The John Birch Society
Myths vs.
Facts & Lies

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On the John Birch Society website (in May 2014) I came across a section entitled, "Myths vs Fact," that would be laughable if it were not so serious.

In defense of their allegedly unfair reputation, they begin by saying:

The age of the Internet grants anyone who can access it an opportunity to learn a great deal about virtually anything in a short amount of time. Unfortunately, the published information can be incorrect. Anyone who Googles "The John Birch Society" will see this problem demonstrated almost immediately. From the slanted view given of the Society at Wikipedia to the crazed rantings of detractors, much of the information provided is either distorted or downright false. Thus, we offer this page where we seek to set the record straight.

This is such a convoluted twisting of reality. Yes, there is a lot of incorrect information on the Internet, and a lot of, "crazed ranting," but The John Birch Society has a long history of contributing to public misconceptions of reality and going off on delusional tirades before the Internet even existed. Far from being the victim of rampant, unfair abuse, they have been the abuser most of the time. Consider the following list of, "myths," as a primer for judging their honesty and belief system.

**Myth: The JBS is a radical organization full of right-wing extremists.**

**Fact:** The JBS is dedicated to restoring the Republic according to the vision of the Founding Fathers: limited government, individual liberty, and the rule of law. Along with America's Founders, we believe that governments are instituted to protect individual rights and liberties, and are not formed to provide for the wants of individuals. To label JBS radical or extreme for agreeing with our nation's Founders is to place that same label on them.

We believe in the Founding Fathers, and if you disagree with that, you disagree with the Founder (you unAmerican Commie Bastard!). It reminds me of the old phrase, "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel." Or, as former President Eisenhower put it in 1961, describing the "super-patriotism" of groups like the Birchers, "I don't think the United States needs super-patriots. We need patriotism, honestly practiced by all of us, and we don't need these people that are more patriotic than you or anybody else."

The Founding Fathers were not of one mind about anything and everything, as the Birchers and others on the radical right like to pretend. General platitudes like, "limited government," ignore the fact that the Founders become so fed up with their first attempt at a national government (under the Articles of Confederation) that they wrote and passed the Constitution to grow the power and scope of government. You can cite a few holdouts, like George Mason, who refused to go along with this new plan, but these were not the people who made this nation what it is; they rejected it. You can also cite men like Thomas Jefferson, who had reservations about where the Constitution would lead us, but he not only went along with it, he
assumed and took greater powers as President than he previously advocated. Such is the practical nature of politics vs. the theoretical. Since the Birchers have never actually governed any group of people they can live in the imaginary world of their ideals and tell themselves they stand with the Founders against practical politics, but this denies the reality that the Founders were practical politicians.

The JBS is not the KKK, driven by racial and religious bigotry, but their hands are not completely clean of hate. They can post all the YouTube videos they like, with "testimonials" from non-white supports and members, but they can't change their past. Revilo Pendleton Oliver was a white supremacist and an original member of the JBS when it was founded in 1958. He was also a writer for their 1960s publication, American Opinion, and a member of their national council. He broke with the JBS over his Jew hating ideas, but that wasn't until 1966, and he didn't suddenly form these ideas the night before he left. In 1967 the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which monitors Jew hating worldwide, said the JBS was, "contributing to anti-Semitism," through its affiliation with known anti-Semites and its attack on the Civil Rights movement as a, "Communist conspiracy." John McManus, a JBS member since the 1960s and the President of the organization since the early 1990s, is also a radical Catholic who, as recently as September 2013, spoke at a gathering, "In the Spirit of Chartres" Committee (ISOC), a fringe Catholic organization that takes The Protocols of Zion seriously.

