

- McCarthyism Revived -

When Senator Joseph McCarthy, (from our neighboring state of Wisconsin,) finally went into decline, after some defeats in the army - McCarthy hearing's and the censure proceedings in the Senate, and not long afterwards passed from the earthly and political scene, there was a wide-spread sigh of relief. For a decade and more, he had ridden rough-shod, not only over the common decencies of life, but over legal procedures^{ts}, ^{and} Constitutional safeguards; had bullied into silence, if not submission, a considerable part of the population; and was well on the way toward what appeared to be a possible ^{thrust} ~~thrust~~ after supreme power.

We have had many demagogues in our history, and in recent years the names of Curly of Massachusetts, and Bilbo of Mississippi, and Hague of New Jersey, and Huey Long of Louisiana, readily come to mind. There is an element of demogogy ever present in our politics because in our somewhat open ^{political} ~~judicial~~ framework there is the felt freedom of any politician to be in H.L. Mencken's phrase " the pumper-up of popular fears and rages". But Joseph McCarthy, according to ^{Richard} ~~John~~ ^{Rouse}, "was our first and only national demagogue".

Others at most were provincial figures, and some had influence mainly within municipalities. McCarthy was the first demagogue who noticeably impinged on the lives of most Americans.

It was too much to hope or believe that with the decline and physical

disappearance of McCarthy, that McCarthyism had completely come to an end.

For a time, the various elements that had spawned on the power play of McCarthy

or at least out of sight.

went into eclipse, (went back, as Dorothy Parker once speaking about ~~another~~ *other*

elements

~~went~~ in another context, said, "into the woodwork".) There was an interim of

psychological relief, of felt freedom to debate real issues, and to ~~enter~~ *venture*

one's neck beyond an all too soon expected chopping block.

That honeymoon, social, political, and *economic*, is apparently now

on the wane. Once again the indigenous elements of projected frustration,

dedicated *reaction* ~~restriction~~, and ego-seeking fulfillment are on the move. A

~~resurgent~~ McCarthyism is with us and is likely to be with us for sometime.

Making for the resurgence are factors both old and new. There is of

course the old matter of communism, which has long been a trigger point for any

kind of anti crusade and almost automatically has sailed forth with considerable

assurance that any divergence or opposition to its view would be dismissed or

denounced as belonging to the enemy. In our world communism ~~is~~ *is* the devil, and

anyone who is against communism is in the company of the angels, and those who

venture a dissenting opinion against the crusaders against communism are for

communism. Once again we are up against an all black and all white world.

Beyond this, we have the growing crises of the ~~modern~~ ^{Present} ~~modern~~ *modern* moment, Berlin

and Red China, nuclear tests, and desegregation, likely annihilation and ~~e~~

a struggling United Nations-all of which creates worry and concern, but

justify those who presume to righteous simple answers. If no one else knows

what to do or where to go, at least they can speak with certainty and they

can denounce and they can say what to do. // In the just concluded session of

Congress, we have had a revealing display of the anti-communist approach.

Stemming mainly from Senators Goldwater *wafu* of Arizona, Thurmond of South

Carolina and Mundt of South Dakota, who coined the term "anti-anti-

communism, and believe anti-anti communism to be rampant in the Department

of Defence, the *principal* target of attack has been not Krushchev or Mao Tse

Tung, but a fellow-senator, Fullbright of Arkansas. His particular offense

took the form of a confidential memorandum to President Kennedy and Defense

Secretary McNamara in which he warned against allowing military officers to

go overboard in their programmes of indoctrinating troops, and the public as

well, on the threat of communism. Specifically the memorandum protested

against public programmes sponsored by the military in which right-wing

fundamentalists equated social legislation with socialism and socialism with

communism. For that Fullbright was charged with "throtling the military" and

spreading anti-anti-communism through and beyond the Department of Defense.

President Kennedy revealed that Senator Fullbright had sent his memorandum at the express request of the Secretary of Defence and that Kennedy himself

wanted a clarification of the National Security Councils 1958 directive which first charged military leaders with the job of providing anti-communist indoctrination.

This, however, only added to the ~~cry~~ cry that Kennedy is soft on communism and surrounded by muddle minded advisors.

