

Tangents

**Neutralizing movements that undermine the work
of patriotic Americans to preserve freedom**

By Don Fotheringham

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Although all men are born free, and all nations might be so, yet too true it is, that slavery has been the general lot of the human race. Ignorant — they have been cheated; asleep — they have been surprised; divided — the yoke has been forced upon them. But what is the lesson?... Rather conclude that the people ought to be enlightened, to be awakened, to be united, that after establishing a government they should watch over it as well as obey it.

— James Madison

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Introduction

It is no wonder that the Communists count so heavily on the unceasing and inevitable tendency of Conservatives and anti-Communists to weaken concerted action by going off on tangents of their own.

— Robert Welch, July 1967 *Bulletin*

*There has been plenty of energy and enthusiasm and money expended by patriotic Americans, even since 1945, to have stopped half a dozen Communist conspiracies. Most of it, however, has actually and cleverly been shunted off course, or guided into support of the very things that the Communists wanted to accomplish.**

— Robert Welch, June 1970 *Bulletin*

*Mr. Welch generally used the term “Communist conspiracy” to refer to a Master Conspiracy of which Communism was the prominent, yet a subservient branch. In the July 1971 *Bulletin* he wrote: “We believe ... that the Communist Movement is merely one arm of an immense and tremendously powerful Master Conspiracy.”

Since World War II, hundreds of patriotic organizations have come and gone. Even though most of these groups and their leaders were well motivated, they were predictably doomed from the start because their structures were not resistant to infiltration and splintering, and because they never really understood the enemy. America’s mortal enemy goes to great lengths to be misunderstood, to conceal his existence, nature, and purpose. The work necessary to preserve a free America is compounded by the fact that decent-thinking people find it nearly impossible to understand the enemy or to fathom the incredible degree of evil by which his purpose is driven.

We must face the fact that America is being systematically dismantled by a cruel, powerful, deeply entrenched Conspiracy (with a capital C) — an enemy who will spare no effort to destroy or neutralize all serious opposition. Therefore, any effective group dedicated to bringing about less government, to restoring the Constitution, and to exposing the Conspiracy will at some point be persecuted without mercy.

Our founder, Robert Welch, knew that once his organized exposure of the Conspiracy had taken root all the “fury of hell” would be launched against him and his followers. He made it clear that our ability to withstand the onslaught, to remain steadfast, and to stay on target would depend on two crucial factors: 1) our organizational structure; and 2) a clear understanding of the nature and

disposition of the enemy.

The John Birch Society has been so organized and structured that it is difficult to subvert or splinter. And the Society has been steadfast in exposing the nature and disposition of the Conspiracy.

The enemy's most effective weapon is deception. One of his very deceptive schemes is the establishment of counterfeit conservative causes over which he maintains effective control. His efforts appear in the form of phony organizations, campaigns, movements, or publications that speak the language of patriotic Americans, but inevitably compromise principles, stalemate on dead center, or move gradually to the left. Counterfeit conservative groups nearly always enjoy media coverage. They can be portrayed as reasonable, responsible, or non-controversial — exactly the opposite of the treatment accorded the legitimate, highly effective John Birch Society. At other times, they can be used as a decoy, incurring media wrath only for the purpose of drawing sympathetic citizens into their camp and away from the Birch Society.

The enemy pays a peculiar amount of attention to the Birchers. His agents rarely confront our members directly, or try to stop them head on — for that is not easily done. It is a fairly simple matter, however, to push an energetic worker slightly off course where he carries himself out of the battle under his own momentum. Sometimes this tactic includes nothing more than coaxing a member to fight symptoms rather than the source of the problem. An example of symptom-fighting is the tendency of good people to wear themselves out fighting an irresponsible, freedom-destroying federal bureaucracy head-on, rather than taking the matter to Congress where the problem was created in the first place. We call this ineffective approach a **tangent**.

Not all tangents are hatched by the enemy. Many ideas for patriotic action come from individuals who feel certain there is a better or easier way to restore freedom and limit government. So, in addition to deceitful programs, we will also describe certain innocently devised activities that still take good Americans off course.

This booklet explains the tangents most frequently faced by members of The John Birch Society and provides some yardsticks for recognizing others. Numerous action ideas emerge almost daily — so many in fact that we cannot foresee all of them or offer an opinion about each. Fortunately, there are keys by which all members can determine the worthiness of almost any plan. Before explaining specific tangents, therefore, let's look at those keys.

We start by presenting a summary of the Society's mission, including **the problem** as we know it and **the solution** we have long advocated. A correct understanding of the problem and the solution provides the twin keys by which every proposed activity can be judged. If a movement, for example, does not address ignorance or neglect as the cause of big, runaway government, or fails to recognize, understand, and expose the Conspiracy, then that movement — whether designed for good or evil — cannot restore the constitutional foundation of America.*

*We do not overlook what a religious movement might accomplish for America. The John Birch Society is not in competition with religious undertakings. Actually, the religious and moral

standards of millions of Americans form the bedrock on which our hope for America is founded.

The first key is a clear understanding of America's greatest national problem. The second key is an understanding of the Birch Society's long-range solution to that problem.

KEY I: The Problem Is Immense

- A. Our main national problem is ignorance. "Therefore my people are gone into captivity, because they have no knowledge...." (Isaiah 5:13)
- B. Ignorance is created and sustained by an amoral clique of Insiders who wield extraordinary control over our top leaders in government, education, and the mass media. "O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err...." (Isaiah 3:12)
- C. The Insiders, and the Conspiracy they serve, use America's vast resources to support their plan to rule the United States and ultimately the world.
- D. The capture of the United States is far more advanced than most people think.

KEY II: The Solution Is Remarkably Feasible

It is the purpose of The John Birch Society to tackle and solve — with God's help — this immense problem, and when solved, to inspire a continuing vigilance that will prevent its recurrence. Fortunately, exposing and routing the Conspiracy is *also* far more feasible than most people think.

To accomplish this mission, *three steps* must be taken immediately:

Step 1. We must increase the size and reach of The John Birch Society by fortifying its ranks with additional men and women of good character and religious ideals. Individuals of this caliber must be organized, instructed, and mobilized — as quickly as they can be found.

Step 2. We must mobilize this growing force in support of strategic, concerted-action campaigns that build understanding among the American people regarding the Conspiracy, its diabolic plan for world conquest, and its present level of national and global domination — the root of the problem.

Step 3. We must also promote strict adherence to the United States Constitution as the proper medicine to cure most of our nation's ills, while teaching the principles and purpose of the Constitution.

The power in the above strategy rests on the recognition that a majority of the American people are innately patriotic and will act responsibly and vote intelligently *when correctly informed*. We believe that a sufficient number of *informed* Americans will assert their influence mainly, and initially, on the United States Congress, making it politically wise for these elected officials to enact laws within the framework of the U.S. Constitution, repeal unconstitutional laws, cut off the funding for programs for which there is no constitutional authority, limit the appellate jurisdiction of the United States Supreme Court, and cancel executive orders that exceed the constitutional jurisdiction of the president.

