. Welch:

IN the December bulletin you state that the next 12 months immediately ahead of us now seem to offer us our last best chance of pulling together enough strength and a sufficiently expanded organization to make the odds more manageable. I've been a member for 2 years now, and that's long enough to know that you have a habit of proving right.

Even though I work hard at our Birch projects studying, writing, and chapter leader, I was still shocked by this statement in our December bulletin. I realized it was time to do some serious thinking and adding.

We are not rich, in fact we live in a 4-room apartment and are expecting our 4th child in the middle of January. We have skimped and saved during the 6 years we've been married (and before) and now have been able to save enough money for a small downpayment on a house. The thought of having a yard for our children to play in made the sacrifices necessary to save this money easy. The thought of having our children taken away from us and brought up under this Godless barbaric tyranny make bunk beds in their present room a very pleasant reality, and we pray alternative.

I am enclosing a check for \$1,000 for my lifetime membership. I hope if things go all right to also raise our donations in the M.M.M. If, as you say, the next twelve months are so vitally important, I think it is of the utmost necessity that a real campaign for lifetime memberships be started. If many of our members realize the importance of the next twelve months, I am sure they will be willing to sacrifice \$1,000. Even if they don't have the amount, they can borrow it from a bank and pay it back over a period of several years, (as time permits). If 5,000 members sent in lifetime memberships, that would add up to \$5 million dollars. If 50,000 members did, it would give you \$50 million to work with in the next twelve months.

You say yourself, all we need is the resources to make rapid enough additions to our educational army. Why worry about houses, cars and college? Let's get the resources to save this ~~Shudechristian~~ civilization before this most important year is gone.

Very truly yours,

36399-1  
JAN 8 1964

Appendix B

A directory of ultra-right organizations linked directly to the John Birch Society through officers or financial supporters of each organization. This directory is prepared by the Council for Civic Responsibility under the chairmanship of Dr. Arthur Larson. Dr. Larson is the former director of the U.S. Information Agency.

### ***Americans for Constitutional Action***

**Program:** A political action group dedicated to electing and re-electing conservative and ultra-conservative members of Congress, formed as a reaction to the Americans for Democratic Action. ACA publishes an index of voting records of Congressmen and Senators, rating them as to degree of conservatism. Local chapters are active in political campaigns.

**What They Say:** "Americans have been running away from their own revolution in order to embrace an armament program saturated with Marxist ideology."

**Birch Links:** Vice Chairman and Secretary, General Bonner Fellers, Birch Endorser. Treasurer, Charles Edison, Member, Editorial Advisory Committee, *American Opinion*, Birch Society Magazine.

### ***America's Future***

**Program:** In addition to the weekly commentary by R. K. Scott broadcast on 365 stations, and the newsletter which draws from the broadcasts, the group publishes pamphlets and books voicing extremist views. It also is the sponsor and financer of "Operation Textbook," a group which evaluates textbooks in use in public schools for their coverage of American society, economy and government.

**What They Say:** The group's secretary, Rosalie M. Gordon, in a book, *Nine Men Against America*, said "... the Supreme Court has struck down practically every bulwark we have raised against the Communist conspiracy in America. . . ."

**Birch Links:** Thomas Anderson, Trustee, member Birch National Council; F. Gano Chance, Trustee, member Birch National Council.

### ***Christian Crusade***

**Program:** This organization was founded and is headed by Rev. Billy James Hargis. In addition to sponsoring daily political-evangelistic programs on 55 radio and 7 television stations, the group publishes a weekly newsletter and pamphlets and brochures.

**What It Says:** In a signed pamphlet titled "No Room in the Inn—Or The U.N." Hargis said: "We slapped Christ in the face at the setting up of the United Nations in San Francisco, in April, 1945, just as surely as the Jews slapped Him on the night of His betrayal 2,000 years ago. We gave in to Communist pressures and agreed to make no mention of Jesus Christ, or God, The Father, in the United Nations Chambers. From the beginning, there has been no room for Him in the U.N. . . ." He also has said: "For 14 years, I thought the 'ism' that was the greatest threat to our nation was Communism. Now, I am convinced it is liberalism. The liberals have the finances and numerical strength the Communists lack; yet their socialistic objectives are much the same . . . To be a real good liberal, you've got to be 100 per cent stupid. . . ."

