

*Robert W. Sellen*

## PATRIOTISM OR PARANOIA?:

### RIGHT - WING EXTREMISM IN AMERICA

"YANKEE GO HOME" is an epithet that has greeted many United States citizens during their travels in other countries. Most have learned to shrug their shoulders and ignore it. Some Yankees, however, have adopted a counter epithet: "World go home." In heated or occasionally scurrilous words they denounce fellow countrymen who, they believe, are members of a conspiracy dedicated to the establishment of a Communist government in Washington. Extremists of left and right are, of course, nothing new in any country. The United States has endured clubs organized in the 1790's to praise the French Revolution, the Ku Klux Klan has often made life hideous for southern Negroes, Huey Long's "share the wealth" movement bemused America in the 1930's, and McCarthyism left its mark on the 1950's. Current extremism, however, avers that the federal government itself is subversive, and America's friends and allies abroad worry about the impact of such ideas upon the political stability of the United States. It therefore seems useful and important to examine the ideas, tactics, and origins of the current crop of "super-patriots."

#### I

Nationwide interest in groups such as the John Birch Society was aroused in the spring of 1961. Newspapers had previously reported extremist activities on a local level, but by April the speeches of Robert Welch, founder and head of the John Birch group, were being published throughout the country. Americans began to wonder about this man who denounced Chief Justice Earl Warren because he thought Warren had "taken the lead in the long, continued effort to convert this republic into a democracy", who advocated the use of "fronts" and of infiltration into established organizations, but who declined to answer questions about his goals and methods.

The most sensational single event in this affair was the making public of parts of Mr. Welch's unpublished manuscript that was unofficially entitled "The Politician." Senator Milton R. Young of North Dakota, known as a conservative Republican, had thirteen pages of the manuscript read into the Congressional Record of March 20, 1961. In this "letter to a friend" Mr. Welch wrote, "In my opinion the chances are very strong that Milton Eisenhower is actually Dwight Eisenhower's superior and boss within the Communist Party. For one thing, he is obviously a great deal smarter." Welch accused Maxwell Rabb, secretary to Eisenhower's cabinet, of using "faithfully and cleverly the exact Communist technique" in helping General Eisenhower to receive the Republican presidential nomination in 1952 instead of the late Senator Robert A. Taft, whom Welch had supported. Welch gave John Foster Dulles his share of attention, saying "I personally believe Dulles to be a communist agent." Furthermore, "Allen Dulles is the most protected and untouchable supporter of communism, next to Eisenhower himself, in Washington." As to Dwight Eisenhower, "I personally think that he has been sympathetic to ultimate Communist aims, realistically willing to use Communist means to help them achieve their goals, knowingly accepting and abiding by Communist orders, and consciously serving the Communist conspiracy, for all his adult life." Finally, "there is only one possible word to describe his purposes and his actions. That word is 'treason'."

By May the John Birch Society was the topic of much discussion, and Welch was persuaded to appear on the television program "Meet the Press." That appearance confirmed his status as a nationally known personality. Since the spring of 1961, Welch and other members of the society have continued to make headlines and to arouse passionate attacks and defence. One of Welch's paid co-ordinators attempted to establish a front organization called the "Freedom Club" on the campus of the University of California at Santa Barbara. Welch's bulletin for July, 1961, called upon members to help "build up and have available for all future research needs, the most complete and accurate files in America on the leading Comsymps, Socialists, and liberals—on those who are trying to change the economic and political structure of this country so that it could be comfortably merged with Soviet Russia in a one-world socialist government." Interviewed in December, 1961, Welch charged that the abortive and American-assisted invasion of Cuba failed on purpose because it "was planned by Castro and his friends in our government to make Castro stronger throughout Latin America" and to kill thousands of Cuban patriots. Welch did confess that his society had not reached its goal of one million members. He refused to divulge how many members there were, but added that his magazine *American Opinion* had nearly 20,000 subscribers.

In April, 1962, Welch told an audience of Kansas City businessmen that the United States government was working with Moscow in a conspiracy to turn the world over to Communism. He added that the only purpose in dropping the two atomic bombs on Japan in 1945 was to help future Communist propaganda against the United States and said that the "Secret Army Organization . . . is composed of the finest people in France." Despite seeing conspirators everywhere, Welch did not respond when J. Walter Yeagley, assistant attorney general in charge of internal security, asked him to give the FBI any evidence he had which would "establish that certain government employees are members of the Communist Party." Perhaps Welch did not reply because he saw the government itself as a tool of Moscow.

Welch founded the John Birch Society in Indianapolis, Indiana, in December, 1958. For two days he talked to a small group of people, later printing his remarks in the society's renowned *Blue Book*. Welch revealed in his speech that he is apparently unable to see any motives for human acts in this century which are not part of a Communist conspiracy. He asserted that American recognition of Russia in 1933 "saved them from financial collapse." This was "the first great break for the Communist conspiracy." He went on to a remark which would surely have startled Adolf Hitler: "Their second break came with the beginning of World War II, which was largely brought on through world-wide diplomatic conniving of Stalin's agents." In more recent years, the Russians did not, according to Welch, intend the famous Sputnik to be part of a space program but only a propaganda stunt to make the United States spend itself into bankruptcy and wild inflation. Welch also insisted that "we should . . . remain constantly . . . aware of the incredible waste of billions of dollars, the socialization of our economy, the centralization of government power, and all of the other Soviet-serving measures being so skilfully promoted by Communist influences within our government, with this completely phony threat of outside war as the excuse."

Besides accusing it of misreading the story of World War II and underestimating Russian power and intentions, Welch finds the world a sinister place for other reasons. He accuses "international socialists" of deliberately trying to overshadow the work of Oswald Spengler with that of "a meretricious hack named Arnold J. Toynbee" and of forcing Toynbee's work upon England and America. Welch adds, "those who are familiar with the way in which Stalin won out in his contest with Trotsky . . . will recognize the similarity of the technique used."