As more Americans come to understand the wisdom behind the original design for our Republic, we can look forward to growing support to repair subsequent damage to the structure: First, re-establish the appointment of U.S. senators by the state legislatures (repeal the 17th Amendment), thereby restoring the Senate's proper role as defender of the states and as a check against the passions of raw democracy in the House of Representatives; and, second, exclude political parties from control of the Electoral College and allow the state-appointed electors to choose a president and vice president of the United States according to their own preferences

Finally, when the citizens are informed and their influence is felt in Washington and when the United States has a constitutionally accountable Congress and president, we fully expect the following marvelous results:

- A defeated, impotent Conspiracy;
- A moral, constitutionally accountable United States Supreme Court;
- An “America first” foreign policy and U.S. withdrawal from the United Nations;
- Termination of foreign aid;
- The end of no-win wars that serve the Conspiracy;
- Inflation-proof currency backed by precious metals;
- Abolition of the Federal Reserve System;
- A strong national defense including security against terrorist attacks;
- The repeal of countless preposterous regulations over individuals, their property, business, and industry;
- The sale of most federal lands (to private interests or to the state in which they are located) to help pay off the national debt;
- An abundance of safe, clean, cheap, nuclear-generated electricity;
- Dramatically reduced taxes at every level of government; and
- Enforcement of the Bill of Rights against the federal government, not the federal government's enforcement against the states.

Fantastic? Yes, these goals are fantastic. Yet we live in fantastic times. In the words of Robert Welch, “It is realistic to be fantastic.” These and other accomplishments are well within our grasp if we take them one at a time, in their proper order. Note that we do not put the cart before the horse. We begin with the people of the United States. When our fellow Americans understand what is happening, they and they alone can prevail upon Congress for accountable and responsible lawmaking. Congress is the body in which the Constitution vests the great bulk of federal power. It is the branch of government in which accountability to the voters is most readily obtained.

Of course, the order in which the above progress occurs could change as we make more and more progress. However, by today's perspective the objectives shown in this outline are reasonable, conceivable, logical, and achievable. Moreover, the work to be undertaken is essential to our “fantastically realistic” goal of changing the course of history.

The methods for accomplishing this great objective employ every moral and humane means available to us within the framework of the United States Constitution. We do not go beyond the

Constitution. We do not go back to the days of the Declaration of Independence when force and blood were the only options. And we do not propose or employ any revolutionary methods or illegal tactics. The United States can be fully restored to the vision of its founders by wise and persistent use of the simple weapon of truth.

Of course, the enemy will do whatever he can to thwart our plan. So let us get busy with the three steps above, holding fast to our strategy and allowing no diversionary activity to pull us off course. We must keep our eyes and hearts focused on our highest aspiration — that of preserving this wonderful United States of America. The John Birch Society is the only organization designed to win that *war*. Regardless of your activities, please keep this in mind at all times and look for opportunities to recruit good people into our ranks.

At some point in this essay, the reader may come to the conclusion that we are very jealous of our members and discourage participation in anything outside of The John Birch Society. We plead guilty to the first but not-guilty to the second opinion. What we would like our members to realize is that there are roadblocks and false leaders and solutions in front of us aimed at diluting our efforts.

The most common tangents to watch out for are briefly explained in the following pages.

Tangent: The Income Tax Rebellion

But we have thought, and still do, that any widespread and organized refusal to pay taxes by people acting in unison would be a mistaken approach to the problem.... Naturally, therefore, we would be reluctant — or would even be discouraged if we were discourageable — to see any sizable fraction of our members running off on all kinds of futile tangents from hopeless new parties to tax rebellion.

— Robert Welch, June 1972 *Bulletin*

The John Birch Society does not oppose federal taxation; we oppose the unconstitutional misuse of taxing power and the waste of billions in tax dollars. We also oppose a direct federal tax on incomes because it is overly intrusive, it imposes an unnecessary regulatory burden, and it gives politicians an irresistible opportunity to manipulate the actions of taxpayers. If the federal government were limited to constitutionally authorized powers, there would be no need for an income tax and the government would function with other authorized tax revenues.

Nevertheless, we do not cheat on our taxes, refuse to pay them, or play games with the IRS. Abusive tax collection methods employed by the Internal Revenue Service abated considerably following congressional hearings. However, Congress continued to allow many unconstitutional procedures relating to searches, seizures, and presumed guilt. We are not likely to enjoy all constitutional protections even with a “kinder, gentler” tax collection system until the 16th Amendment is repealed and the graduated income tax is abolished.

Meanwhile, citizens must not be led into the tax rebellion trap. We sometimes suspect that the IRS makes the tax evasion rope deliberately long in order to snare people who are engaged in the freedom fight. The enemy could hardly contrive a better way to take patriotic men and women out of the battle than to tie them down with extensive audits, expensive court contests, and endless appeals. Tax rebels or evaders who manage to stay out of jail spend much of their time — often the rest of their lives — trying to pay back-taxes, huge penalties, and heavy interest charges. Perhaps nothing cripples a free citizen so severely or hampers his effectiveness so badly as this tangent.

Some tax evaders complain they alone are fighting the Conspiracy by withholding the tax dollars needed for building the new world order. They insist that a great number of equally courageous Americans could break the back of the enemy by cutting off the flow of tax money. This argument hardly holds up when one considers the Insider control of our nation’s flow of unbacked currency. Any reduction in tax revenue caused by tax rebels would be made up by more printing-press dollars, resulting in “taxes” being paid in the form of lost value of our currency.

Moreover, tax rebels supply just one more excuse for federal enforcement agencies to add more officers and more harsh enforcement measures. This reaction on the part of government plays conveniently (or even purposely) into the hands of the Insiders who seek more government, more power, and more control over every aspect of our lives. Please don’t fall for this tangent — it’s a certain trap.

The federal graduated income tax is a symptom of a far greater problem: a brainwashed public suffering under the belief that the United States would fall apart without this means of massive taxation. When enough people understand the proper and limited role of the federal government, they will prevail upon Congress to introduce an amendment repealing the 16th Amendment. Solution to the income tax? Build a better understanding among our fellow citizens of the principles of a limited and frugal U.S. government. And create awareness of the unique power that an accountable Congress has under the Constitution to restore fiscally sound government without the income tax.

Tangent: Religious Neutralism

Do not yield to either of the two great psychological weapons which the Insiders are now using more extensively and more forcefully than even a decade ago. First is the argument that we should simply go home, repent our sins, and pray, thus leaving the outcome of this struggle entirely up to God. We urge you to pray, by all means, whenever you feel that prayer is in order; but never stop working against a Conspiracy that is already destroying the freedom to worship God at all wherever it can do so.

— Robert Welch, September 1976 *Bulletin*

For John [Birch] believed completely in free will, and even by his own understanding of the relationship of man to God, he had to be worthy in order to be chosen as one of God's instruments on earth.

— Robert Welch, *The Life of John Birch*

America's religious foundation is essential to restoring freedom and truth. The John Birch Society is not a religious organization; however, most of its members are devoutly religious, and their enduring faith provides them with a foundation of hope for achieving success in the secular affairs of our nation.

A few of our best citizens, however, have withheld their time, labor, and resources from the cause of freedom under the belief that only worship and prayer can save our nation in its present "fallen" state. They feel that it is too late to work for freedom because the world is already doomed to destruction and that the end is near. A few individuals go even further by hoping to hasten the "Day of the Lord" by allowing evil to flourish.

A widely accepted, biblically based position regarding the end of the world is that "*not even the angels of heaven know the day nor the hour,*" and therefore, no one can profess to know when the Lord will come or when the world will end. In the meantime, we sense a profoundly *sacred* duty to resist evil and promote good at every opportunity. Most religious Americans understand that God has given them that responsibility. Moreover, they accept that all men everywhere are bound by humane conscience to oppose oppression and evil, save lives, liberate captives, and pronounce the truth as quickly as it becomes known to them. It is when people do not follow their conscience and do not take steps to oppose evil that evil has prevailed — punishing everyone including those of their own faith and their loved ones.

A belief formerly prominent among almost all Christian sects — sometimes attributed to St. Augustine but dating back to the Apostles — can be summarized as follows: "Pray as if it were all up to God, but work as if it were all up to me." This is a good maxim that should keep us on course as we work and pray for freedom in this troubled world.