**Birch Links:** Billy James Hargis, member of Birch Society's Committee of Endorsers.

### ***Christian Freedom Foundation***

**Program:** This group is the vehicle of Howard E. Kershner whose "Commentary on the News" is broad-

cast on approximately 148 radio stations weekly. Kershner is also editor of *Christian Economics*, a fortnightly magazine intertwining religion and economics, and he also writes a weekly syndicated column which goes to about 700 newspapers.

*What It Says:* In a speech at Harding College in 1961, Kershner said: "We are driven to the conclusion that evil men in strategic positions with the aid of their dupes, stooges and fellow-travelers have been able to mold public opinion in our country and shape governmental policy along lines that are hurrying us onward to destruction. In a real sense, the Communists have taken over our country and have greatly influenced our major economic, fiscal, military and foreign policies."

*Birch Links:* The principal financial support for the Christian Freedom Foundation comes from J. Howard Pew, who is a member of the Editorial Advisory Committee of the Birch magazine, *American Opinion*, and is also a stockholder in Robert Welch, Inc.

#### ***Church League of America***

***(also called National Laymen's Council)***

*Program:* Research Section maintains "five tons of files" and "over 850,000 cross-referenced index cards on all organizations and individuals who had aided the cause of subversion." Since 1962, it has sponsored a weekly 15-minute radio program carried on 17 stations in eight states. It conducts a film rental service which distributes such films as "Communism On The Map," which was produced by the National Education Program at Harding College and based on sections of the Birch Society's *Blue Book*.

*What They Say:* "Communism and theological modernism are as one." The Girl Scout Handbook is "un-American."

*Birch Links:* Two members of the Board of Directors, E. L. Wiegand and Mrs. H. Dillon Winship, are on the Birch Society's Committee of Endorsers.

#### ***Citizens Foreign Aid Committee***

*Program:* Publishes weekly newsletter "Facts on Foreign Aid" regularly urging cutback or elimination of aid funds.

*What They Say:* Describes itself as "crusading to kill the foreign aid program."

*Birch Links:* National Director, General Bonner Fellers, Birch Endorser; Vice Chairman, Clarence Manion, Birch National Council; Chairman, J. Bracken Lee, Birch Endorser.

#### ***Conservative Society of America (Courtney Complex)***

*Program:* Publishes the "Independent American" and runs right wing broadcasts on 39 radio stations.

*What They Say:* Get out of the U.N. Eliminate the income tax. Free the government of "infiltration by subversive agents."

*Birch Links:* Board of Directors includes the following Birch Endorsers: Medford Evans, Dan Hanson, E. Merrill Root, Maj. Gen. C. A. Willoughby, George J. Hess, J. Bracken Lee, R. W. Orell.

#### ***Liberty Lobby***

*Program:* "A monthly newsletter of, by and for the American right wing." Also publishes brochures such as "How to Write Your Congressman," by Billy James Hargis.

*What They Say:* Oppose Federal aid to education. Favor repeal of the income tax, and withdrawal from the U.N.

*Birch Links:* Board of Policy includes: Tom Anderson, National Council member; Billy James Hargis; J. Bracken Lee; and E. L. Wiegand, all Birch Endorsers.

#### **Manion Forum**

*Program:* Weekly radio programs on 240 radio stations. Promotes "Conservative Clubs." Now claims over 4,000 such clubs seeking charters from Manion.

*What They Say:* To wage war by television, radio and the printed page against (1) the confiscatory, Marxist income tax; (2) wanton foreign aid squandering; (3) Socialistic "public power"; (4) destruction of states' rights; (5) futile conferences with Kremlin gangsters; (6) ridiculous budgets; (7) Federal aid to education; and (8) unrestrained labor bossism.

*Birch Links:* Clarence Manion, member National Council Birch Society.

#### **National Economic Council**

*Program:* Publishes semi-monthly economic news letter.

*What They Say:* "All branches of American life, especially such unsuspected areas as the Christian churches, have been infiltrated by Communists." On the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court: "Warren has led the job of making the court one of the strongest allies Moscow has in America."