Almost completely ignored and certainly not publicized by Goldwater, Thurmond, and Mundt was the finding of a House investigating committee last year that 762 former top-ranking military officers were currently employed by the country's 100 leading defence contractors. And likewise not emphasized was the fact that President Eisenhower in his ~~speech~~ ^{speech} talk to the nation in January very unexpectedly but very bluntly warned of the "conjunction of an immense military establishment and a large arms industry" and went on to say "we must never let the weight of this combination endanger our liberties or democratic processes."

The political drift rightwards, polarizes around Senator Barry Goldwater. Goldwater is of a different cut than was Joseph McCarthy. He is well dressed, well mannered, and well heeled, and he is far more presentable ~~and thereby~~ acceptable than was McCarthy. He is not however, above making use of various McCarthy techniques such as the sweeping charge, gross over-simplification of issues, and the smear of being soft on, if not openly supportive of, communism. According to him the Democratic platform is "a blueprint for socialism" and "U.S. leaders, both political and intellectual, are searching desperately for means of ^a appeasing or accomadating

the Soviet Union..." When it comes to presenting his own program, it is equally simple and is aimed, as someone has expressed it, "straight at the adrenal glands." "He tough abroad, and cut federal spending at home". The vehemence of his attack on Fullbright and the associating of Fullbright with anti-anti-communism, was undoubtedly not without an eye on hoping to unseat the Senator from Arkansas in next year's elections, but the same pattern of associating Fullbright with Communism carries over to identifying every liberal and any cause with which he is associated with communism.

In a recent commentary article, Alan Westin, associate professor of Public Law and Government at Columbia University, lists five characteristics of the fundamentalists, whether left fundamentalist or right fundamentalists.

First, "they assume that there are always (~~surely~~) solutions capable of producing international victories and of resolving our social problems; (and) when such solutions are not found, they attribute the failure to conspiracies led by evil men and their dupes"; Second, "they refuse to believe in the integrity... of those who lead the dominant social groups (the unions, the churches, even some elements of the business community)--and declare that the American "establishment" has become part of the conspiracy; Third, they reject the political system; they lash out at "politicians", the major parties, and the give-and-take of political compromise as a betrayal of the fundamental truth and as a device to divert the people.

(Right now, incidentally, there is an ultra fundamental^{ist} group in the Soviet Union which holds Krushev and company as being soft on capitalism and trying to appease and accomodate the Western Powers). Fourth, they ~~advocate~~ those programs for dealing with social, economic, and international problems which liberals and conservatives agree upon as minimal foundations. In their place, the fundamentalists propose drastic panaceas....Fifth, to break the neck of conspiracy they advocate "direct action", sometimes in the form of a new political party, but more often through secret organization, push-button pressure campaigns, and front groups. Occasionally "direct action" will develop into hate propoganda and calculated violence."

There are variations and modifications upon these characteristics as they apply say to communists and Birchites, but by and large they provide a helpful framework with in which to weigh quite opposite (but in some respects quite similar) points of view. Turning to the right fundamentalists, with whom we are concerned this morning, they span a rather broad spectrum. At one pole are the outright anti, ^{hate} ~~like~~ groups, such as the John Kaspers and the ~~Constitutional Democrats~~, who offer various combinations of anti-semitic, anti-catholic, and anti-negro sentiment. Their position is so extreme in its variance from anything conceded to be democratic principle and procedure as to be offensive to most Americans and ~~in many ways~~ ~~in many ways~~ as groups they gather little open support. At a considerable remove are such other organizations as the Committee for Constitutional

Government and the Foundation for Economic Education which stay ^{with it} clear of virulent hate-mongering and press their right-fundamentalism about economics and government in a much more measured manner. They are apparently well-financed and draw support from much more respected and prominent quarters. They have not, however, won widespread support, and in and of themselves are not likely to. So far, at least, they have been without the personality-leadership and the combination of simplicity and sweeping approach that make for popular appeal.

Somewhere between these more or less extremes of right-fundamentalism, stands the John Birch Society. While I was away this past year, I occasionally came across references to ^{The John Birch} ~~this~~ Society in British journals and papers. Never having heard of the Society and knowing nothing about it, I might have assumed, just from the name, that it was some modern-day counterpart of a Johnny Appleseed Society, some organization dedicated to the planting and preservation of birch trees. The contexts in which the references appeared, however, gave indication that it was not that innocuous. And since my return, I have conclusively learned that the John Birch Society has nothing to do with trees. Rather it is an organization well on the way to being a major polarization of resurgent Mc.Carthyism in American life.