Tangent: Anti-Semitism

[The Communists] have dupes and agents clamoring incessantly that the Society is anti-Semitic; and at the very same time they have agents provocateurs everywhere trying to persuade members of the Society that the whole Communist movement is simply a Jewish conspiracy, and that these members are wasting their time in The John Birch Society because its leaders do not have the courage to name the enemy. And by this typical Communist method, they have made anti-Semitism into one of the most powerful weapons in their whole arsenal of destruction.

— Robert Welch, November 1966 *Bulletin*

Anti-Jewish sentiment does great harm to the struggle for truth and justice in America, particularly when bad feelings toward the descendants of Judah translate into unfair treatment or persecution. Anti-Semitism thrives on hatred and makes a mockery of man's God-given rights to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," which we valiantly defend. Those unalienable rights belong to men and women of every race, color, creed, and nationality.

Anti-Semitism is particularly harmful in the battle for freedom because bad feelings toward Jews tend to preoccupy and warp the thinking of otherwise capable people. Deeply biased individuals nearly always end up on a futile course that eventually takes them entirely out of the freedom battle. Their racist sentiments make them useless to the legitimate cause that others, with God's help, so earnestly pursue. Burdened with a repugnant fixation, they are unable to influence the many other responsible Americans who need to be recruited into organized, constructive action.

It is important to note that anti-Semitism, in relation to the present struggle, has been traced to a spurious document known as the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. This publication is widely recognized as a fabrication. Robert Welch believed that the *Protocols* were a fraud perpetrated by Nikolai Lenin. He wrote that Lenin needed a mechanism for drawing fire away from himself, so he made up the whole idea of a Zionist plot.

Lenin, along with his collaborators, conspired to misdirect blame for the deeds of Communists onto the Jews. They promoted the notion that the Jews were the real force behind Communism. The *Protocols* are supposed to prove that the Jews have long plotted to take control of the world by methods actually being employed by the Communists.

Anti-Semitism is worse than a tangent — it is a trap from which few escape once they become obsessed with bad feelings toward the Jewish people. Patriotic citizens who develop such an obsession are not welcome in The John Birch Society. They are of no value to the freedom battle.

Nothing is more dishonest or vicious than charges that The John Birch Society is racist or anti-Semitic. Ironically, among the organizations that have circulated this defamatory allegation is the Anti-Defamation League. Men and women who look into this charge realize they have been lied to when they discover highly capable Jewish members serving at all levels of The John Birch Society. There is a large body of patriotic Jews in the United States who will stand up and help The Birch Society throw off the chains of tyranny once they learn that The John Birch Society is one of their most valiant defenders. [See also, "Tangent: The Masonic Implication."]

Tangent: Information Junkies

Set a good example of “keeping your eye on the ball,” and try to be of help in having all other members do the same.

— Robert Welch, May 1965 *Bulletin*

That we must always be realistic in appraisals of our predicament is quite different from actively promoting despair. For unless we tell it like it is, we have little hope of convincing those who are ignorant of what is happening. This task, however, is no more important than presenting the constructive side of the picture. Or, if you will, the solutions to the problems we face. Unless we do this, then as bearers of bad news only, we are contributing little to building the necessary resistance in time.

— Thomas N. Hill, August 1980 *Bulletin*

The upsurge in electronic and print data brings us to a tangent that makes its way into our meetings through those who become fascinated with rumors or “bad news.” They become what might be called “information junkies.” While we always encourage our members to study and become informed on the issues, we do so only as a means to a solution. Dwelling on the “ain’t it awful” is not the goal of The John Birch Society; our object is to change the course of history and thereby advance the cause of freedom.

Moreover, a high percentage of the information in circulation today, particularly on the Internet, is unreliable. And that which is accurate usually does not support a focused concerted action program and therefore should not take up our time individually or in our meetings. One of our veteran members, recalling Mr. Welch’s earlier warnings about six forms of neutralism, registered his dismay:

[T]he internet and use of e-mail have risen to a new form of neutralism. That is not to say this marvelous technology is in itself valueless, but as with most technological marvels they have their place and should be used intelligently.

Logging on and using the “net” is easy. It’s fun. Simple to use, and you can do it sitting on your backside at home. That’s a lot easier than setting up a table in a shopping center and obtaining signatures on our *Get US out!* petition, going door to door amongst neighbors, or distributing TRIM bulletins. And what does the majority of that email correspondence deal with? Just about anything except our JBS agenda items. Some days I’ll get twenty or thirty emails and a high percentage are the exchange of various aspects or reports of problems caused by big government, unconstitutional legislation, media disinformation, foundations, etc. Sure, they’re interesting and informative, but just passing this material around doesn’t really accomplish much of anything.... Oh sure, a few people may be shocked briefly, but don’t take any action. They’ll just wait until tomorrow when another batch of email will arrive to excite them....

Email is basically a “one way” correspondence vehicle. You seldom if ever get any feedback or response. And how often does one respond or follow up with personal contact? That’s one of the traps of email, i.e. to just assume it was well received and

tomorrow I'll send another and another and another, and "boy am I doing a good job at Birching" or "boy does this make me feel good." Just exchanging correspondence with other complainers, friends, relatives, or whomever does not really accomplish much. In fact, for most of us it's just a waste of precious time that could and should be spent on more productive action programs of the monthly agenda.

The professional research staff serving the Birch Society and *The New American* magazine constantly search and sort out information needed to stay on course and ahead of the enemy. The high-speed computer search systems at JBS headquarters are "state of the art," and our leaders are competent in analyzing tremendous amounts of information. This service is one of the great benefits of JBS membership.

Friends and members are discouraged from bringing to our meetings fax and email alerts that are often the tangents of other groups. The introduction of sensational news at our chapter meetings tends to distract from the carefully planned information and action agenda under consideration.

Sensational information from non-JBS sources is often incorrect, misleading, or irrelevant. It takes up valuable time, often displays the ignorance of the person sharing it, and may embarrass the Chapter Leader, who — at that particular time — will not likely have the facts on hand to evaluate it. If a member feels we have overlooked something important, he should contact his Chapter Leader privately or send the information to JBS headquarters via his MMM for evaluation. We urge every member to remain steadfast and on course by advancing the agenda items in the *JBS Bulletin*.

Tangent: False Leadership on the Right

Time after time ... the Conservatives do most of the work and put up most of the money to elect exactly the man who is wanted in office by The Insiders. This is simply because the anti-Communists themselves do not have enough understanding to detect the false leadership which is being imposed upon them. Too late, most of these good patriots, in sad disillusionment, finally wake up to the fact that they have been had. Then they immediately fall in step behind the newest fast-talking and photogenic stooge of The Insiders, whom the Liberal press has built up with tons of publicity — even by attacking him mildly as a Conservative, to make his “image” convincing — for that very purpose.

— Robert Welch, April 1968 *Bulletin*

The Insiders are traitors who fear exposure and expect opposition. Just as the Communists have done in years past, today’s Insiders create and control much of their own opposition. They manufacture or support false “right-wing” leaders from among amoral ladder-climbers, misguided egotists, and outright fools. The Insiders count on this bogus opposition to draw unsuspecting Americans off course.

How can we recognize these false leaders? First, take notice of their acceptance by the national media. An intelligent, well informed spokesman for true Americanism is not likely to get 10 seconds of time on national television. Ironically, therefore, if an individual emerges who advocates a course of supposedly wise “conservative” action and receives extensive coverage in the Establishment media: Beware! That well-esteemed individual, his group, or his publications are probably not worth your time.