*Birch Links:* President, Mark M. Jones, Birch Endorser; Founder, Merwin K. Hart, deceased, was Birch Endorser; Constance V. Dahl, Executive Vice President, Birch member.

#### **Dan Smoot Report**

*Program:* Publishes weekly report and runs nationwide radio-TV broadcasts on 70 radio stations, and 40 television stations.

*What They Say:* Calls for impeachment of Earl Warren; suggests "that the Cuban invasion fiasco was organized betrayal, planned in Washington and Moscow."

*Birch Links:* Leading financial supporter is D. B. Lewis, a member of the Council of Endorsers of the Birch Society.

#### **We the People**

*Program:* Holds an annual Constitution Day rally (One featured Robert Welch on subject "This is a republic, not a democracy.") Also issues "Home Study Kits."

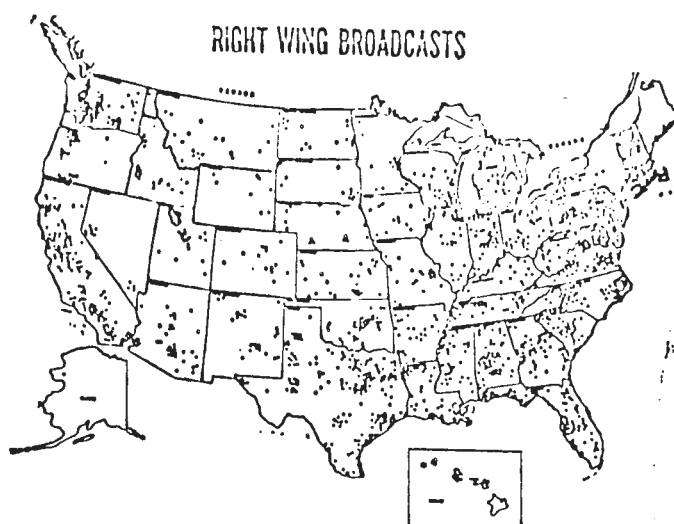
*What They Say:* Wants impeachment of Earl Warren. Investigation of National Education Association. Wants to get out of the United Nations. "You cannot expect the American people to sacrifice to fight the enemy if the President does not act now to clean the enemy out of our State Department."

*Birch Links:* President, Tom Anderson, is on National Council of Birch Society. Board members include: C. W. Pavey, E. Merrill Root, J. Bracken Lee, all Birch Endorsers, and Revilo P. Oliver, member of the Birch Society National Council.

#### **Radical Right Broadcasters**

Nine of the leading Radical Right broadcasters account for over 7,000 programs a week over radio and television stations. The following spot map shows the

location of "only seven key extremist-sponsored radio programs taped and distributed to stations throughout the country. . . ." They are: "Life Lines"; "Dan Smoot Reports"; "Manion Forum"; "Howard Kershner"; "Christian Crusade"; "20th Century Reformation Hour"; and, "America's Future."



Source: National Council for Civic Responsibility, 1964.

The nine leading groups or individuals responsible for over 7,000 programs a week over radio and television include the following, according to the National Council for Civic Responsibility:

*Howard Kershner*

This 15-minute commentary on the news by Kershner is broadcast weekly on 148 stations in 41 states. It is financed by the Christian Freedom Foundation, which is largely supported by J. Howard Pew, oilman, and member of the Editorial Advisory Committee of *American Opinion*, the Birch magazine.

*Manion Forum*

A weekly 30-minute commentary by Clarence Manion, member of the National Council of the John Birch Society, broadcast weekly on 240 radio and 30 television stations.

*Dan Smoot*

A 15-minute weekly commentary by Smoot, broadcast on 70 radio and 40 television stations. Leading sponsor of the program is D. B. Lewis, an Endorser of the John Birch Society.

*America's Future*

A 15-minute commentary by R. K. Scott, broadcast on 365 stations in 48 states sponsored by America's Future, on whose Board of Trustees serves Thomas Anderson and F. Gano Chance, both members of the National Council of the Birch Society.

*Independent American Radio Edition*

A 15-minute weekly program broadcast on 39 stations in 18 states, written by Kent and Phoebe Courtney, whose Conservative Society of America has many Birch Endorsers on its Board of Directors.