According to an article in the Lexington, NC Dispatch from Nov. 14, 1963, the JBS, "takes no position with regard to segregation or integration. It has both segregated and integrated chapters, in accordance with the wishes of the members in their respective communities. The society believes that the serious questions involved in this racial problem should be decided [locally]... and in no case by any unit larger than the state government. The Federal Government is strictly forbidden by the Constitution from either making these decisions or from using military compulsion to enforce them, the society said." The Bircher's justification for this being unconstitutional was the Tenth Amendment. This ignores the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, passed at the end of the Civil War, which clearly widened the role of the Federal Government to protect the rights of all citizens. More important to the discussion here, however, is the lack of a position that the JBS took on, "the Kennedy Administrations so called "civil rights" program." They may not have been advocating hate directly but they were willing to let their members advocate it locally, if they so chose, because they saw no moral or legal imperative for equal rights across the nation. They were more obsessed with the idea that Civil Rights was a front for Communist actions than the fact that Civil Rights were long overdue. As President Kennedy put it in his June 11, 1963 televised speech to the nation, "One hundred years of delay have passed since President Lincoln freed the slaves, yet their heirs, their grandsons, are not fully free." The JBS refused to see this and stood with the segregationists instead by defending the "right" to make local decisions about, "this racial problem."
If this were not bad enough, the JBS had several notable segregationists on its national council (e.g. A.G. Heinsohn Jr., T. Coleman Andrews, Tom Anderson, and Thomas Parker) and many connections to, support from, and support of hardcore racists, including infamous figures like Gen. Edwin A. Walker and Gov. George Wallace. Fred Koch, the oil refining father of today’s Tea Party supporting Koch Brothers, was one of the first members of JBS and a national council member who wrote a book, A Business man looks at Communism, which outlined his beliefs in the early 1960s. As Koch saw it, "The colored man looms large in the Communist plan to take over America." The Communists intended to use the votes of, "Southern Negroes and Puerto Ricans," moving to Northern cities to, "swing the balance," for the Communist Party and then, "when the Party is ready to take over these cities it will use the colored people by getting a vicious race war started." It is true that some racists were removed from the ranks of the JBS - they even shutdown an entire chapter in Mississippi because of its strong ties to the Klan - but such actions were arguably done because of bad PR in those particular cases, not because of any high-minded principles, given all the racists who have passed through the JBS’s doors and sat at their table year after year.
After Supreme Court Justice Earl Warren wrote the landmark decision in Brown vs. Board of Education (1954), which all the other Justices unanimously agreed to, ruling that separate schools for white and black students was unconstitutional, an Impeach Earl Warren movement began among segregationists and white supremacists. As with the entire Civil Rights movement, the issue of "Communism" got dragged into the mix and so did the Birchers, who became the driving force and biggest financial backers of this nearly impossible and ill-conceived goal.

The JBS may pretend that they were only upholding the Constitution, which they believe they know better than all the members of the Supreme Court, and that the Civil Rights movement was a Communist Plot, but the FBI did not accept this, even under the leadership of their bigoted, anti-communist Director J. Edger Hoover. While the FBI often looked at the connections between Communist groups and Civil Rights groups, because the Communists did try to exploit the hypocrisies in American Society, the FBI never found the Communists to be a driving force or secret power behind this legitimate movement.

The Birchers clearly wished to be seen in solidarity with those who feared, "JUDICIAL TYRANNY UPON THE WHITE SOUTHERNERS," which is why many of the billboards they paid for throughout the former Confederate States were deliberately associated with that "lost cause" of Southers (i.e. White Southers) through the use of the Confederate Flag.

Many still today wish to deny the bigoted symbolism of that flag but the meaning was not lost on the target audience at the time; it was meant in a hateful way. The JBS also attacked Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King and his support of Civil Rights as an outgrowth of his alleged allegiance to Communism, rather than his sincere
believe that it was right for American. Billboards featuring a photo of King in an integrated audience at a, "COMMUNIST TRAINING SCHOOL," was all many needed to see (the mere fact that the audience was integrated proved it was a Communist school, if you were already sure Civil Rights was part of the Communist Conspiracy). Once again, the FBI disagreed, on more than one occasion, over several years of investigating this charge.

Responding to an inquiry from Tennessee State Senator R.L. Peters Jr. in 1957, the FBI said, "The Bureau has known of the Highlander Folk School for years and has investigated numerous allegations concerning its activities. While it permits Communists to attend, there has been no indication that it teaches courses along the Communist line or has ever employed any Communists on its staff. It is primarily designed to teach economics and related subjects." But none of this matters if you believe the FBI and/or those they report to were in on the Communist Conspiracy as well, which most Birchers at the time generally accepted.