Welch's attitude toward government contributes to his anger. He abhors most domestic programs as socialistic welfarism. America, he believes, had too much vigour at the turn of the century to follow Europe into decay caused by "the can-

cerous disease of collectivism." But Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt and others forced America into contact with Europe, and "the closer our relationship with this parent civilization has become, . . . the sicker and more morbidly diseased has the patient become." The collectivist conspiracy has gone so far that even "the American Medical Association has now been 'took' to the extent that we could not count on any direct help there." Because he considers the threat of war as "phony", Welch is willing to do without most defence programs; they are merely spending America into Communism. Furthermore, while some degree of government is necessary, it is a "non-productive expense" and "frequently evil." Moreover, government "is always and inevitably an enemy of individual freedom", especially of the middle class and especially in its interruption of free enterprise.

Welch is also a man of Protestant fundamentalist outlook, speaking of divine truths revealed in the Bible, denouncing the social gospel as advocacy of the welfare state, and speaking with nostalgia about his Sunday School in a country Baptist church in North Carolina, where he was taught, "with a huge chart on the wall to reinforce the teaching and emphasize its accuracy, that the world was created in 4004 B. C." To this yearning for absolute truth he adds derision of "the folly of the two-sides-to-every-question argument."

Starting as a man looking for specific truths to believe in, Welch adds dramatization of himself. Although he is not a forceful speaker he wishes to be a vigorous leader. His characteristics help to explain the nature of the John Birch Society. He stated at its founding that it would not be a democratic organization, thus remaining impervious to infiltration by the enemy. It was to be under completely authoritarian control at all levels because the members would "believe in me and what I am doing and are willing to accept my leadership anyway." Yet, in best *laissez-faire* tradition, it was to be voluntary, with all members following the "founder" except in matters contrary to their own judgment. Members finding themselves in constant disagreement would be expected to resign.

The John Birch Society is not alone in its frantic efforts. Fred Schwarz, an Australian-born physician, directs the "Christian Anti-Communist Crusade" with headquarters in Long Beach, California. Dr. Schwarz's technique is evangelistic; he visits various cities for a week or so at a time, setting up an "anti-communist school." With respectable sponsors, ranging from churches to United States Senators, he gives lectures, shows films, and sells books. The Crusade's income has at times been handsome: \$214,000 for a week in Los Angeles in 1961, and a rise in gross income from \$48,000 in 1956 to \$1,273,000 in 1961. More recently, income has slumped, Dr. Schwarz stating that the Crusade lost \$75,000 in New York City

operations during the spring and summer of 1962. This announcement brought in \$12,210 in cash and pledges, Dr. Schwarz urging one dinner group to "put their hands deep in their pockets and spend money before the Communists come and take it off them."

Dr. Schwarz's manner is apparently a mixture of London music hall and fundamentalist preacher; his Australian accent and humorous opening remarks are blended with emotionalism which hints that political and religious liberalism may be allied with Communism. A St. Louis newspaperman called the movement "a poor man's John Birch Society", and Dr. Schwarz has used a film, "Communism on the Map", which was prepared by a member of Welch's group. The danger of Dr. Schwarz's crusade lies only partly in his frightening of Americans by claiming that "the Communists had set 1973 as the date for their American take-over." There is also danger in his use of impressive sponsors in his proselytizing; among those who have taken part in or praised the Schwarz Crusade are the publisher of *Life*, Senator Thomas J. Dodd of Connecticut, Congressman Walter Judd of Minnesota, and motion-picture stars John Wayne and James Stewart.

There is also a group called the "Minutemen", presumably after the Yankee farmers who helped to begin the War of the American Revolution in 1775. It was founded in the summer of 1960 by Robert DePugh, operator of a pharmaceutical firm in Norborne, Missouri, a small town about fifty miles east of Kansas City. DePugh moved his business and home from a Kansas City suburb because he feared being eradicated in a nuclear attack. Since that time, pictures of Minutemen with weapons, crawling about the countryside on manoeuvres, and other publicity have given rise to rumours of immense guerilla bands planning even assassinations of such people, for example, as Governor Edmund G. Brown of California. Charges of sexual perversion among some leaders gave added spice to news stories.

The Minutemen appear to be few in number and scattered throughout the nation in loosely organized groups. According to DePugh's own membership material, there is a national headquarters in Missouri, but the basic organization is in squads of six to fifteen members, with the location and membership lists "kept in separate sealed envelopes near the Minuteman headquarters". Thus, "it will be almost impossible for an enemy to hunt us all out by following contacts from one squad to another". DePugh said in an interview that his records had been treated to be self-destructive if they fall into enemy hands, being "in a nitrogen filled metal cabinet" so that they would burst into flames on contact with the air. New members join established squads for a time and are then to form new squads of their own. The national headquarters helps with material on guerilla warfare and

has offered for sale various kinds of military equipment. One list offered eleven-bladed pocket knives at \$2.25, pistols at \$21.50 to \$130.00, and seventy-five millimeter recoilless rifles at \$150 each.

These are the objectives of the Minutemen:

. . . to prepare the means of personal defense and survival in case of enemy attack; to resist and expose the spread of communist influence and propaganda within our own national boundaries; to investigate by means of our own secret memberships the possible infiltration of communist sympathizers into American organizations of government, business, labor, religion, and education; to detect and expose waste, corruption, or disloyalty in an American enterprise or activity that might subvert the defense effort; to promote the use of firearms among the population; to form in advance of actual need a secret underground organization equipped to spy upon, harass and destroy troops of any foreign power that might occupy United States territory; to extend the organization abroad, if possible; and to remain entirely free of government subsidies or control.

DePugh himself has said, "If the time ever comes when the people feel their government no longer represents them as a true constitutional form of government, then I look for open rebellion; it's almost inevitable." He added, "Our organization is pledged to conduct itself in a completely lawful manner up to that point. If the time ever comes that we are commanded to turn in our legally-owned weapons, we pledge to ignore that demand and hide them so they can't be found and seized."