There are certain points about the Society ~~xxxx~~ itself that are un-

doubtedly familiar to most of you. I am admittedly late in catching up with the matter and what is discovery for me may be rather well-known to you, after the amount of news that has been devoted to the John Birch Society over the past few months. Nevertheless some main points about the Society itself bear repetition, if repetition it ~~is~~ is, because we are likely to be confronted with this Society for some time, and we had better learn all we can about it, and keep what we can learn to the forefront of our mind.

First, the name itself. Why the John Birch Society, and not the Robert Welch Society, insofar as Robert Welch is the acknowledged and admitted founder and leader of the society? Not because of overwhelming modesty on the part of Robert Welch, but because he found in the name of an American killed by Chinese Communists a much more emotive symbol for his ostensible crusade against communism. His volume, "The Life of John Birch" is subtitled "In the story of one American boy, the ordeal of his age", which not only expresses with simplified ease the crises of our time, but is calculated to arouse sympathy and to enlist support of the John Birch Society.

Cheer curiosity alone, however, would like to know something more about John Birch and something ~~other than just~~ ^{beyond just} ~~possibly~~ what Mr. Welch has to say about him. According to Gene Grove, who has spent several months investigating

the John Birch Society for the New York Post, and who has recently put his findings into a volume entitled "Inside the John Birch Society", John Birch was a Southern Baptist fundamentalist, who while a student at Mercer University in Georgia led a secret group of fundamentalist students in an effort to purge five faculty members accused of teaching heretical doctrines. Their dismissal was pressed on the ground that ~~xxxxxxx~~ they were teaching such doctrine as "The Bible was not divinely inspired", and "there were no such persons as Adam and Eve." The faculty members were cleared. Other students displayed placards, one of which read "Lynch Saint Birch", and Birch and his friends were temporarily escorted from the campus by the police for their own safety. The student newspaper urged expulsion of the Birch group. John Birch, nevertheless, graduated magna cum laude in 1939 and went on to the Bible Baptist Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. From there he made his way to China as a missionary, and when the United States entered the Second World War, he became, by virtue of his knowledge of the language and of the country, an intelligence officer under General Claire Chennault. According to Welch, in the course of the war, he led a bewildered Jimmy Doolittle out of China after the general's famed raid on Tokyo. According to Doolittle, questioned by the press after the Birch Society became a public issue, Birch was trying to get out of Japanese-held territory, and therefore "we just joined forces." Birch was killed by Chinese Communists near Suchow ten days after the war ended. Welch contends that Birch was

shot as a result of direct orders from a Communist high command afraid of his potential post-war influence on behalf of the Nationalist government...But, according to Joseph S. Sample, an officer in the Office of Strategic Services, who served with Birch, "Birch was a man with no particularly distinguishing characteristics...and if he had strong political convictions, they were not in evidence." Continuing Sample said that the mission on which Birch died should have been routine, except that when it arrived at its designated area it was met by a force of Chinese Reds. When the Reds demanded an explanation for what they considered an unwarranted intrusion into their area, Captain Birch chose to attempt to bluff his way out of a difficult situation, and harsh words led to insults, and insults to arrogance, and finally in rage the Chinese Communist leader shot Birch. "The remainder of the team was released and returned to Kunning after an arduous trip on foot which consumed several weeks. The sergeant in command received a citation as a result of the successful withdrawal. "The news of Birch's death" said Sample, "created a sensation at OSS headquarters, primarily because of the irony of his being killed after the war was over. While succeeding OSS teams were more careful in the dealings with the Chinese Communists, there was no real object lesson in Birch's death and certainly no glory."

Admittedly the case of John Birch is not made definitively clear by

a simple statement of alternative or even contradictory testimony, but the Sir Galahad symbol of John Birch as presented by ~~xxxxxxx~~ Robert Welch is at least open to considerable modification, if not complete denial.

And be that as it may, the nature of the John Birch Society, in and of itself, is not exempt from evaluation.

Who, then, second is Robert Welch? In a skeletonized autobiography, which he finally consented to present, because of "the pressure from chapter leaders, members, and prospective members of the Society", he says that he was born December 1, 1909, on a farm in Chowan County, North Carolina, that his ancestry was full of farmers and Baptist preachers, that he was educated at the University of North Carolina, that he spent two years at the Naval Academy, and another two years at Harvard Law School.