This may seem to be a harsh generalization. However, please remember who controls the mass media. In judging any media-favored leader of America’s right wing, ask yourself whether he addresses the hard issues that truly threaten the Conspiracy:

- Does he identify members of the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) who occupy hundreds of high U.S. government offices? Or does he prefer merely to complain about too much red tape and too many government agencies?
- Does he blow the whistle on CFR members who occupy sensitive desks in the State Department? Or does he merely attack America’s “misguided” foreign policy?
- Does he explain America’s treasonous policies? Or does he merely conclude that policy failures result from poor judgement or ineptness?
- Does this “responsible conservative” identify the work of the Conspiracy? Or does he merely dwell on the fatal consequences of liberalism?
- Does he insist that the United States must get out of the United Nations? Or does he demand that the UN merely be “reformed”?
- Does this Establishment-dignified conservative reveal the extent of foreign aid and the transfer of U.S. technology to America’s enemies? Or does he simply lament the growing scientific and technical progress of Russia, China, or other anti-American regimes?

False “conservative” leaders are very adept at tailoring their speeches to the audience before them, avoiding the hard issues, and stressing the inconsequential.

Traditional conservatives understand the tremendous wisdom embodied in the Constitution and base many of their arguments on constitutional principles. Today's phony "conservatives" never refer to themselves as constitutionalists. And surely they are not.

A handful of well-known Establishment conservatives are regularly trotted before the nation's cameras, particularly upon the release of some major late-breaking story. They seem always to be on the verge of saying something important about world events or blowing the whistle on who really runs things. But these men know just when to stop short of naming the enemy or pinpointing the real cause of America's problems.

Some of these opportunists maintain a massive mailing list of registered Republicans and contributors to conservative causes. The names of these well-known Establishment right wingers appear on numerous fundraising letters mailed from the Washington, D.C. area. These letters ask for your support of projects such as balancing the federal budget, limiting the terms of congressmen, or electing some allegedly conservative candidate to national office. Notice that these projects fight symptoms, not problems. Our nation's mailing-list experts on the right are very skilled at raising false hope and large amounts of money to supposedly solve our problems *for us*. Unfortunately, much of the money so raised is dissipated in mailing costs, commissions, and overhead.

One version of the phony conservative operates under the banner of "responsible Republican." So-called "responsible Republicans" drive such publications as *National Review* and *The Weekly Standard*, where fluff and bluff displace substantive information about who runs America and why Americans are losing their freedoms. We strongly suspect these periodicals are intended to satisfy a demand for balanced opposition against *Time*, *Life*, and *Newsweek* — when in reality they are the instruments of surrender, accepting piecemeal concessions of principle, always losing ground to the collectivist left.

Please beware of manufactured conservative leaders, their fundraising, their causes, and their pretenses.

Tangent: The Masonic Implication

[Condemning all Masons as conspirators] would be like condemning all American Jews over the crimes and cruelties for which Henry Kissinger has been responsible....

[I]t is a fundamental principle of The John Birch Society — as we have often repeated — to judge every individual human being as an individual, entirely on the basis of his own morality, integrity, and purpose, without regard to his color, creed, social background, or even the organizations to which he belongs — provided none of those organizations is one with a discipline which he must accept for participation in activities contrary to his own conscience. And while I have never been a Mason, nor a member of any other secret society, I do not believe that the ordinary American Mason today is subject to any such discipline.

— Robert Welch, December 1977 *Bulletin*

Membership in the Conspiracy, either at the outer circles or within its innermost center, is not confined to any religion, race, nationality, or fraternal organization. It should be understood that the Conspiracy is not the Jews, or the Moslems, or Catholics, or Masons, or Protestants, or Mormons, or the adherents of any single identifiable set of beliefs. The Conspiracy would be pleased to lead activist Americans on a tangent by creating an obsession against one or the other of these organizations. To be sure, the Conspiracy places its agents in all kinds of legitimate groups at every possible opportunity, but these groups must not be mistaken for the Conspiracy itself.

From as early as 1780, many of the European Masonic lodges were used and corrupted by the conspirator Adam Weishaupt and his Illuminati. European Masonry was a victim of the conspiracy in its earlier days as have been other organizations and religions that have been infiltrated and taken over. Some groups have been used and distorted — sometimes only to be abandoned later and discarded when the parasite has sapped the energy of the host. It must be understood that the Insiders of the Conspiracy are the apostates of all morality-based religions and subscribe to no tenets of faith other than their godless and relentless drive for power. At its core the Conspiracy is Satanic — it opposes and seeks to corrupt all uplifting faiths. It will attempt to use any and all organizations for its purposes. Patriotic citizens who expect to serve a valuable role in the freedom fight must steer clear of the notion that Masonry or any particular denomination is the Conspiracy.

Tangent: Public Protest

But obviously, if the Insiders at the top cause enough of these [Vietnam moratorium] “demonstrations” to be organized, and to become big enough and disorderly enough, the American people can readily be brought to accept, approve, and even applaud, the use by these Insiders of army troops, as an auxiliary or substitute for local police forces, to restore “law and order.”

— Robert Welch, December 1969 *Bulletin*

Wise activists are wary of attention-seeking activities that challenge public order. Any such major activity nearly always attracts the media. Television crews and reporters hope to find strife, faction, contention, and even violence at such events. News coverage of public dissent in the form of marches, demonstrations, or protests plays directly into the hands of the Conspiracy. Anarchy — or virtually any form of public disorder — creates an excuse for government to show its muscle and exercise force against the dissidents, which turns out to be force against everyone. This is one of the most subtle ways by which governments expand their power.

The general public wants order, and the Insiders want police power for which the disorder is a pretext. Citizens must beware of being used in demonstrations, marches, or any form of public protest that strengthens the enemy by furnishing an excuse for more laws, more government, and extreme enforcement measures.

Once a public protest is organized — for good or ill — all it takes is one or two people planted in the crowd to provide the violence or ill manners that can be displayed on television to discredit the cause.

For this and other good reasons The John Birch Society does not participate in demonstrations, marches, and other public protests. Moreover, we scrupulously stay away from areas where confrontation, clashes, or violence are likely to occur.

Tangent: Civil Disobedience

[A]s also stated in the Blue Book, we believe that a certain amount of government is an absolute necessity for any civilization. Because, without law to protect a man's life, family, and the results of his productive labor, there can be no freedom — as both the wisest Greeks and Romans had already learned two thousand years before us.

— Robert Welch, July 1978 *Bulletin*

It is not proper to test a law by disobedience to a law. Respect for law must be cultivated as a virtue in a free society. Moreover, civil disobedience has often been employed as a Communist tactic to induce passage of more restrictive laws and to increase the government's enforcement powers.

Citizens must obey all civil and proper laws that protect life, liberty, and property. Questionable laws should be obeyed until they can be legally corrected or repealed by an orderly legislative process. Over a period of years, The John Birch Society has legally blocked passage of many unconstitutional and dangerous measures by exposing them to public scrutiny. And the Birch Society is ambitiously engaged in the lawful process of repealing and rescinding other bad laws, as well as blocking proposals for questionable constitutional amendments.

Tangent: Militant Revolt

The basic strategy involved here is also one reason why so much of the Communist agitation and propaganda of the poor misguided fools at the bottom is being aimed, in open and vicious hostility, at the very Insiders in the upper levels who are subtly encouraging, promoting, and controlling it. For their interest and plans do not lie in the success of these militant revolutionary operations, but in the public reaction which such increasing lawlessness and defiant treason will ultimately produce. The straightjacket of brutal force can then be subtly woven over the American people by the very power which these Insiders can gradually seize and exercise, with public acquiescence, as a means and under the excuse of putting an end to such rampant anarchy, crime, and confusion.