The Minutemen have not been given a warm welcome by other right-wing groups; one member of the John Birch Society remarked, "I think these people are idiots. There are a lot better ways of doing things". Later Minutemen bulletins, becoming somewhat hysterical, tended to substantiate that statement. A bulletin of July 8, 1962, marked "urgent" and "confidential" began in this way:

Dear Fellow Patriot: Our organization has advance notice of an event of utmost importance which will take place in possibly thirty to sixty days.

It will mean one of two things: (1) A start on the road back to patriotism, freedom and victory over the international communist conspiracy or, (2) A virtual collapse of the pro-American movement with greatly accelerated curtailment of individual liberties.

Attached to the bulletin was a questionnaire which asked if the recipient would be willing "to organize a meeting of loyal Americans" in his area and inquiring how many loyal Americans he knew personally who would attend such a meeting. The object was apparently to call meetings throughout the nation at the time of the "event of utmost importance."

The bulletin of August 3, 1962, reminded members of this coming event and

continued with material on guerilla warfare, combat techniques at night, and the use of automatic weapons. A plea for funds was mailed during the summer of 1962, beginning ominously: "The United States government is now in the process of surrendering this nation to the forces of international communism." One might infer from this that DePugh considers the time at hand when "the people feel their government no longer represents them." In the meantime, thirty and then sixty days and a still longer period passed without noticeable catastrophe.

Other organizations have sprung up in recent years in an attempt to achieve similar goals, and some established groups have either been infiltrated by extremists or have willingly surrendered to them. Young Americans for Freedom, presumably a youth group but with older sponsors including Senator Barry Goldwater, proposed at one time to question all members of the departments of Economics and Political Science in the University of Kansas, seeking "concrete data on which to judge the professors' political leanings". When Dr. Fred Schwarz spoke in New York City in April, 1962, an organization calling itself The National Renaissance Party took advantage of the occasion to distribute handbills charging that "phony Jewish conservatives" in the Schwarz crusade were trying to undermine the efforts of "such Gentile patriots" as Robert Welch. A "Project Alert" meeting in Los Angeles in December, 1961, designed to awaken America to Communist threats, suffered a setback when a retired Marine Corps colonel said that Chief Justice Warren should not be impeached for his leftist activity but should be hanged instead. Further confusion came to a meeting in Miami Beach, Florida, which distributed stickers bearing labels such as "Join the American Revolution—Freedom Forever Under God." A puzzled participant asked if it were not a mistake to use the word "revolution" in a patriotic meeting, but the chairman assured him that the words "Under God" provided a safeguard for the proper meaning.

White Citizens' Councils, formed in many parts of the South to preserve racial segregation, divulged in November, 1961, that several communities were assembling "Minutemen" groups to resist integration forcibly. The continued presence of white supremacist segregationists was shown in an "anti-communist leadership school" in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in January, 1962, when R. Carter Pittman, a Georgia lawyer, presented over fifty pages of what he described as "the massive evidence of Negro-White differences that demand segregation." He asserted that there was a communist conspiracy working to integrate American schools, but that "the Caucasian race is many thousands of years ahead of the Negro race in the scale of civilization, and white children are several school years ahead of black children in educability".

The Reverend Mr. Billy James Hargis, director of that "leadership school",

later sought to blend some seventy right-wing and other groups into one "grass roots movement", apparently trying to produce agreement among the Daughters of the American Revolution, the American Legion, Young Americans for Freedom, the National Indignation Committee, We the People, the John Birch Society, the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, the Right-to-Work National Committee, the Foreign Aid Committee, For America, the American Free Enterprise Association, and the American Society of Physicians and Surgeons.

The possibility of making such diverse groups work together remains to be seen. However, some organizations have embraced extremism for purposes of their own, and have in some cases formed interesting connections. One is the American Farm Bureau, dominated by conservative farmers. It has begun urging members to send their children to, for example, a "high school citizenship seminar" at Oklahoma Christian College in Oklahoma City during the summer of 1962. George Benson, Chancellor of the college, is also President of Harding College and of the National Education Program of Searcy, Arkansas. The latter organization sponsored the film "Communism on the Map", written from John Birch Society materials by "an ardent member of the John Birch Society". The quoted words are those of Robert Welch.

At a time when the French *Organisation Armée Secrète* was repelling most civilized people by its terrorist tactics and obstinate attitude, some American military men began, apparently, to regard themselves as personal saviours of the United States in *OAS* fashion. The most famous case was that of Major General Edwin A. Walker, relieved of his command in Germany in the spring of 1962 for allegedly attempting to indoctrinate his troops with John Birch Society material. In June, 1961, Senator J. William Fulbright of Arkansas sent a memorandum to the President and to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, citing instances of military officers taking part in "schools" ostensibly concerned with communism but actually attacking "welfare state" aspects of the government's domestic policy. As a result the Department of Defense issued a directive providing policy guidance for military men speaking to public meetings.

General Walker came to represent this larger issue of how far prominent officers should be permitted to go in expressing anti-Communist measures. A number of people rallied to Walker's defence. Kent and Phoebe Courtney, of the Conservative Society of America, published a little book in which they stated that America is in danger of becoming "a totalitarian democracy" in which "no officer can expect promotion to leadership rank in the armed forces unless he is willing to be brainwashed . . . by extreme left-wingers who would indoctrinate him in the theories



of appeasement of socialism-communism". Several Congressmen expressed sympathy for the general, but Senator J. Strom Thurmond of South Carolina went farthest of all, declaring in one speech that American military leaders had been muzzled on orders "direct from Moscow." Newspaper reports added, tersely, that "Thurmond . . . did not cite the source of his information".