And the record appears to be that he was more than just an average student. He graduated from the University of North Carolina at an age when most students are just entering; he was near the top of his class during his stay at Annapolis; and he had good grades at Harvard Law School, before withdrawing at the end of his second year, to enter a candy manufacturing business, run by his brother. In his autobiography, he says that he "was ~~xxxx~~ for many years Vice President, in charge of sales and advertising.... that he was a director of a bank as also of several other

business corporations...that he was a member of the board of directors of the National Association of Manufacturers for seven years.... that he has been active in many other business associations and educational activities-- including service on the Belmont School Committee... that he has lived in Belmont, Massachusetts for the past twenty years. (Belmont, incidentally, is one of the ~~more~~ wealthiest suburbs of Boston, Massachusetts, and it is here, not far from the residence of Robert Welch, that the ~~physical~~ headquarters of the John Birch Society are located. Located next door to the Belmont Post Office, the Society is by far the Post Office's largest customer and its staff now numbers some 28 or more individuals.) Not mentioned in Welch's autobiography is the fact that during the Second World War he served on the Office of Price Administration's advisory committee for the candy industry. This would undoubtedly ~~contrast~~ ^{clash} with his repeated demand for an irreducible minimum of government. And not mentioned is his prediction in an earlier volume of an imminent invasion of the United States by the Russians. This would decidedly clash with his major contention that the ~~only~~ real danger to the nation is from internal subversion.

"As of January 1, 1957" according to his autobiography" he gave up most of his business responsibilities...in order to devote practically all of his time and energy to the anti-Communist cause." His brother, head of the candy firm, is quoted as saying that Robert was "much too quick to condemn and criticize many good, patriotic Americans... and that his activities

had no place in a business like ours." In December of 1958, Welch gathered together some eleven men for a two day meeting held in Indianapolis, and out of that meeting emerged the John Birch Society. Since then it has grown to an estimated membership of some sixty thousand widely distributed throughout the nation, and it gives indication of becoming a united front for various right-wing groups .

Just recently the New York Times reported an interview with the Rev. Billy James Hargis at the opening of the seventh annual convention of "We, the People" being held in Chicago. Mr. Hargis indicated that some conservative congressmen and the leaders of a number of right-wing organizations are forming a secret fraternity to coordinate their anti-Communist efforts. He would not name the congressmen or anyone else -- "We don't think publicity would be a good thing" he said---but he did say that among the aims of the fraternity would be renewed efforts to outlaw the Communist part, and organized support for a resolution of Senator Thurmond against muzzling anti-Communist military spokesmen, and backing for the efforts of the house committee on un-American activities.

The Reverend Billy Hargis is a Tulsa evangelist, director of Christian crusade, president of "We, the People", and on the advisory board of the John Birch Society. The major speaker at the "We the People" convention was Robert Welch, who dwelling upon one of his favorite themes told his

audience that "democracy is probably the worst of all forms of government", that "democracy leads to mobocracy", that the socialists and communists, and they are the same, are attempting to convince Americans that our form of government is a democracy rather than a republic and, with people like Earl Warren, are at the same time trying to revise out of our constitution the system of checks and balances that would stop the trend to democracy, that we must again return to a republic which is founded on a set of laws superimposed on divine and natural laws.

This was palatable meat for a convention of "We, The People", We, the People assuming themselves to be the select elite who will determine and enforce the law, divine, natural, and otherwise. Dressed in the guise of anti-communism, it has all the ear-marks of neo-fascism.

