

Welch's Feeling for Ike Dates From 1952 Convention

Editor's note: Following is the last in a series about the anti-Communist John Birch Society, an anti-Communism organization that has caused controversy by its methods. A UPI special reporting team headed by Barbara Bundschu, New York staff correspondent, reports today on the society's prominent members and the founder's feelings toward Eisenhower, Nixon, Taft and Goldwater.

By BARBARA BUNDSCHU
UPI Correspondent

Robert Welch, founder and leader of the John Birch Society, charges that the 1952 GOP presidential nomination was stolen from the late Sen. Robert A. Taft.

Welch's bitterness against former President Eisenhower apparently dates from the 1952 convention, when Eisenhower won the GOP nomination over Taft.

In a startling "Letter to Khrushchev," published in his magazine "American Opinion" in 1958 and now available in pamphlet form, Welch told the Russian leader he knew that among the pro-Communist activities of recent years had been: "The snatching of the Republican nomination from Taft in 1952 by purchase, theft, secret deals and other tactics more foul than had ever before appeared in American politics."

Later in the same letter, which starts out assuring Khrushchev that "We know that you are winning the cold war by leaps and bounds," Welch wrote: "The president of one of America's largest banks took suitcases full of currency to the convention, to bribe delegates away from Taft; and he was rewarded, for thus providing such spontaneity, by a major ambassadorship."

Lauds Taft, MacArthur

In an interview with United Press International, Welch named Taft and Gen. Douglas MacArthur as men he considered great Americans of recent years but declined to name his current favorites. His "Blue Book," however, leaves no doubt that his current choice is Arizona's Republican Sen. Barry Goldwater.

"I'd love to see him president of the United States, and maybe some day we shall," Welch said.

Goldwater, in response to a UPI inquiry, said he wasn't

aware of any Birch Society endorsement and wasn't in any case running for anything except the Senate. His term expires in 1964. Goldwater said he was familiar with the organization, that he had met several of its members during his travels and "they are very outstanding people."

Welch, in a "Blue Book" speech of December, 1958, called former Vice President Richard M. Nixon "one of the ablest, shrewdest, most disingenuous, and slipperiest politicians that ever showed up on the American scene."

But he said he would leave his remarks about Nixon out of the tape-recorded version of his speech because "he MAY be the best we have for the Republican standard bearer in 1960, who has any chance of getting the nomination. He would be far better than Nelson Rockefeller..."

Raps Rockefeller
"I think Nixon could become a very patriotic anti-Communist if we would create circumstances in which it would be smart politics to be one, whereas I think Nelson Rockefeller... is definitely committed to trying to make the United States a part of one-world socialist government..."

Welch's views on President Kennedy were indicated before his election. He did not mention Kennedy by name but his sentiments were made clear in a discussion about "moral man."

"You will usually find him in church on Sunday morning, maybe even a Catholic church," Welch said then.

"But as a member of the United States Senate, running for the presidency, and smart enough to know the strong Communist support behind the scenes which he will have to get in order to have any chance of being nominated in 1960, such an amoral man can do a tremendous amount of ball-carrying on behalf of the Communist aims here in the United States; and he can do an almost equal amount of damage to anti-Communist morale in other parts of the world, by his well-publicized speeches against Chiang Kai-Shek or in favor of the Algerian rebels..."

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"And any similarity of characters in this story to any living persons is not coincidental."

Sad Commentary
"I am prepared to defend their right to express their views, as I would 'leftist' opinions," said Los Angeles Attorney A. L. Wirin about the John Birch Society.

"That its views, however, are acceptable to any portion of the American public is a sad commentary on the present American political scene." Sen. Milton R. Young, (R-N.D.), who has criticized the society on the Senate floor, said "what surprises me most is not the size but the number of prominent men who belong."

Twelve of the 26 men currently listed as members of the society's council are listed in Who's Who in America. They include two former presidents of the National Association of Manufacturers, William J. Grede and Cola G. Parker, both of Wisconsin, and a third former NAM president, Ernest G. Swigert of Portland, Ore., had previously been listed as a council member.

The Racine, Wis., Journal-Times, noting the association of these and other prominent businessmen with the group said: "It is a cause for crackpots, but those allegedly responsible persons who support it will be tarred with the same brush."

Other Members
Other council members include Spruille Braden, former U.S. ambassador; T. Coleman Andrews, the former collector of internal revenue who ran for president on a platform calling for abolition of the income tax; Clarence Manion, former dean of the Notre Dame law school and head of the highly conservative Manion Forum; M. T. Phelps, former chief justice of the Supreme Court of Arizona; Col.