The Department of Defense later released the reasons for its recall and reprimand of General Walker; an investigation took almost a thousand pages of testimony from forty witnesses and placed over two hundred exhibits in evidence. General Walker had made inflammatory statements about American political leaders and had tried to influence the voting behaviour of his troops and their families in the 1960 election. Walker's divisional newspaper, the *Taroleaf*, had urged votes for members of Congress on the basis of an appraisal of voting records by Americans for Congressional Action, a conservative group which rated Senator John F. Kennedy's quality as eleven per cent and that of Senator Barry Goldwater at ninety per cent. In the midst of this controversy General Walker announced his resignation, not retirement, from the Army. He said that he would give up his retirement pay to be free as a civilian to fight Communist infiltration. He then began making speeches, declaring that he "could no longer serve in uniform and be a collaborator with the release of United States sovereignty to the United Nations." On February 2, 1962, he filed as a Democratic Party candidate in the primary election for governor of Texas, flying in the face of conservative friends' advice not to run because his candidacy would draw funds which were needed by regular conservative candidates. Furthermore, his speeches alienated many elements of his potential constituency; he denounced most of the press, radio, and television as un-American and attacked not only President Kennedy but also former Presidents Truman and Eisenhower for having "cost us our sovereignty and our society". A veteran Washington reporter remarked at that time, "He might be trouble, but he won't be. By the grace of God, he is the worst speaker in the United States".

Stirred by General Walker's case, in addition to Senator Thurmond's accusations that military patriots were being "muzzled", a Senate armed services subcommittee, headed by John Stennis of Mississippi, offered Walker a platform from which to spread his views. The committee proceeded judiciously during the late winter and spring of 1962, Senator Stennis holding that while it was proper for officers to alert their troops to dangers it was improper for them to attempt to influence political views or behaviour. General Walker appeared in April and was questioned gently. He attempted, unsuccessfully, to convince the committee that he was "a scapegoat of an unwritten policy of collaboration and collusion with the

international Communist conspiracy." He added later that "the real control apparatus will not tolerate militant anti-Communist leadership by a division commander". Asked to identify the mysterious "control apparatus", General Walker admitted that he could not name its directors, but asserted that Secretary of State Dean Rusk and White House aide W. W. Rostow were followers of the "soft-on-communism line." Walker declared that others who had been framed, as he said he had been, for being anti-Communist were General Douglas MacArthur, Syngman Rhee, Moise Tshombe, and the late Senator Joseph R. McCarthy of Wisconsin. Apparently, the framing was done by the "control apparatus" which Walker said works through the United Nations. Walker added that the U.N. "is the nearest thing to the tower of Babel that's ever been built".

Not only did General Walker's appearance before the Senate subcommittee fail to win him national acclaim, but he made a poor showing in the subsequent Democratic Party primary election in Texas. Running sixth in a field of six candidates, he polled 138,000 votes of 1,449,000 cast, or only nine and one half per cent. His political career could not end for it had never begun, and his later public appearances were made amid the indignities of race riots and court orders that he be tested psychologically.

## II

The tactics used by right-wing extremists appear to fit their cast of mind. They begin with a certain degree of persecution complex, as seen in a 1959 report by the American Bar Association's "special committee on communist tactics, strategy and objectives". This report's foreword said, in part, that "it is now an established fact that every institution, every force, and every person actively engaged in the forefront of the defense of our country against the rising menace of communism becomes the target of attack and vilification by Communists, Crypto-Communists, fellow-travellers, their stooges, and innocent but beguiled persons". Almost an echo of this came to the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee two and a half years later when Edward Hunter, a writer and lecturer from Port Washington, New York, stated that the Soviet Union had ordered a "frontal attack" on the anti-Communist movement in the United States and made use of agents who infiltrated the White House itself to gain information and influence. Hunter furnished no details.

Such remarks are attempts to discredit in advance opposition to extremism and to gain control of the audience. A second step is the setting up of special "schools" or the insertion of "anti-communist" material into public school and other programs. A number of states have prescribed teaching about Communism, and

Louisiana actually included in the required curriculum the famous film "Communism on the Map." This is probably the most famous piece of "right-wing" propaganda, with the possible exception of Robert Welch's writings from which much of the film was derived. As such, it is an excellent example of the kind of material to which some people expose themselves and others. The film opens with the Russian Revolution, erroneously placed in Moscow, and continues by repeating the Welch line that American recognition saved Soviet Russia from collapse. In the midst of denunciations of World War II diplomacy as a series of "give-aways", the film's narration equates Communism and progressivism. It asserts that "at present the President of Mexico is apparently not a communist", and, ignoring airlifts, says that the Berlin situation proves that America cringes at Communist threats. The film proceeds to catalogue the nations of the world, explaining that almost every one is either already Communist or ready to fall. Socialist parties in western Europe are branded as Communists, although Harold Macmillan and his fellow Tories somehow escape notice. Even Ireland is said to be deep in collectivism. Nehru is denounced as a Marxist who "denies a spiritual god", Iraq and Afghanistan turn up as Communist satellites, Arab nationalism and the revolutions in Africa are described as Communist-manufactured, and Communists are said to control every phase of life in Canada as well as legislation in the United States Congress. Even Spain has its fifth column, and one's final impression is that only Formosa, Portugal, and South Korea are safe.

Pamphlets also produced at the Harding College centre have been used, voluntarily, in the Kansas City, Kansas, schools, and some Boy Scout leaders have used "Communism on the Map" in training courses. Fred Schwarz's crusade found its way on to television in California, sponsored by the Schick Safety Razor Corporation and the Technicolor Corporation.

Occasionally, something more spectacular has developed. In December, 1961, Senator Thurmond spoke in famed Little Rock, Arkansas, announcing that the State Department was preparing to turn American nuclear weapons over to the United Nations and that a drive to "degrade the military" had been in progress since the Russian government decided that anti-Communism was becoming too strong in the United States. Two months later, bombs damaged the houses of a Lutheran pastor and a Unitarian minister in the San Fernando Valley suburbs of Los Angeles. Both clergymen were speaking at panel discussions on right-wing activity. Fortunately, such examples of OAS direct action remained rare.