Besides their frequent associations with Jew haters, White Supremacists, and recognized haters, the Birchers also have a clear hatred of their own, which they have always proudly boasted about. Unlike most Americans, who were all for the fight against the external threat of the Soviet Union, the JBS is in the McCarthyist vain of attacking their fellow citizens as thought criminals.
Of the few real American Communists there actually were, most were not paid Soviet Agents and they sincerely believed, naive as it was given the evidence, that Communism offered a better way forward than Capitalism. Their right to be stupid should be defended as much as the Birchers', who claim to be all about liberty and the Constitution. Saying we should, "REGISTER COMMUNISTS NOT FIREARMS," is saying that these people don't matter, nor does the Constitution matter, because it's really not for everybody. What was, and is, most important to the Birchers is the hatred of Communism in all its forms, which can include anything and everyone that they want to see as unAmerican.
In the first edition of The Politician, in 1958 (not just the, "1954 letter," edition for, "a few friends") Mr. Welch labeled President Eisenhower as a, "dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy," which he claimed was, "based on an accumulation of detailed evidence so extensive and so palpable that it seems to me to put this conviction beyond any reasonable doubt." In the mass produced and publicly sold editions of the book from 1963 on that line and a bit more was removed, so that, "the reader is left entirely free to draw his own conclusions," (as Welch first noted in the 1963 edition). Nevertheless, he makes his own conclusion very clear by saying, "The role [Eisenhower] has played, as described in all the pages above, would fit just as well into one theory as the other; that he is a mere stooge or that he is a Communist assigned the specific job of being a political front man." These are the, "several possible conclusions offered by Mr. Welch," that the JBS now likes to speak of, and with either of them, Eisenhower (the Supreme Allied Commander in the fight against Hitler and one of the most popular, respected Presidents ever) is seen as doing the Communists' bidding. How is this possible? According to Welch, Eisenhower was only the, "third stage," in the Communist takeover of the White House. FDR had been, "used," by them, perhaps unwittingly, then Truman was used, "with his knowledge and acquiescence as the price he consciously paid for their making him President." Eisenhower, however, was different. As Welch put it, "in my own firm opinion, the Communists have one of their own actually in the Presidency. For this third man, Eisenhower, there is only one possible word to describe his purposes and his actions. That word is treason."

The JBS, like all conspiracists on the political right or left, pay little attention to history and its lessons when these things contradict their favorite stories. If you look at the actual history of communist takeovers, rather than the fanciful stories of conspiracists like Welch, you will see that Communists tend to move very fast, once they get near positions of power. This was demonstrated from the start by the Bolsheviks in Russia. It was a popular uprising that removed the Tzar and established a new government, but it was the second, "October Revolution," lead by Lenin and his small band of followers that quickly turned the situation to the Communists' advantage and began the repressive, murderous Soviet State. With Lenin's death the violence only ratcheted up, as individuals vied for control and Stalin emerging as the final winner. In China it was Mao who followed a similar path of slaughtering his way to the top. Not all Communist States have played out exactly the same, some have had truly popular leaders, while others have had leaders the people were commanded to worship, but they have regularly ended with a strongman at the apex and a mound of corpses beneath him. Somehow the Communist takeover of America that Welch believed in was conducted completely in secret from 99.998% of the public and so gentlemanly as to have no list of dead, "counter revolutionaries," or, "Trotskyites," to point to, no gulags, or show trials. Even when the Communists repeatedly had the President under their control they still restrained themselves in ways that no other Communists ever have.
Just as history has shown us that a, "dictatorship of the proletariat," ends in a single dictator, or oligarchy at best, it has also proved the limits of a Worldwide Communist State. It is exceedingly difficult to control another country, particularly when their are language barriers, geographical obstacles, and cultural differences to overcome. Stalin and later Soviet rulers had some success in ruling over Eastern Europe, after the war left those nations decimated, but no one in Poland, Hungary, etc., imagined that their local "leaders" were actually leading the country. When a local leader had a strong network of loyal followers to draw upon, as well has a mountainous terrain, as Josip Tito did in Yugoslav, Stalin and his successors had to capitulate and not push their will too far. A more dramatic example was Mao, who had the most populous nation on Earth under his command. The Soviets never had a chance to play master with the Chinese and even feared them as a rival superpower. To imagine that the U.S., with more wealth and power than the world has ever seen before, would be under the thumb of Moscow without the masses knowing it, is farcical. If America were taken over by Communists, they would be domestic and everyone would know it, because it would quickly degenerate into mass murder and repression. Such is the way that actual history plays out.