Laurence E. Bunker, former personal aide to Gen. Douglas MacArthur, and Lt. Gen. Charles B. Stone III, USAF Ret., former commander of the 14th Air Force in China. The late Alfred Kohlberg, New York importer best known for his letter writing campaign in support of the so-called "China lobby" was a charter member and is still listed as such.

Adolphe Menjou, the Hollywood actor, was at one time a member of the council. His wife said early in March that both she and her husband were still members of the society. On March 21, Mrs. Menjou said her husband was in a hospital with a minor ailment but that he had withdrawn from the society, having found he disagreed with its founder and head, Robert Welch, "on certain points." She declined to elaborate.

Some answers to Wirin's question on the society's appeal were provided March 18 in two pages of letters printed by the Los Angeles Times following its editorial condemnation of the society.

Justify Membership
Four writers said the Times articles preceding the editorial were prompting them to join the society. Two justified their membership in these words:

"It is the only organization that I know of that gives vital information on what is really going on and gives us suggestions for positive action; and 'If our government had made a real attempt to inform us, or to direct our attention to the need for this information, the John Birch Society would have been unnecessary.'"

Letter writers who praised the newspaper for its stand included former Vice President Richard M. Nixon, presidents of the University of California and Occidental College and the chancellor of the University of California at Los Angeles, Rep. James C. Corman (D-Calif.) and Methodist Bishop Gerald Kennedy.

One letter, signed only with initials and presumably written with a matrimonial "we," complimented the Times for explaining "probably much better than we might the reasons why we resigned after several months as members."

The letter said writers had become disturbed by cards distributed by the society last year to protest the planned summit meeting. Designed for mailing to President Eisenhower, they read: "If you go - don't come back!"

"Then we began to note that almost every public official Roosevelt, Truman, Ike, Nixon, Dulles and others be-

came ever-widening targets of Welch.

"We heard whispers, remarks prefaced by 'would you believe it if I told you...?' and we became increasingly wary."

"We became disenchanted with the John Birch Society, and withdrew."

Nixon Defends Rules
Former Vice President Richard M. Nixon wrote the Times: "It may at times seem unrealistic and naive to follow the rules of the game when our opponents are so unscrupulous and completely devoid of morality. But, in the end, refusing to resort to methods that are wrong not only is right but in the long run is the most effective way to combat an evil doctrine like Communism..."

"One of the most indelible lessons of human history is that those who adopt the doctrine that the end justifies the means inevitably find the means become the end."

Times Publisher Otis Chandler rejoiced on two counts at the heavy reaction to the newspaper's stand. The readers' expenditure for "stamps, phone calls and shoe leather (and aspirin)" he took as a happy omen that the economy is on the upswing.

Further, he wrote: "To stand up and say unequivocally what you believe in your heart is the right thing, regardless of immediate discomforts or neighborhood reactions, is a blessed virtue. We have done this on major issues of concern to all of us, and we respect and thank God, you, the American public, have the guts to do the same. This in itself hurts the Communist cause."

The first count of replies, he said, was: "Pro Times policy, 126 letters, 13 phone calls, one new subscription; against, 163 pieces of mail, 8 phone calls, 22 actual subscriber cancellations and 12 threats or mentions of cancellations."

Readers Favor Society
The readers lined up slightly in favor of the John Birch Society in almost exactly the same proportion as the Supreme Court has lined up five to four in favor of the doctrine that freedom of speech is not an absolute right when it becomes involved with Communism.

Extending the judicial difference of opinion into the realm of the society's operations would appear to create a two-edged sword.

The court minority which might look askance at the society's own efforts to suppress dissent would nonetheless support its right to think and say what it chooses.

The five-man majority has already held that the freedom



FLUID DRIVE - Talk about fluid drive! Marlene Pendleton steers her seagoing auto across Central Park lake in New York City, much to the surprise of rowers taking advantage of the warm sunshine. The vehicle is the Amphicar, a West German import. Miss Pendleton was given two summonses - one for driving on a foot path and the other for operating a vehicle in the lake - when she emerged from the water. (UPI Telephoto)

In a minority decision by Justice Hugo Black, with concurrence of Chief Justice Warren who has been attacked by the society: "Liberty, to be secure for any, must be secure for all, even the most miserable merchants of hatred and unpopular ideas."

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