Extremists, however, made so many wild remarks, attempted so often to sway public opinion, and finally began to do so much damage to regular party

finances that leaders of both political parties and men of both liberal and conservative views were moved to speak against them. A non-partisan attack came from J. Edgar Hoover, the renowned chief of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and a man with enormous prestige among conservatives. Hoover prepared a pamphlet for the Senate Judiciary Committee condemning those who would attack reform by calling it Communist, and published a similar statement in the American Bar Association's *Journal*. Perhaps as a result, not even the FBI has been spared; retired Admiral John Crommelin has likened it to "communist-Jewish secret police".

One might have expected the reaction of former President Harry Truman, who branded the extreme right as "a vocal minority who crave headlines and foster hate . . . the sick among us". The Republican Party also reacted unfavorably to rightists, many of whom claimed membership in that party's conservative wing. Former Vice-President Nixon was among the first publicly to oppose the John Birch Society, writing a letter to the *Los Angeles Times* in March, 1961. By the autumn of 1961 the party began to feel a financial squeeze as right-wing candidates and movements took campaign funds away from regular party activity. Nixon himself felt the pinch during his primary election battle in California in 1962. Former President Eisenhower expressed his opposition to extremism in a letter to the Senate subcommittee which later heard General Walker's testimony. The Republican Central Committee in the state of Michigan condemned the John Birch Society by name, and Senator Barry Goldwater remarked that conservatives must "beat off the idiots that are always attracted to a movement in its beginnings". Goldwater said that there were many fine people in the John Birch Society but that he objected to its "intemperate and unwise" leader. In the midst of charges and counter-charges, the American Bar Association, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the American Legion took positions against extremist name-calling. The Legion, normally regarded as militantly conservative, presented its distinguished service medal to President Kennedy, the Legion's national commander stating that the President "has dedicated himself aggressively to rally the forces of freedom." Cheers and applause came from the legionnaires for Kennedy, who had earlier denounced right-wing extremism in vigorous language. Clearly, a distinction had to be drawn between normal and abnormal conservatism or anti-Communism.

### III

How, finally, can one explain abnormal conservatism, the phenomenon of right-wing extremism? On one level, and in many participants, there is either a reaction against American "liberalism" or a devotion to Protestant fundamentalism;

often there is a mixture of both. "Liberalism" and "democracy" appear to be the *bêtes noires* of arch-conservatives. Eugene C. Pulliam, a newspaper publisher of Indiana and Arizona, made this declaration in a long speech in November, 1958:

. . . this government of ours is a representative republic. It is not a democracy. Throughout the ages democracies have drifted into some form of socialist state or become outright dictatorships, and democracies . . . like socialist states, have never succeeded, never in the history of the world. They have never succeeded in doing anything except to bring people into misery and regimented existence.

Furthermore, "let the Supreme Court go unhampered and we will have a complete bureaucratic dictatorship in this country". M. Stanton Evans, one of Pulliam's editors, recently published a book entitled *Revolt on the Campus*, describing "a conservative revolt directed against the liberal establishment" in American colleges.

Another vigorous opponent of current trends is Eddie Rickenbacker, World War I air corps ace and chairman of the board of directors of Eastern Airlines. At a meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in February, 1962, Rickenbacker called for the United States to repeal the Federal income tax, leave the United Nations, abandon foreign aid, sell government corporations to private enterprise, and restore "states' rights"—all this as a start in fighting Communism. A small radical newsletter, *Life Lines*, published at the same address as the conservative weekly, *Human Events*, has even attempted to denounce all reform movements as playing into Communist hands:

There probably is no significant section of the American public . . . whose interests have not seemed to coincide, on occasion, with one or more of the immediate demands of the Mistaken forces.

This is a danger to guard against. In itself, any one of the immediate demands proposed by the Communist Party may be entirely legitimate, or even popular, in nature, representing the desire for a limited and specific reform within the framework of our present system of government. Quite often, these demands do not originate with the Communists at all, but in completely non-Communist quarters. The Communists love to make us their dupes.

A widely held attitude among conservatives is that liberalism equals relativism, both being insidious. Patrick Riley expressed this view in the *American Mercury*:

Liberalism preaches that as the times change so do the concepts of morality. Since the liberal has no fixed standards he is willing to embrace Communism and Socialism. He has no reason to find anything intrinsically wrong about Godless Communism . . . .

The philosophy of the liberal is summed up in Edward Hunter's *Brainwashing*. Hunter asked a young returning POW, who had been victimized by brainwashing,

“What else is maturity if it is not the time when a man has reached basic conclusions on right and wrong conduct?”

The young man replied, “How can a person maintain liberal principles if he closes his mind on anything?”. This is the insidious germ that has been spread for 25 years by liberal professors.

People who express such viewpoints are apparently incapable of open minds on any topic, and apparently equally incapable of understanding a genuine philosophy of freedom. They are, as one might expect, intimately connected with Protestant fundamentalism, which is still fighting a rear-guard action against major Protestant denominations, Judaism, and much of Catholicism. Fundamentalism has been defined in terms of both doctrines and morality. Its doctrines generally include the virgin birth of Jesus, the infallible accuracy of the Bible in the King James version (often referred to by the devout but unlettered as the “Saint James” version), the resurrection of the physical bodies of Jesus and the saints, and the literal acceptance of Christ’s miracles. In morality, there is often strong condemnation of worldly pleasures, which are seen as vices, and include the use of alcohol and tobacco, playing cards, dancing, or even attendance at motion pictures and the theatre.

Fundamentalists have denounced the Revised Standard Version of the Bible as Communist-inspired and blasphemous. Gerald Winrod’s *Defender Magazine* did so, adding that “True believers have no choice but to reject it, and try to keep others from being ensnared by what Peter would call its ‘damnable doctrine.’” The same issue of the magazine indicated the connection between rightist extremism and fundamentalism by including a denunciation of democracy which gave as an evil example only revolutionary France (mistakenly dating the first republic 1789-1799), and saying:

A Democracy has never succeeded, except in small, enlightened, religious communities, because it tends eventually to leave out God . . . . If Man takes the place of God the State comes to chaos. If the State takes the place of God the State becomes master, Man becomes a slave or brute.