The reference by Hargis to the new fraternity ~~under way~~ being secret and his accompanying remark "We don't think publicity would be a good thing", should likewise be noted. For the Birchers have sought, as zealously as any communists, to shroud their organization and membership in secrecy and to keep some of their opinions hidden and known only to themselves. Nothing has disturbed them more than to have had the light of scrutiny and disclosure turned upon them, as it has been during these past few months. Take for example the disclosure that has been made of The Politician, the book-length letter which Welch circulated privately

some few years ago to only a small part of the membership itself. In this letter he called, as one might expect he would, Presidents Roosevelt and Truman knowing instruments of the Communist conspiracy. But then in keeping with his basic conviction that the communist danger and conspiracy is almost entirely internal, and being himself a Taft supporter and a McCarthy stalwart, he proceeded to pour his strongest venom on the Eisenhower administration. "For many reasons and after a lot of study" he wrote "I personally believe John Foster Dulles to be a Communist agent". As for Allan Dulles, said Welch, he "is the most protected and untouchable supporter of Communism, next to Eisenhower, himself, in Washington." As for Milton Eisenhower "the chances are very strong that he is actually Dwight Eisenhower's superior and boss within the Communist Party". And as for Dwight Eisenhower "There is only one possible word to describe his purpose and actions. That word is treason. My firm belief that Dwight Eisenhower is a dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy is based on an accumulation of detailed evidence so extensive and so palpable that it seems to put this conviction beyond any reasonable doubt."

Or to take one other example, there is the following position set forth by Welch for new members. "The John Birch Society will operate under completely authoritative control at all levels....We are going to cut through the red tape and parliamentary briar patches and road blocks of

confused purpose with direct authority at every turn. The men who join the John Birch Society during the next few months or few years 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."

Such disclosures, particularly of statements so extreme as to be ridiculous, and of the authoritarian character of the Society have made it an object of attack in numerous quarters. Both liberal and conservative newspapers have raked it with criticism, pointing out not only the unsubstantiated extremism of its charges, and its authoritarian character, but also its nihilism which denies the realities of international politics and domestic economic and social needs. It has been attacked by prominent Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish leaders, and by politicians as diverse as Nixon and Kennedy, and even by Senator Goldwater himself.

~~While~~ No one who experienced the McCarthy period can dare to underestimate the potential of a resurgent McCarthyism. There are however three aspects which are hopefully different in the present situation. One is the glare of publicity that has so quickly and so rather widely been turned upon the John Birch Society. This was not the case with Joe McCarthy, who by and large, was given the kid-glove treatment by much of the press. Apparently the experience of McCarthyism has alerted and nerved a good many more mediums of expression to quickly go to work

examining and publicising resurgent McCarthyism. And this has decidedly help curb its growth. It has driven individuals and groups away from the united front of the John Birch Society, and when not completely away into a hasty disclaimer of association. Welch and his colleagues are aware of this. References to persecution abound in Birch literature and there is incessant mention of how the patron saint (Senator McCarthy) was driven to his death. Thus the attempt to get back into the secrecy with which the movement began and which it desired to continue. Like most secret organizations, it doesn't relish the spot-light of publicity. But the spotlight has been on and there is apparently a greater courage and willingness in the current situation to keep it on.

Second, the John Birch Society has so far at least been unable to tie in with a personality-leader, and more particularly ~~with~~ a personality leader in a position of political office and political power. The most likely candidate has been Senator Goldwater of Arizona, and Welch has praised him highly: "He is absolutely sound in his Americanism, has the political and moral courage to stand by his Americanist principles, and in my opinion can be trusted to stand by them until hell freezes over." But having praised him, he has also proceeded to bury him. There is no chance, he has said, of Goldwater supplying the leadership needed to save the country because "Goldwater, by the very circumstances of his political success, present prestige, and the expectations of his support-

ters, will inevitably think and move in terms of political warfare."

And Goldwater has. As a political figure, ambitious for political office, he has felt it necessary to criticize ~~Welch's~~ **Welch's** charges against Eisenhower, and ^{he cannot} he cannot wield the John Birch Society to his political career, as long as Welch exercises authoritarian and autocratic control over it.

Third, along with a resurgence of McCarthyism, there is indication of a countering revival of liberalism and respectable conservatism. After a considerable period of apathy and fatalism, largely induced by McCarthyism, there is finally appearing once again on the campuses and in the halls of Congress a sense of liberal social purpose. Whatever one may think of the Kennedy administration, and its first year in office has been a good deal less than spectacular, nevertheless there is little likelihood that it will allow itself to be bullied and cowed in the degree ~~as~~ that the Administration was under McCarthy.

The right fundamentalists are in no way to be lightly dismissed. They constitute a real threat to democratic rights and procedures. But there is reason to believe that with courage and conviction they can be exposed and curbed, and can be kept from running away with the ball. We have plenty of problems, but hate-mongering and the big lie provide no constructive answers or solutions.