

# PIONEER

## An Interview with LESLIE FLEMING President of the Oregon Chapter of The John Birch Society

(The views expressed by Mr. Fleming are his own and not necessarily those of the John Birch Society. He stressed that his answer to many questions would have been different if he was speaking officially for the Society.)

Q. How many members does the John Birch Society have in Oregon?

A. That's a secret.

Q. How many members does the Society have nationally?

A. That's also a secret—we don't give out those figures.

Q. How long you been active in the Society?

A. Since 1958. Since practically the founding.

Q. What other occupation do you have?

A. I used to be a dairy farmer—but now spend my full-time with the Society and the bookstore. (The Freedom Bookstore in Eugene.) I got fed up with dairy-farming and being regulated and controlled by the government—so I quit. I don't want all the money I make to go to the government.

Q. You mean you quit dairy-farming because the government was regulating your activities?

A. Yes—by the time all those fuzzy-headed government people got through with their percentages milk is priced so high—I don't want any part of it.

Q. What do you mean by "percentages"?

A. Taxes—excise, property, income—anything you can think of billions in taxes for nothing—going down the drain—being tossed away by melon-heads in Washington.

Q. You don't want taxes?

A. Not income taxes and the other "social" taxes—only the taxes that were originally intended in the constitution—the excise taxes.

Q. How could the government finance its programs if the income tax was eliminated? It accounts for over 80% of the government revenues—

A. They don't need to spend all that money.

Q. But most of the money is for defense anyway—what would you do about that?

A. You don't realize that we could eliminate or bring all government non-defense spending down to a billion and military experts say thirteen billion is adequate for defense—so there you've got only fourteen billion which could be covered without income taxes.

Q. The Russians are spending approximately fifty billion a year on defense—the Russians are the very people your group is trying to beat—wouldn't we lose the arms race if we only spent thirteen billion?

A. Well—General Walker states right here (holding out a 1952 magazine) that all the defense needs of the country could be taken care of for thirteen billion.

Q. Is he your only "military expert"?

A. Yes. Of course, I never believe Russian figures—they're all phony. Never believe anything the Russians distribute.

Q. You don't believe their figures—then why are they a threat to the U.S. a nation with a 500 billion plus G.N.P.?

A. By subterfuge and sneaky, dirty tactics—not so much an external threat as an internal one.

Q. You mentioned the high price of milk and your quitting dairy farming—if your program of taxation was followed how would it lead to lower milk prices?

A. Well, milk is now about 22c a quart—I bet that with no income tax and the other government mumble-jumble, milk would cost only 12c a quart. That would make sense.



Q. Wouldn't that lead to deflation—lower wages as well as lower prices—no one would benefit.

A. What's wrong with deflation?

Q. What do you think of John Keyne's theory of economics?

A. Well, I don't care for any of those Harvard people Kennedy has got in his group.

Q. But Keynes is dead—he's an English economist.

A. Oh—I was thinking of Galbraith. I read his Status Seekers and thought it poor. (Ed. Note: Vance Packard wrote *The Status Seekers*.)

Q. I notice your book-store here. What books do you recommend for Americans to read?

A. Well, Hoover's—J. Edgar Hoover's—"Masters of Deceit". Welch's stuff (Robert Welch is founder and president of the John Birch Society)—some reprints of Goldwater speeches. National Review and Human Events are good too.

Q. What do you think of National Review's attack on Welch as being a liability rather than an asset of the John Birch Society?

A. Not much. We don't subscribe to everything they (National Review) write—but generally it's a good publication.

Q. Do you follow Welch's claim that Eisenhower was a "conscious Communist agent"?

A. Look at the record of Eisenhower, or any President since Roosevelt and tell me they weren't helping the Communist cause. Roosevelt gave them Europe. Truman gave them China. Eisenhower gave them Cuba. And just watch Kennedy because he'll give them what they want too.

Q. What do you think of Ayn Rand's writings? Do you believe "Atlas Shrugged" and "Fountainhead" are good?

A. I've read a few of her things and believe she is thinking straight. I didn't care for the bedroom scenes, though.

Q. Did you prefer working in the Society when it wasn't so publicized?

A. Well, once you become effective they get after you. You know the press of the country is controlled by Communists.

Q. If the press and government of the country are controlled by "conscious communist agents" why isn't the U.S. in Russian hands now? It seems if they have all this working for them we wouldn't be any threat to them?

A. Well, it's part of a plan. They've got to