— Robert Welch, November 1969 *Bulletin*

Movements calling for the forceful or violent overthrow of our government (including those advocating even the slightest semblance of militant revolt) must be vigorously opposed. Actions of this kind are led either by misguided fools or by our mortal enemies. The problems in Washington stem only from the ignorance or neglect of the people. Neither Congress nor the White House is occupied by forces beyond our power to expose by vigilant, peaceful, and honorable means. Every necessary and lawful mechanism is now in place for expelling the politicians who violate their oaths. Additionally, we have the means for exposing the power that props them up.

The American people do not need a revolution except in their understanding and fortitude. It would be a serious mistake in strategy not to capitalize on the strength of the system we have inherited and which the enemies of freedom are working so hard to destroy. If Americans today understood the principles of good government and the forces of despotism, our problems would be solved readily through the normal political process. Without this understanding, what hope can there possibly be that freedom could come out of insurrection and revolution?

With widespread understanding, revolution would be unnecessary — the electorate would empower a constitutionalist Congress followed by the restoration of good government. Without that understanding, particularly of who the good guys and bad guys are, any attempt at rebellion would play into the very hands of those seeking total power.

Make no mistake about it, the power behind the scenes in Washington would be very pleased to see a violent revolution in America. It would bring about the very conditions under which that real enemy could surface and openly take full dictatorial control. As the JBS educational army advances, members and friends must not be tricked into employing methods having even so much as the semblance of anarchy, violence, or force.

Tangent: The Posse Comitatus

Armed posses working their individual will, in violation of constitutional processes, can only help the enemy.

— “A Critical Look At Sheriff’s Posse Comitatus,” The John Birch Society, February 1974

All throughout history, tyranny has been built on the ashes of anarchy.

— G. Vance Smith, “The Action Is in the Reaction,” April 1993 *Bulletin*

Members of the Posse Comitatus groups urge citizens to form posses in every county for the purpose of correcting the unconstitutional acts of leaders. They want to arrest violators, impanel a “citizen’s jury,” and try cases. If the verdict were “guilty,” the posse would even carry out the sentence. This incredible “solution” would at once destroy the American system of the separation of powers.

Whoever controlled the posse would decide what is a constitutional violation, what is not, and who should be arrested. The treachery of mob rule would replace the republican rule of law. It is not difficult to imagine who, or what powers, might advocate or “allow” the formation of Posse Comitatus groups throughout the United States. The Conspiracy loves anarchy, disorder, and any excuse to arm soldiers and police against the populace. All radical or violent measures play directly into the hands of the enemy. If widely adopted, this “lynch-mob,” vigilante mentality could lead to the destruction of our Constitution and very likely lead to anarchy and terror.

Tangent: The “State Citizen” or “Sovereign Citizen”

Those who think they are somehow striking a blow for freedom by not using driver’s licenses, marriage certificates, or zip codes, or by sitting in a courtroom or jail cell for not paying taxes — the so-called “patriots” and “tax protesters” — will not attract the people needed to win this struggle. The responsible people we need have no time for such nonsense and will avoid these misguided would-be patriots like the plague.

— JBS VP Tom Gow, *JBS Bulletin*, June 1995

Our only possible safety lies in victory.

— Robert Welch, April 1968 *Bulletin*

This fugitive reaction to growing federal power embraces a variety of bizarre notions. In general, their common theme is the idea that the individual can declare himself sovereign and independent of existing federal law. One brand of the “sovereign citizen” movement bases its thinking on a clause in Article I, Section 8 of the Constitution granting Congress the power to exercise exclusive legislation over the District of Columbia. Advocates of this idea purport that the clause means that only those born in D.C. are subject to the broader powers of Congress, and thus they regard themselves as *state* citizens exempt from federal taxes and other federal laws.

To become a state citizen, they say, one need only renounce his federal citizenship. Other adherents of this notion disclaim both state and federal citizenship and assert that they, as individuals, are independently sovereign and not subject to any laws at all. The Conspiracy, of course, would smile on such bizarre conduct. It would undoubtedly prefer that all “patriotic” Americans follow the precepts of the “sovereign citizen” movement, as those doing so can easily be held up to scorn and rendered ineffective at influencing others.

Fortunately, “sovereign citizen” advocates are few in number. They spend much of their time in court, in jail, or even in disguise — without identification or credit cards. Some refuse to carry a driver’s license or apply license plates to their vehicles. The “sovereign citizen” has imprisoned himself and is of no value in the fight for freedom. Actually, his actions make him worse than useless — he is a detriment to the freedom fight, because he usually tries to vindicate his course by recruiting others to his heresy.

Tangent: The Modern Militia

Before they can fully inaugurate the totalitarian police state of their planned new world order, the Insiders must portray genuine patriots as outlaws who are dangerous menaces to society.

— William F. Jasper, August 1996 *Bulletin*

Prior to 1787, each state, under the direction of its governor, maintained its own civilian defense force known as the militia. Generally, all able-bodied men were subject to serve in the militia in times of emergency. During the eighteenth century, there were strong public sentiments in the United States, and in England, against regular standing armies. Our founders provided, therefore, that each state would continue to keep and train a militia as its first line of defense.

The Constitution delegates to Congress the power to declare war and to call the militia into the service of the United States. Once the militia is called and a state of war declared, the president would serve as its commander-in-chief. The militia system was gradually supplanted by permanent army and naval forces that were trained to move as a homogenous unit; whereas the militia was not uniformly disciplined and proved to be ineffective.

Beginning about 1900, the state militia, as official units, were replaced by national guard units equipped with modern weapons and periodically trained under a unified national command. It should be noted that the phasing out of the militia has no bearing on the right of the people to keep and bear arms. This right is independent of the militia and applies to individual citizens for their security as well as that of the state.

We see danger in any *unofficial* group of uniformed, armed men training under the title of militia. Such groups become renegade bodies not under command of the governor and not subject to call by Congress. They have the potential to become armed revolutionary forces. One danger is that a provocateur would infiltrate the militia unit and incite violence, thus providing an opportune pretext for conspirators in government to undertake repressive measures against all citizens and their rights.

But even if such unofficial groups contemplate no violent acts and pose no threat, the Insiders will still not miss the opportunity to portray the militia movement as gangs of dangerous, militant, or terrorist outfits. Under that pretext, all kinds of controls could be imposed, including the imprisonment of well-meaning members of the militia, the seizure of vehicles and real estate, confiscation of all firearms, even the declaration of martial law. The unauthorized, unregulated, unaccountable militia may well furnish an excuse for conspirators to criminalize all dissent.

Tangent: Jury Nullification

A sufficient understanding of what is taking place, on the part of enough community leaders, honest opinion molders, and plain good citizens throughout America, would set off a storm of questioning and of revulsion that would start the whole Communist framework of power cracking in many joints. Creating that understanding is merely a big job and a hard job, but by no means an impossible one.

— Robert Welch, December 1963 *Bulletin*

Nullification of a law by a jury, as it pertains to a particular case, is a little known prerogative that a jury may exercise. Most judges have never heard of the process, and recoil at the notion that a jury would judge the law as well as the facts pertaining to the case before them. There is an organized effort to apprise potential jurists of their right to judge the law and nullify it if they see fit.