*Billy James Hargis*

A 30-minute daily broadcast on 55 radio and 7 television stations, sponsored by Hargis' Christian Crusade. Hargis is an Endorser of the Birch Society.

## Appendix C

Birch sponsored recruitment ad that  
appeared in many U.S. newspapers following  
the assassination of President Kennedy.

### THE TIME HAS COME

The President of the United States has been murdered by a Marxist-Communist within the United States.

It has been pointed out by the Hon. Martin Dies, since the assassination, that "Lee Harvey Oswald was a Communist," and that when a Communist commits murder he is acting under orders. The former Congressman, head of the original Dies Committee, is probably second only to J. Edgar Hoover in first-hand knowledge acquired from early and long experience in investigating Communist activities.

The Hon. J. Edgar Hoover said in a speech on October 18, 1960: "We are at war with the Communists, and the sooner each red-blooded American realizes that the better and safer we will be." He emphatically repeated this statement on December 3, 1963 - ten days after the assassination. And this is none the less war because the Communists conduct it according to their usual methods, without regard to civilized rules or human decency.

Nor is it in character for the Communists to rest on this success. Instead, we can expect them to use the shock, grief, and confusion of the American people, resulting from the assassination of our President, as an opportunity for pushing their own plans faster. Also, we shall be subjected to an ever greater barrage of distortions and falsehoods, aimed at imposing on the nation a completely false picture of the situation and of the forces at work. They have to subvert our minds as well as our institutions.

For five years The John Birch Society has said that, regardless of the external threat, Communism was a serious internal menace in the United States. And we were

right. This has now been proved, tragically but conclusively, to the deep sorrow, but also to the profound alarm, of all good Americans. The time has come for those good Americans to join us in this fight against the powerfully organized "masters of deceit." For, as Edmund Burke once wrote: "When had men combine, the good must associate; else they will fall one by one, an unpitied sacrifice in a contemptible struggle."

The John Birch Society is an *educational* army, and our only weapon is the truth. But George Washington stated our problem well: "Truth will ultimately prevail where there is pains taken to bring it to light." We take tremendous pains in proportion to our numbers and our strength, and all we need to win is that enough other patriots join us in our determination and our labors. For there is nothing the Communists fear so much in the whole world today as having the American people learn, too soon, the truth about their purposes, their methods, and their progress.

If you oppose the Communist conspiracy by learning and spreading the truth, you may expect to be smeared as viciously as we have been for five years. But you will be helping to save your family and your country from the same cruel tyranny that has already been imposed on a billion human beings.

The time has come for every red-blooded American to react as such. If you have the willingness to learn and the courage to support the disturbing truth, use the coupon below. It will be without any obligation on your part, and we shall not contact you further unless or until you request us to do so.

#### THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY Belmont, Massachusetts 02178

Executive Committee: Wm. J. Guede, A. G. Henshaw, Jr., Paul C. Koch, Clarence E. Mason, R. W. Stoddard

The John Birch Society  
Belmont, Massachusetts 02178  
Gentlemen:

- ☐ Please send me, without cost or obligation on my part, a sheet of preliminary information about the Society.
- ☐ For the enclosed one dollar, please send me your **Introductory Packet** of THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY.
- ☐ For the enclosed five dollars please send

me your **Special Packet**, containing the basic materials from which I can obtain a thorough understanding of what The John Birch Society is, how it works, and what it hopes to do.

Sincerely,

(Name) .....  
(Address) .....



Appendix D

## Application For Membership

\_\_\_\_\_, 19

THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY  
Belmont, Massachusetts 02178

Gentlemen:

This is my application for membership in the \_\_\_\_\_  
Chapter of THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY, for one year  
from this date, and for automatic renewal each year  
thereafter, unless I resign in writing. I understand  
the dues schedule printed on the back of this sheet,  
as applicable to myself.

If my application is accepted, I agree that my mem-  
bership may be revoked at anytime, by a duly appointed  
officer of the Society, without the reason being stated,  
on refund of the pro rata part of my dues paid in  
advance.

Sincerely,

(Name) \_\_\_\_\_

(Address) \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dues Received \_\_\_\_\_

Application Approved  
By \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_