Another example of this connection was Homer H. Hyde, who as an Air Force civilian employee wrote a training manual which proclaimed Communist infiltration into major Protestant denominations. Hyde was a member of the Grace Baptist Temple of San Antonio, Texas, and drew material from Billy James Hargis, Circuit Riders, and similar right-wing sources. More recently, Kansas newspapers printed a letter entitled “Here’s How A Rightist Stands”. The letter reads, in part:

I do not think the Federal and State income tax is constitutional. I do not believe in big government and little people or in a giant Welfare State. I am for

stricter immigration laws. I believe in States' rights . . . . I am against excessive foreign aid . . . . I am against Urban Renewal as a Communist device . . . . We are in favor of capital punishment. We are opposed to inter-racial marriages. Anyone taking the fifth amendment is unfit for a position with the government, any armed forces, defense work, or school teaching. Communists are infiltrated in our every walk of life . . . . We believe in the fundamental principles of religion as set forth by the King James version of the Bible . . . . We have no use for the Council of Churches or the Revised Standard version of the Bible . . . . Repeal of the Prohibition law and recognizing the Soviet Republic was wrong.

An interesting and possibly significant sidelight in this matter is the fact that John Birch, whose name now symbolizes rightist extremism, was a violent fundamentalist. As a student at Mercer University, Georgia, in 1939, he attempted to secure the dismissal of five faculty members, charging that they taught heretical doctrines. Later, as an alumnus, he listed his campaign against "modern" teachings as one of his accomplishments while a student.

Evangelism plays a large role in right-wing circles. One observer found Fred Schwarz's methods "reminiscent of evangelists and patent-medicine salesmen, rousing their audiences to an awareness first of the horrors of 'satanic communism' and finally showing the way to salvation". Another "Christian Crusade" is run by Billy James Hargis of Tulsa, whose organization took in almost one million dollars during 1961. This portly evangelist detects the presence of Communists in many places and carries a message of terror to his listeners. The conspiracy he reveals consists of actual Communists and "liberals, welfare-staters, do-gooders and one-worlders who serve the communist cause". These people, he says, are found among the clergy, in Congress, in the Pentagon, in the press, and in the great foundations. They have smeared or muzzled such patriots as Robert Welch and Edwin Walker, and spread false ideas such as the brotherhood of man. Mr. Hargis puts his view simply: "My crusade cannot fail. It is of God".

Obviously, some of the money which is contributed to right-wing organizations and their propaganda efforts is given by men with selfish motives. Many wealthy people would enjoy paying less or nothing in income tax, and a number of them are also religious conservatives. This desire to escape taxation helps to explain their obsession with finding internal enemies, who can be combatted much more cheaply than Soviet Russia. Postures of anti-liberalism or fundamentalism, or even cupidity, are not sufficient, however, to explain all such extremism. One can discern certain characteristics common to many such groups and individuals of the far right: misunderstanding of the world around us, frustration, fear, and feelings of persecution.

Fundamentalism, which is often one component of right-wing thought or feelings, appears to flourish most vigorously among people of lower economic levels and of less education who live in small towns and rural areas. Such people are in less direct contact with good sources of information about foreign affairs and other matters which agitate Robert Welch and his kind. The spokesman for the John Birch Society in Fairfield County, Connecticut, attracted attention by distributing automobile stickers saying "This is a republic, not a democracy. Let's keep it that way". He remarked, "I am not a bright man. I only had eight years of schooling. But I love my country and I don't want it to go down the drain to liberalism, socialism or communism. I'm a conservative Democrat". Other "conservative Democrats" support right-wing and racist politicians in the South. The problem of education, it should be noted, does not end with those leaving school after eight years. One survey of 1957, corroborated since in many colleges, indicated that at least two thirds of American college students are ignorant of constitutional rights under United States law and that many of them would deny to others the protection of these rights, such as public trial or the right to face one's accuser. Similar ignorance and repressive attitudes were found among public school teachers.

It is no wonder, therefore, that odd ideas are often accepted at face value. Katanga, certainly a complex portion of a complex Congo situation, has been described in *Christian Economics* as inhabited by "a peaceful, orderly people governed by a regime that had proved itself the most pro-Western and anti-Communist within any of the new nations. . . ."

Walter Lippman has described the radical right bluntly:

They are against the consequences of modern science and technology which have brought into being a concentration of masses of people in cities, masses of people uprooted from their ancestral ways of life. These radical reactionaries are against the welfare state which provides these urban masses with some of that personal security which their ancestors in the country made in their communities. And they are against the regulation of this enormously complex economy, though without regulation it would churn itself up into crisis and chaos.

The reactionary radicals, who would like to repeal the 20th century, are, so they tell us, violently opposed to communism. But communism also belongs to the 20th century and these reactionary radicals do not understand it and do not know how to resist it.

Thus they do not want the alliances with which we have contained communism in Europe at the armistice lines of World War II. They are against foreign aid which is used to help new countries and weak countries help themselves without succumbing to communism. They despise the United Nations which has so much to do in opening up for the new and inexperienced countries the road to freedom.



An important ingredient of radical reaction is ignorance, with resulting misapprehension of the world and what America can do in it. There is the naïve expectation of easy solutions to all problems, in addition to frustration at the course of events during the past sixty years. Eugene C. Pullman expressed it thus:

At a time when we should be making magnificent progress in mankind's struggle toward a real civilization . . . what do we find? We find an uncertain and chaotic world, wherein every country is filled with doubts of herself and fears of her neighbors and without faith in anything. In short, most of the world is in a frightful mess. . . . What happened? How did the world get such a headache and such a heartache?

All over the world the 20th century version of socialism—no matter what hifalutin name it takes—has planted its virus in the bloodstream of the human race, leaving us wishy-washy, weak-kneed and groggy, spiritually, morally and financially.