We do not challenge the legitimacy of jury nullification. It may even help achieve justice in a few cases. However, we question the value of the jury nullification movement in the overall scope of the struggle to save America. The movement must first inform enough potential jurists, hope a sufficient number are called at the same time to the same jury, determine if a law is misapplied in the particular case they are called to render a verdict on, and — if the law is wrong and they so determine — hope the judge does not squelch their effort. Then, if not squelched and the law relating to that case is nullified, what has been accomplished? The nullified law in question applies only to that one case; it does not nullify the law for all time, and the jury's opinion does not apply in subsequent, similar cases.

We should also recognize that jury nullification is a double-edged sword that can be used for good or bad. However, even if correctly applied, the uneven opportunity of “enlightened” juries to reach past repressive laws and preserve justice in particular cases is no more a sufficient solution to repressive legislation than are tax loopholes to the growing burden of the welfare state.

Given the time, effort, and element of chance inherent in this effort, the accomplishments are small at best. Our position on the jury nullification movement is taken in light of the tremendous effort that must be undertaken to expose and destroy the Conspiracy. Would not the enemy be pleased if more American activists expended their energies on the jury nullification battlefield rather than on the front lines to cure the ignorance of the voting public?

Tangent: Single-Issue “Friends”

As a rule, in fact a rather firm rule, will you please put the time and thought and energy and determination thus provided behind our projects, instead of much of your effort — and of our total strength — in support of the ever-changing projects and plans of some of the coattail riders who, with no organization and little following behind them, want to use the framework and the membership of The John Birch Society to give substance to their dreams.

— Robert Welch, July 1971 *Bulletin*

Single-issue organizers have become very adept at persuading Birchers to work under their auspices on causes the Society already believes in, such as fighting the Equal Rights Amendment, defending our right to keep and bear arms, pushing for taxpayer relief, or opposing the crime of abortion. We often help various groups by publishing information about their issue, even about themselves, in our national magazine. In the past, we would often publish the names of the groups and their leaders in the national *JBS Bulletin*.

Unfortunately, these favors have rarely been reciprocated. No matter how fairly we treat our single-issue allies in this war for freedom, few ever seem to acknowledge our help, offer thanks, or give credit either privately or publicly. We can think of only one reason for such strange rudeness: The leaders of these groups fear being publicly associated with The John Birch Society. Why? Because the JBS is the main target of the Conspiracy, and the other groups seem to want to avoid the flak by distancing themselves from us and staying out of the danger zone.

Most single-issue organizers are undoubtedly sincere and well meaning. Unfortunately, some are not. In conservative activist circles, it is well known that Birchers are dedicated, reliable, and hardworking. Thus, certain promoters and opportunists see our members as a “ready-made work force,” and whenever possible they use Birchers to advance their personal ambitions or causes.

Those leaders who gladly use our members, but who refuse to acknowledge our help, eagerly compile active telephone and email trees for contacting Birchers privately to seek their assistance. They receive the help of our members in mailing out literature, making telephone calls, attending public hearings, and filling up a room with “live bodies” (their term, not ours) to impress the news reporters when they call a press conference.

We are usually good-natured about helping other groups who work on the right issues. Even so, the actions of many of their leaders toward The John Birch Society often rankle. Self-promoters who want help from our members, but who avoid the courageous stands necessary for victory, seem to want the glory of the battle, without standing in the line of fire.

No matter how valid any single issue might be, the war for freedom will never be won by any group, or its leader, who is afraid to name the enemy and strike out at his most vulnerable points. Nor can it be won by any leader who refuses to organize a force of grassroots Americans to use their influence to expose this enemy. There is widespread understanding of many of the single issues but not nearly as much understanding regarding the Conspiracy. Those who have the deeper understanding must concentrate on the deeper issues because if they don't, nobody else will and all battles will be lost.

All single-issue battles will be lost unless Americans fight to get us out of the United Nations and expose the forces behind it. Do we really have the time or luxury to do anything less than identify and rout the enemy?

Tangent: Politics and Bleeding the Birchers

[V]ictory at the polls, for a true Conservative, can come only when the electorate has been sufficiently informed about the basic issues themselves, and about every candidate's stand on those issues, so that the people understand clearly for whom and for what they are voting.

— Robert Welch, *The Neutralizers*

The modern Pied Piper is very skilled at flattering and exploiting Birchers by applauding their good character and hard work. Such a pretender is too proud to join The John Birch Society, but not too proud to use our members for some wonderful new program to “save the nation.” But before his plan can be implemented, he needs just two ingredients: willing workers and money. He seems to think JBS members are just sitting around waiting for someone to come along and give them something to do, and something to finance.

When asked if he belongs to the Society, the inevitable explanation goes like this: “Oh, I have great respect for The John Birch Society — I am really a Bircher at heart. I share all your concerns about our country and stand by your principles. I can't join right now because I have connections with the news media I would lose as a member of the Birch Society. However, I can help you better by getting the word out and working on the outside.”

After all or part of this old song is sung, his wonderful new program to “save the nation” often turns out to be getting himself elected to the state legislature or Congress, or some other political office. In his new office, he promises to use his influence to turn things around, stand by the Constitution, and fight boldly for freedom.

But first he needs workers and contributors — he needs those faithful, ambitious, dedicated Birchers to do his grunt work in the precincts, to help raise money, and to write their own checks payable to the campaign.

We should have no time for those individuals who seek to use our labor while pretending to be on our side of the freedom battle. Members must be alert and learn to recognize the self-serving cowards and opportunists who want to use JBS members to realize their personal political, financial, or other aspirations.

We must remember that no politician can rise far above the level of understanding of his constituency and remain in office. If the people elect him on shallow or vague promises, he will either be shallow and vague or he will not get reelected. A politician cannot suddenly become something the voters do not understand. That is why our first mission is not in electing someone to political office, even if the candidate is one hundred percent sincere. Our first mission is in the homes and neighborhoods of America, where principles must be taught and understanding must be built among the electorate. The natural result will be better elected officials and civil servants at every level of government.

While we in no way wish to discourage all participation in partisan politics, please remain focused on our mission, and do not allow office seekers — whether genuine or charlatan — to lead you away on promises they likely can't keep.

Tangent: Partisan Politics

Patriotism means to stand by the country. It does not mean to stand by the President or any other public official save exactly to the degree in which he himself stands by the country.

— Theodore Roosevelt

[I]f political action alone, or of itself, were the key to the solution of our problem, we would have solved that problem long ago. We proceed on a solid and more permanent program which includes political action, but without letting political action get out of perspective.

— Robert Welch, *The Neutralizers*

Notwithstanding our Founding Father's disdain for political parties, party machinery is in place and not likely to go away. What George Washington called "the baneful spirit of party" is a tendency toward party zeal and loyalty that so often exceeds loyalty to country and adherence to principle. Party faithful tend to mistake party loyalty for patriotism, placing faithfulness to party leaders, platforms, or party unity ahead of the principles of constitutional government.

At the highest levels of party politics, "the baneful spirit of party" is not merely a tendency, it governs the party system. Make no mistake about it, state parties and local units have little or no influence over political action at the national level. The leadership of the two major political parties is — and long has been — under the control of the Insiders. Even though a party's national platform may contain a number of principled, patriotic positions, with few exceptions the national strategy follows a pattern established by the enemy.

We believe that members of the Birch Society should work within the party of their choice to nominate and elect the best candidates and — where possible — help get correct principles written into their party's official platform.

However, we offer a word of caution: Political action cannot rescue a nation adrift in a sea of ignorance. In order to get elected and remain in office, even the best politicians will appeal to the public's existing level of understanding, rather than try to raise that level to a higher standard. Without the support of sufficient numbers of informed voters, few politicians will keep promises to limit government to its proper role. Instead, they find themselves walking a line designed to appease the uninformed voter.

