

SPIRIT

get the F.B.I. and the Army now and then the people.

Q. You believe there's a plot to destroy the F.B.I.?

A. Definitely.

Q. Welch says the U.S. is 70% Communist now—if that's the case do you have any chance of succeeding?

A. Well, he didn't say it was 70% Communist. But it's 50-70% Communist and if the people start to think straight we'll beat them.

Q. How can anyone gauge the amount of infiltration in a country by percentage points?

A. He gets inside reports and can get a pretty good estimate on things.

Q. What will happen to your members when, and if, the Communists take over?

A. We'll all be shot. Anyone with capitalism, with property—and so forth—will be shot. They say that up in Portland at their rallies—six million Americans they're planning to kill.

Q. I have friends at Yale and Princeton who are members of Young Americans for Freedom. They claim there is a big swing to the right on their campuses. There doesn't seem to be any motivation from the right on Oregon campuses. Do you think the Birch Society should go around to the schools and encourage conservatives to set up clubs?

A. Well, we're mostly concerned with adults—not college students. But I think it's fine for students to set up these organizations.

Q. At the Young Americans for Freedom rally in New York recently—the group claimed that of the 20,000 people attending 90% were under 25. Do you think conservatism is a movement of the nation's youth now?

A. Well, it's a movement of all clear-thinking people, whether they be nine or ninety.

Q. They wouldn't let Tshombe into the country to address that rally in New York. Do you have any opinion on that?

A. The State Department is against Tshombe. Look at their U.N. policy—they're out to unify the Congo under the Reds.

Q. What does the John Birch Society plan to do to stop this?

A. Well, we can't do much except tell the American people what's going on. How they're being stabbed behind their backs.

Q. What do you say to the charge that the Birch Society is anti-union, anti-social security, anti-integration, anti-Semitic, anti-Catholic, anti-United Nations, anti-foreign aid, anti-lower tariffs, anti-Common Market, anti-anti-trust, anti-immigration, anti-Alliance for Progress, anti-peace, anti-Supreme Court?

A. Well, I can't speak for the Society. That's a jumbled problem—we don't like many of the "so-called" social measures—like socialized medicine. We aren't anti-Catholic or anything—a lot of negroes, Jews and Catholics belong to the Society.

Q. Are most of your members rich?

A. Some are rich, some are poor. They come from all levels—a lot of poor—they can't make any money with big government—a common man can't get a dairy farm it takes too much money. We represent the common man.

Q. You don't think the common man needs social security or free medical care? How can he pay for it—support himself after retirement?

A. They could if the government would get off their back.

Q. Are you anti-government?

A. Well, the government should just do those things specified in the Constitution—not all the rest of this stuff. Those men have no right doing half the stuff they pull—they ought to be locked up.

Q. You believe that we should revert to the Constitution?

A. Yes, do only the things specified in the Constitution.

Q. But aren't there many implied powers in the Constitution?

A. No—it's very specific. It lays down just what you can do and can't do.

Q. Why does the Birch Society want to impeach Justice Warren of the Supreme Court?

A. Because he's been handing down Communist decisions ever since he got on the bench.

Q. What did you think of Gus Hall's speech at U of O? Did you go to it?

A. No, I didn't bother to go see it. He achieved his purpose though—he achieved it perfectly.

Q. What was his purpose?

A. To put you to sleep. Put all the Americans to sleep so the Russians can march in and take over.

Q. If all these people are in alliance (in government) why did Hall—a Communist—have to spend eight years in prison. And why is he under indictment now?

A. Communists get ahead by stepping over the bodies of dead comrades—it's an old policy. Look at the history of the party in Russia. Today Stalin is a hero. Tomorrow he is down-graded—taken out of Red Square—it's a farce.

Q. When Rudolf Abel was arrested as a spy—it was reported that he was told not to contact the American Communist party since they are so unreliable and infiltrated with F.B.I. agents. If this is so—the Communist conspiracy in America must be very weak—it couldn't have even left the ground.

A. They are still a powerful factor. They may not be Communists. They have a lot of front groups. The American Communist party may not even be a Communist group.

Q. There is a new theory circulating that your group, the John Birch Society, is a Communist group in disguise. Would you care to comment?

A. That's the sort of stuff the Communists would spread. They try to stop any opposition.

Q. In a report of the C.I.A. it was noted that in East Germany those who had been the most ardent Nazis—were at once the first to become radical Communists. It's called the "Cosmic Law" the thin line between two opposites. Do you think members of the far-right would be easy converts to the far-left.

A. We're not Nazis—we're just common Americans doing what's right. I don't believe any Birchers are Communists—and I would never go to the left.

Q. That's what is bothering many free-thinkers, that is, the insistence of the Birchers that their and only their opinion is the right one. That all the rest of us are stupid and that only Robert Welch knows what's going on. Do you think the American people should follow Welch unquestionably?

A. There is only one right way and that's a clear, sensible government following the Constitution. Mr. Welch is telling us about this—he isn't seeking power.

Q. You then say there are no alternatives in policy other than those laid down by Welch?

A. That's right.

Q. Don't you believe that since society is constantly changing that government should be dynamic, flexible to the needs of the people it should serve?

A. Government should provide a service to the people—but only as much as is specified in the Constitution.

Q. Do you believe Reed College is Communist?

A. Well, I think most political science departments in most colleges are left-of-center. That's been my experience.

Q. Do you approve of the Freedom Center in Portland that so strongly objected to Hall's coming to Oregon?

A. I think they're doing a job that needs to be done.

Q. Wouldn't anti-Freedom Center be a better title for them. They allow freedom only for those who hold views of their own.

A. Hall achieved his objective in coming here.

Q. You don't believe people have the discrimination to make their own judgments after hearing both sides of the story?

A. They can be led astray by Communist lies. They (the Communists) don't ever speak the truth.

Q. What do you think the future of America is if it were "50 to 70% Communist?"

A. If we get thinking straight, we'll be all right.

Q. Why don't you go to Reed and speak?

A. If I spoke up there—they'd give me thirty minutes to speak—and I'd get the usual snickers and smiles. Then some professor would spend three months of his tax-paid time to knock down everything I said. That's what happened at (University of) Oregon—I spoke briefly—and then some self-appointed egghead took three months to knock it all down. I'm too busy for that sort of thing.

Q. But if you don't answer these charges—how is your group to succeed? You can't expect to win with a defeatist attitude?

A. We have to fight them in other ways. The press is all controlled by the left.

Q. Well, this one isn't. It desires to present both sides of every story. Would you like to write an article for us and tell the University of Oregon students of the real character and goals of the John Birch Society? It's possible they have a distorted picture—and as leader of the Oregon chapter I think it would be worthwhile for you to write such an article. How about it?

A. We're too busy. Too many things to do. A good thing for you to run would be Senator Goldwater's speech on the A.D.A. that tells about that group. A lot of professors are members of the A.D. and it's a Communist front group.

—Interview by Art Harger
(The concluding article on The John Birch Society will appear next week. It's an analysis of the tactics of the Society by Donald Haynes.)