William F. Buckley, Jr., echoes the plaint: "During this century we have fought two great wars, and a few dozen smaller ones. For our pains, we have a world far worse off than ever it was before. Why?" *Lifelines* adds its voice in complaining that we spent billions of dollars to defeat Hitler "so that Communist Russia could be rewarded with the factories, machines and craftsmen of East Germany". These people are apparently unaware of the sad fact that such distressing problems have always existed; only America's vivid awareness of them is new.

To ignorance, frustration, and bewilderment is added fear. One sees fear in the ravings of those who cry, "Fluoridation is used by dictators to immobilize the people's will and ability to think". Fluoridation was discovered because fluorides exist naturally in many water sources and can be added to water to retard tooth decay, but some people view it as a sinister plot. There is fear in those who charge that "mental hygiene is a subtle and diabolical plan of the enemy to turn a free people into a cringing horde of zombies. Fight Communist world government by destroying the unholy three." The "unholy three" turn out to be fluoridated water, mental hygiene, and polio vaccine. There was fear in the night watchman, an American Legion "Americanism Chairman", who supplied the films "Communism on the Map" and "Operation Abolition" to many meetings and said of an opponent of the films, "He may be a fellow traveller. But he may be deeper than that or he wouldn't oppose 'Operation Abolition'."

Such fear led one Arkansas newspaper to say that the John Birch Society "resembles nothing so much as one of those sects which have from time to time taken to the basement and sealed up the cracks around the door in the conviction that the world would end at 5:27 a.m. a week from Thursday". Perhaps there is a clue to

the origins of this fear not only in the misunderstanding of today's world but also in the reading material of many rightists. One finds after reading for several hours in their writings that he is losing touch with reality and needs to get out into the sunshine to come back to a normal existence. Many rightists steep themselves in two types of reading: Communist propaganda, which they believe will help them to understand the enemy, and their own kind of propaganda. Neither source is balanced, and a daily diet of such material must lend itself to depression, anxiety, and a sense of unreality.

This possible sense of unreality may be expressed in another rightist syndrome, the persecution complex which may or may not go as far as actual paranoid symptoms. In a mild form this feeling is present in many conservatives who complain that they are not accepted by the "liberal establishment." The feeling is more obvious in the testimony of Edward Hunter, professed expert on brainwashing, before Senator Norris Cotton and staff members of a Senate subcommittee, July 11, 1961. Hunter declared that a Kremlin-inspired campaign was fighting the anti-communist movements of Fred Schwarz and the John Birch Society. He labelled Cabell Phillips as "the New York Times axe-man" in this campaign, and felt that the banning of "Communism on the Map" from military posts was a "tremendous step" in favor of Russia. He said that his own book on brainwashing was given a "hush-hush" reception, indicating the growth of a Communist conspiracy in America. Actually, his book had been well received by so-called "liberal" journals.

Robert DePugh, of the "Minutemen", is so fearful as to be almost obsessed with security. His protection of membership rosters and other papers has already been described. By the autumn of 1962 he was even avoiding the use of his own name, signing bulletins as "Five Hundred and Fifty One". Perhaps Attorney General Stanley Mosk of California was correct in his analysis of the Birchers:

For the paranoid, life is a nightmare. Only he can see *The Enemy*. Only he understands the nature of *The Peril*. The more he acts upon his systematized delusions, the more he is cast out by his fellow man for his oddness. This only serves to feed his dark suspicions and moves him to ever more bizarre beliefs.

Inevitably, people labouring under the several burdens of ignorance, frustration, fear, and feelings of persecution seek to simplify their problems and achieve simple solutions. Inevitably, the rightists see all problems as springing from the Communist conspiracy led abroad by Nikita Khrushchev and at home by the Eisenhowers and Earl Warren. The simple solution is well illustrated by a remark to President Kennedy by E. M. Dealey, publisher of the *Dallas Morning Herald*.

Dealey said, "We need a man on horseback to lead this nation and many people . . . think that you are riding Caroline's tricycle". Kennedy's reply, in a Los Angeles speech, was to criticize those unwilling to face danger from abroad because they were obsessed with danger from within: "They look suspiciously at their neighbors, their leaders; they call for a man on horseback because they do not trust the people."

As Alan Barth has noted, the rightists do distrust the people, but "the people" always means someone else. They never regard themselves as susceptible to Communist subversion or to error. Perhaps Bertram Wolfe's analysis of Communism itself applies to the rightists as well:

The whole dynamics of dictatorship calls for a personal dictator: authoritarianism for an authority; infallible doctrine for an infallible applier and interpreter; . . . and "messianic" powers for a "charismatic" symbol or tenant of authority.

Here, finally, is security. It may be that a great deal of Erich Fromm's classic description of man's "escape from freedom" applies to rightist extremism. A survey by Herbert McClosky of the University of Minnesota indicated that extreme conservatives did often possess the characteristics of less education, less awareness of the social process, bewilderment, pessimism, guilt, rigidity, obsessive traits, and a lack of self-confidence. The study was rightly attacked because the people surveyed might not have shared the surveyor's definition of conservatism. However, one wonders if mere coincidence is responsible for the presence in many contemporary right-wing movements of many of the characteristics identified by McClosky.

One can see the origins of rightist ideas in fundamentalism, in those who oppose "big government", and in all the fears and frustrations of involvement in a continuing cold war. One probably should add the warning that liberals share some portion of responsibility in having failed to lead Americans to a reasonable awareness of the dangers and problems of the cold war. Perhaps a more serious indictment can be found in the fact that the American intellectual community has been talking to itself for years. It has learned a great deal about the physical universe and man's past, but has failed to spread this knowledge to the public or even to secondary school teachers.

The answer to rightist paranoia and propaganda must be, first, the explanation of reality. Nathan Glazer pointed to this in analyzing American communism:

In America even the most oppressed and the most miserable could see that the normal processes of American democracy, operating in this huge and wealthy land, could give them more than the Communists ever could. Self interest, which according

to the Communists' own theory should be the spur that brings the masses to them, operated here to drive them away.