Successful political action will be the *result* of correct information. Good candidates cannot be elected, or retained in office, by voters who cannot distinguish between a charlatan and a statesman or between a worthwhile cause and a pretext for power. Therefore, our first priority must be to invest our time and resources in building greater understanding of the principles of Americanism and of the forces working to obscure and destroy those principles.

Time and money invested in educating our friends is never wasted, whereas time and money spent getting out the vote or promoting a candidate is nearly always lost. This is true, even when our favorite candidate wins the election. For if he honors his oath of office and adheres to correct principles, he will not be understood or appreciated by the voting majority in his district, and the media will surely work to destroy him prior to the next election.

Tangent: Wild Speculation

[O]ur only hope in the ultimate fight is that we offer leadership which can be trusted.

— Robert Welch, September 1962 *Bulletin*

The Society has built a reputation for credibility based on solid research, and that credibility can be quickly destroyed by crying “wolf” unnecessarily or prematurely.

— William F. Jasper October 1993 *Bulletin*

It is admittedly difficult to expose the Master Conspiracy — its existence, record, and intent — even though a great amount of information and history are available to document our claims. For this reason, we urge our members to utilize for this task only what is known and well documented regarding the purposes and tactics of the Conspiracy.

Wild statements to the effect that “Communists and conspirators are everywhere” must be carefully avoided. Our enemies are not everywhere. They are but a small number, even though their power and influence are very extensive. The Conspiracy also persuades many more individuals to do its work, but most of these know nothing about the Conspiracy and have no idea they are employed by it.

We must also avoid exaggerated, panic-inducing statements and wild speculation. Rumors concerning “black helicopters” mobilized to suppress opposition to the new world order, the imminent invasion of America by United Nations troops, or weather modification scares must not be repeated as fact by our members or attributed to The John Birch Society. These rumors misrepresent the Conspiracy’s strategy and ignore the layers of strength the Conspiracy has yet to overcome. They ignore the fact that the Conspiracy still needs to practice deception and patient gradualism. It is entirely possible that rumors of this sort are planted by the enemy for the purpose of destroying credibility and keeping good people chasing non-existent dragons.

The Conspiracy does not work along the lines indicated by many of those rumors. For example, there are no plans for the UN to make a military assault on the United States. That is contrary to the scheme; Insider plans call for America to enslave itself by legislating away its freedom and independence in a subtle, step-by-step process. A military attack by the UN would destroy that plan, which is now moving very nicely in the direction wanted by the Conspiracy. Also, a sudden, UN military assault on the United States would be a dead giveaway — it would alert all Americans, who would rise up and throw off the enemy. A UN attack would destroy a half-century of propaganda propping up the world body as the only hope for peace. Such an act would be devastating to the Conspiracy and its UN foundation for world government. And above all, an overt attack would destroy the step-by-step plan for Americans to be kept in ignorance while they enslave themselves.

This tangent addresses *false* alarms that stem from a *false* notion of the Conspiracy and its modus operandi. We realize the Conspiracy has used and will use real violence and terror to create enough fear to induce more laws, regulations, and government controls over the American people. Terrorist attacks on the United States serve the Conspiracy well, creating the fear needed

for passage of severe legislation that Americans would ordinarily oppose.

Members and friends must not waste time on enemy-induced tangents and spurious rumors that make us look ridiculous, destroy our credibility, and take us away from dispensing bona fide information. Our progress in enlisting new members in effective organized action is the only thing the Conspiracy fears.

Tangent: Local Battles

[O]ur effectiveness lies in concentration. We must use our fire power as a rifle not as a blunderbuss.

— Robert Welch, October 1961 *Bulletin*

[The Communists] are relying heavily on the expectation that nobody is going to be able to keep tens of thousands of Conservative individualists working together in concerted action against specific targets, instead of going off in all directions on forays of their own. But maybe they are wrong!

— Robert Welch, January 1968 *Bulletin*

We must not attempt to fight every state and local measure that violates the principles of good government. The endless flow of bad state legislation is the result of voter neglect or ignorance, which the long-term programs of the JBS are geared to correct. The state legislatures handle hundreds of bad bills every session, and we could soon wear ourselves out attempting to confront such measures.

At times, however, proposed state laws that would, for example, impact the U.S. Constitution or violate our God-given right to keep and bear arms are discovered locally and brought to the attention of JBS leaders. In such instances, local JBS opposition may be authorized in the regular *JBS Bulletin* or by special fax or email alert or through the field staff.

It is true that state and local laws are more easily reversed than federal measures. It is also true that it is often easier to gain *brief* public attention over local issues. However, it should be remembered that all harmful laws will be repealed at every level of government as we draw closer to our goal of building understanding of the *big picture* among a greater number of people. State and federal politicians are very sensitive to what their constituents know and how they feel. Increasing the understanding of their constituents is our first order of business. No other activity should come ahead of that goal.

Tangent: Why Not Disband and Start Over?

How an individual in the Congress, House or Senate, may vote will depend upon the people back home, the individuals that sent that individual to Washington. In the final analysis, Joseph de Maistre will be proven right, that we will get the kind of government we deserve.

— Congressman Lawrence P. McDonald, April 1983 *Bulletin*

Waking up the citizenry must come first, and then an aroused and informed electorate will take care of other deficiencies in short order.

— Thomas N. Hill, August 1978 *Bulletin*

Several groups have been formed that advocate rolling the nation back to the 18th century and starting over with a clean slate.

One movement, under the title *The Refounding Amendment*, advocates the disbanding of Congress, the firing of all bureaucrats, and the repealing of all but the first ten amendments, retaining only the Constitution and Bill of Rights and adopting a new 11th Amendment authorizing the refounding of the United States.

A similar movement, under the title *The Committee of 50 States*, is based on the idea that the states must assert their authority to withdraw from the Union, fire all the bureaucrats, dismantle the federal agencies, dismiss all elected officials (Congress and the president), disband the Supreme Court, amend Article III and Article VII of the U.S. Constitution, repeal the 14th and 16th amendments, elect all new officials, and start a new federal government without the necessity of risking a second constitutional convention.

Both plans appear to be well motivated, and their authors are likely sincere, yet horribly naïve. Advocates of both “start-over” movements feel that America’s main problem is a federal government that has gotten out of control. However, their plans do not address the cause of the problem; they merely advocate starting over on essentially the same constitutional footing as in 1787.

No problem can be solved, of course, without an understanding of its cause. The cause of today’s out-of-control government is public ignorance. If either of the proposed phase-out plans were to be implemented today, what kind of new president and new Congress would the people elect? Obviously, they would elect officials no better than the politicians they had just fired. The problem is not in Washington; the problem does not persist because bad people are in office. The problem persists because negligent, uninformed voters send charlatans, rather than statesmen, to represent them in Washington.

By what great magic will the same old electorate make better choices the second time around during any refounding process? If Americans had the understanding necessary to refound our government on a proper footing, they would insist today that their representatives adhere to the proper role of government. There would be no need to refound.

The best either plan could accomplish is to kick out the old socialists in Washington and replace

them with new socialists. But much worse would likely happen. Since most of the public receive their information through media controlled by the Conspiracy, we could count on the Conspiracy using the transition to create turmoil and advance its aims. The Conspiracy loves anarchy, for the absence of law and the ensuing chaos leave a leadership vacuum the enemy would instantly fill. The Conspiracy could never pass up such a golden opportunity to consolidate its control over the United States.

Both plans betray an ignorance of America's root problems: They reflect no understanding of the nature and disposition of the enemy; and they display little awareness of the fundamental responsibility of the American people. It is the American people who have permitted our government to run amuck through their ignorance and neglect.

No member of The John Birch Society should participate in or support either of these terribly flawed ideas.