Secondly, men must give up their fears of freedom and their neurotic reactions to problems and responsibility. Carl Rogers, the renowned psychologist, puts it this way:

It is my conviction that rigidity and constriction are the surest road to world catastrophe, and that one of the major hopes for the future is that, through education, we may utilize our knowledge to develop flexible, adaptive, creative individuals who are in the process of learning to be free.

Let these words be, hopefully, the epitaph of extremism of both left and right.

#### NOTES

[Because of the number of major and minor sources used for this article, and as a guide to further reading, the following bibliographical list is supplied by the author instead of the usual footnotes.]

##### I. PRIMARY SOURCES

*American Opinion*, February, 1962.

James Burnham, "Tangle in Katanga", *Christian Economics*, February 6, 1962.

John E. Connally, "Tabulated Statement Showing Votes Cast for Governor, First Democratic Primary Election, May 5, 1962, by Counties." Texas State Democratic Executive Committee, 1962.

Robert DePugh, *History and Organization of the "Minutemen"*. Norborne, Missouri: Robert DePugh, n.d.

———, *Join the Minutemen*.

———, *Letter to Members*. February 12, 1962; June, 1962; July, 1962; July 8, 1962; August 3, 1962.

———, *Supplies and Equipment List*. February, 1962.

———, *Surrender*.

M. Stanton Evans, *Revolt on the Campus*. Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1961.

Jerzy Hauptmann, "Conservatism Grows on Campus", *Kansas City Star*. November 18, 1961.

"Here's How A Rightist Stands," *Lawrence Outlook*. November 2, 1961.

J. Edgar Hoover, *The Communist Party Line*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1961.

*The John Birch Society Bulletin*. April, 1961; July 1961; January, 1962.

*The Johnson County Courier*; August 24, 1961.

*The Kansas Farm Bureau News*; April, 1962.

*Lifelines*. November 24, 1961; January 26, 1962.

Charles B. McFarland, "Republic and Democracy", *The Defender Magazine*. November, 1952, pp. 22-23.

"The New Unholy Bible", *The Defender Magazine*. November, 1952, pp. 9-10.

Patrick Riley, "Conservatism on the Campus", *American Mercury*; April, 1957; pp. 41-42.

*The American Bar Association Speaks*. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1959.

United States Congress, Senate, *Hearings Before the Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and other Internal Security Laws of the Committee on the Judiciary, July 11, 1961*. Washington, 1961.

United States Congress, 87th Congress, 1st session, *The Congressional Record, Senate*. Vol. 107, part 4, pp. 4268-4279.

Robert Welch, *The Blue Book of the John Birch Society*. Belmont, Massachusetts: [The John Birch Society], 1961.

## II. SECONDARY SOURCES

### A. BOOKS

Nathan Glazer, *The Social Basis of American Communism*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1961.

Gene Grove, *Inside the John Birch Society*. Greenwich, Connecticut: Gold Medal Books, 1961.

Ralph Lord Roy, *Apostles of Discord*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1953.

Richard Vahan, *The Truth About the John Birch Society*. New York: Macfadden Books, 1962.

Bertram D. Wolfe, *Communist Totalitarianism: Keys to the Soviet System*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1961.

### B. MAGAZINES

George Barrett, "Close-Up of the Birchers' Founder", *New York Times Magazine*; May 14, 1961.

"Communications", *The American Political Science Review*; LII, 506-510 (June, 1958).

"The First Shall be First", *The Reporter*; April 13, 1961.

Thomas R. Ford, "Status, Residence, and Fundamentalist Religious Beliefs in the Southern Appalachians", *Social Forces*; XXXIX, 43 (October, 1960).

Philip Horton, "Revivalism on the Far Right", *The Reporter*; July 20, 1961.

"Let Freedom Ring", *Time*; September 9, 1957, p. 56.

Herbert McClosky, "Conservatism and Personality", *The American Political Science Review*; LII, 27-45 (March, 1958).

Harold H. Martin, "Doomsday Merchant on the Far, Far Right", *The Saturday Evening Post*; April 28, 1962, pp. 19-25.

Stanley Mosk and Howard H. Jewel, "The Birch Phenomenon Analyzed", *The New York Times Magazine*; August 20, 1961, pp. 12, 89-90.

Waldemar M. Nielsen, "Soldier in Politics; A Growing Issue", *The New York Times Magazine*; October 22, 1961.

Harvey B. Schechter, "The Liberals Have Helped the Radical Right", *The New York Times Magazine*; April 29, 1962.

Robert L. Shayon, "Off Balance", *The Saturday Review*; November 25, 1961.

Thomas M. Storke, "How Some Birchers Were Birched", *New York Times Magazine*; December 10, 1961.

C. NEWSPAPERS

*The Christian Science Monitor.*

*The Kansas City Star.*

*The Kansas City Times.*

*The Los Angeles Times.*

*The Manchester Guardian Weekly.*

*The New York Times.*

*The University Daily Kansan.*

D. UNPUBLISHED MATERIAL

Jerry D. Davis, Stewart L. Entz, Henry A. Lutz and Robert W. Sellen, *Notes on "Communism on the Map"*; April, 1961.

## UNFAMILIAR AS TOMORROW

*Alice MacKenzie Swaim*

The new church rises, angular and strange,  
 its contours unfamiliar as tomorrow,  
 as if religion in this nuclear age  
 has lost its peace and purpose and presents  
 exaggerated idols of confusion,  
 false gods for us to worship.  
 The simple heart stays rootless here,  
 finding no streams of living water flowing;  
 the poor turn back, being terrified  
 of marring in some unintended way  
 this shining palace of complacent sins.  
 The church is built; its sterile emptiness  
 more pitiful than ruin, in its pride.  
 The doors are open and the candles lit,  
 the hearts expectant; hopeful spirits cry,  
 "The house is here; when will the God arrive?"