Tangent: Divide and Destroy

There is no reason why any dissident member should be allowed to make The John Birch Society over to suit himself, especially since almost every such member has an entirely different view of what should be done, and how, from the views of any other dissident. The Society really would be torn to pieces by factions warring over which way it should go, the minute we let it get off the original track. Those who disagree with our strategy certainly have the privilege and the duty of fighting Communism in whatever ways may seem best to themselves. And we wish them well in doing so. But we must remain true to our own principles, methods, and purposes.

— Robert Welch, October 1966 *Bulletin*

As a general rule with regard to all attacks, we think it is far better for us to ignore, rather than to defend — and simply get on about our business.

— Robert Welch, March 1962 *Bulletin*

As noted earlier, the Birch Society is organized and structured to make it hard to infiltrate or subvert. On several occasions, however, a member or former employee of the Society has tried to draw members into a movement of his own making, promising quick results, offering a better plan, or assuring superior leadership.

During the 1960s and again in the 1970s, some former staff thought they could run The John Birch Society better than Robert Welch. They demanded that Mr. Welch resign from his leadership of the Society. Others, having gained the confidence of good members, set up parallel organizations.

In warning of the great harm that could result from dividing the JBS, Robert Welch wrote:

But today there are some fifteen ‘companies’ or individuals, scattered all over the United States, that seek to achieve fame (or at least notoriety) and fortune (or at least a living) on the basis of their relationship to The John Birch Society. The doubts and confusion about the Society, which they thus generate in so many quarters for their own purposes, are reaching a substantial volume and variety. And their combined impact could become quite damaging to our own plans and effectiveness.... It is not our aim to hurt anybody else, but simply to protect ourselves by revealing the truth about various matters.

In 1997 several former members of our field staff helped set up a parallel organization. This brought the current JBS leader, G. Vance Smith, face to face with a challenge nearly identical to that confronted earlier by Robert Welch. The new dissidents also used proprietary mailing lists to send out letters demanding that Mr. Smith resign.

The most troubling aspect of this effort to splinter The John Birch Society was the piety of the perpetrators. Posing as devoutly religious individuals, they went about the United States circulating false rumors intended to undermine support for our leaders, targeting especially the support of major financial contributors.

The actions of these self-appointed leaders — who still have no dues-paying members, no

organized chapters, no full-time field staff, no arsenal of educational weapons, and no way on earth of harming the Conspiracy — required us to expend countless hours of staff time to document their folly and restore the confidence of members whom they had temporarily deceived.

No faithful member or employee of the Birch Society would do anything to hinder the tremendous organized work being done by the Society members — the only earthly work that has the potential to save the Constitution, destroy the Conspiracy, and preserve freedom in America.

The claim of dissidents that their efforts to demoralize members and undermine support (of all kinds) for the Society's leadership will somehow lead to a *strengthening* of the Society is simply crazy at best. We do not understand former friends who tear down rather than build. Perhaps they are driven by personal pride or selfish ambition. But regardless of their motive, efforts of this kind could accomplish precisely what the enemy wants: a weak, divided, and demoralized John Birch Society.

By the grace of God, these attacks have not been successful. In fact, because of the high character of our members and their sound understanding of principle, we lost very few members and very little support. But, if history is our guide, our present and future leaders can expect similar challenges in the future.

Whom Does the Enemy Really Fear?

The one form of opposition they have never faced before is a sizable, organized, permanent educational force dedicated to the task of exposing their Conspiracy.... And how much these enemies fear the potential ultimate reach and effectiveness of such a body is shown by the incredible ends to which they have gone, and means they have used, in their efforts to destroy us.

— Robert Welch, April 1973 *Bulletin*

The progress and potential of The John Birch Society are validated by the number and intensity of attacks levied against the Society by the institutions most heavily influenced by the Conspiracy: the national media, higher education, government, and the major political parties. An enemy so entrenched, so arrogant, and so powerful as this Conspiracy would never go to the trouble to mount a concerted, sustained, unfair attack against any organization unless that targeted group posed a foreseeable and foreboding threat to its power.

It is instructive to note that the tangents or tangent groups identified in this booklet incur little more than token opposition by the Conspiracy or its agents. Only the Birch Society has been on the receiving end of the most fierce, foul, and unfair treatment ever perpetrated against good, honorable citizens by America's ruling elite.

Members should regard this treatment as a badge of honor.

Last Words

Which leads to our one piece of advice that we have thrown at you many times before. It is very simple: Keep a level head throughout this whole struggle! And never yield to despair, no matter how great the confusion.

— Robert Welch, September 1973 *Bulletin*

Please fight to stay on course. Do not allow anything to obscure the purpose or diminish the urgency of the work we are doing in The John Birch Society.

The tangents we have discussed obviously do not cover every possible challenge to that focus. However, any member can evaluate a proposed activity or movement by asking the right questions. For example:

- Does this movement or activity help identify and expose the enemy?
- Does this proposal take into consideration the existence, cunning, tactics, and power of the Conspiracy?
- Would this undertaking lead to a reduction — or to an increase — in the size, power, and scope of government?
- Is it legal, honorable, and constitutional?
- Is the objective to be accomplished by building informed pressure for an act of Congress, or does the plan presume favorable rulings in the courts?
- Can it be accomplished without help from the Establishment news media?
- Does this non-JBS effort rely on money or manpower from members of The John Birch Society?
- Does this organization work at the grass-roots educating the people or in the hallowed halls of leadership lobbying the famous?
- Does this group strike at the root of the problem or slap only at the tentacles?
- Do the organizers work at what they say, or do they merely raise funds and employ public relations to win people to their banner?
- Do they enlist, inform, and challenge patriotic Americans to work in an organized program to alert their neighbors, or do they offer a “program” that does it all for you?

The importance of these questions is almost self-evident. America will not be saved in a court of law. The nation will not be saved by a multiplicity of new laws, but by the repeal of many measures that corrupt the simple, proper role of government. An idea that relies on favorable media coverage cannot get off the ground at present. America cannot be saved without God’s help, and no act of Providence can be expected unless perfectly honorable and legal means are employed. Anyone or any group professing to save America, but refusing to identify the enemy, can never accomplish its purpose. Any outside group whose goals depend upon action by members of The John Birch Society can do no more than thin our ranks and neutralize our efforts.

We can take heart from the fact that we are so feared by a terribly powerful enemy and so envied by the impostors who exude shallow patriotism. Those two conclusions do not come from an inflated sense of our own abilities — but on the contrary — stem from stunning evidence that in our dependence on God’s help we have been assisted far beyond anything we had ever dreamed

possible. By all human equations, the Birch Society should have been destroyed by the sinister attacks and diabolic smears of the 1960s. Our recovery from those early assaults, our tenacious clinging to principle, our undaunted fight to preserve the Constitution, and our constant upward reach must surely have been aided by a Power above ourselves. We have been tested by fire, defied the odds, and grow stronger daily. We see no reason to doubt that — with God’s continued help — we will save this wonderful United States of America.

The counsel of Daniel Webster seems as timely today as it was in 1837:

*I apprehend no danger to our country from a foreign foe.... Our destruction, should it come at all, will be from another quarter. From the inattention of the people to the concerns of their government, from their carelessness and negligence, I must confess that I do apprehend some danger. I fear that they may place too implicit a confidence in their public servants, and fail properly to scrutinize their conduct; that in this way they may be made the dupes of designing men, and become the instruments of their own undoing. Make them intelligent and they will be vigilant, give them the means of detecting the wrong, and they will apply the remedy.**

*Daniel Webster, June 1, 1837; *Works* 1:403