Going back to Welch's conclusion in The Politician, "To paraphrase Elizabeth Churchill Brown, 'the only enemies the American people have to fear are the enemies in their midst.' The most conspicuous and injurious of these enemies today, I believe, is named Dwight David Eisenhower. He is either a willing agent or an integral and important part of a conspiracy of gangsters determined to rule the world at any cost." Welch also claimed that, "If we do not wake up to the real facts fast, and wake up enough of our fellow citizens, it will be our children and ourselves living as enslaved subjects of the Kremlin - possibly within five years, and certainly within ten to fifteen years at the very most. The danger is present, and it is very clear." Yet, more than half a century later, the would-be rulers of the world, who would pay "any cost" to take over America, have yet to make any decisive moves. In fact, the Kremlin (aka the Soviets) have long since gone out of business. Paranoia at the Welch Level, where we must, "fear... the enemies in [our] midst," is still wildly popular in the present day JBS and the rest of the radical right. They can even twist the fall of the U.S.S.R. into another layer of deception in the larger conspiracy that will lead to an imminent loss of our freedom and the destruction of the United States any day now. Like doomsday cults that keep predicting and revising the end date for the world, conspiracists like Welch, the JBS, and company, would be laughable if they were not so serious and dedicated to this nonsense.

As for Operation Keelhaul, the name originally referred to one repatriation effort of Soviet POWs in Italy, conducted by American and British Forces, but it has been applied to all the repatriation operations done following the end of the Second World War in Europe. These actions were based a decision made by President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill at the Yalta Conference in February of 1945, where they agreed to return Soviet Citizens and other Easter Europeans to their native countries and Stalin agreed to get all American, British and Wester Europeans caught in the East back to their homes. It was not clearly stated that anyone should be forced to repatriate but that is the way the agreement was understood and often carried out. According to the book, Operation Keelhaul (1973), by Julius Epstein, some four million Eastern Europeans, including many who were not actually Soviet Citizens, were sent back. Some, like POWs who knew they would face harsh treatment or execution upon return were still forced to return. In at least one case these former POWs were shot immediately, with British soldiers still close enough to hear the machine guns going off. According to Nicholas William Bethell's book, The Last Secret: The Delivery to Stalin of Over Two Million Russians by Britain & the United States (1974) the numbers may have been smaller but the actions are no less regrettable. Welch's version of this period, however, and the JBS's spin on it today, do little to help us reasonably assess Gen. Eisenhower's actions in the context they were made.
The JBS today may want to focus on the repatriation of, "anti-communist Poles to their certain death or torture," but Welch only mentions these men in pass in The Politician: "Those readers with good enough memories will recall the wave of suicides of Polish officers, who had served gallantly as volunteers with our troops in Italy, when these men found that they were being forcibly returned by our army to their certain death in a Poland which was now ruled by Stalin's Lublin Gang. For some brief mention of this affair did get into the American newspapers. But we were all too busy celebrating the universal and eternal peace, which had now been achieved, to pay any attention. And these Polish officers, who could not by any stretch of the imagination be considered prisoners of war, were not covered by the Yalta agreement at all. The responsibility for the merciless cruelty to these allies rests squarely on the shoulders of the Supreme Commander, Dwight D. Eisenhower."

For Welch, "the destruction of General Vlasov's army," was, "the most important single implementation of the foul," crime that he held Eisenhower personally responsible for. Who was Vlasov and why was his story so important? As Welch put it: "A Soviet Army Commander, Andrei A. Vlasov, who was at heart a better anti-Communist but an equally dedicated Russian patriot, surrendered to the Germans in 1942. His intention was to get their help in organizing a Russian army to free Russia from the Bolshevik tyranny. But he made it all too clear that he and his troops, even in German uniform, would never fight against the Western allies."

Besides downplaying the fact that Vlasov actively worked for the Nazis, Welch also ignores what Vlasov said about his own beliefs. In a public statement issues to justify his decision to, "[take] up the struggle against Bolshevism?" Vlasov explains that he was, "calling on all Russian people to rise up in struggle against Stalin and his clique, to build a new Russia without Bolsheviks or capitalists." Vlasov identifies himself as an, "All-Union Communist Party," member since 1930 and a twenty-four year veteran of the Red Army who had joined, "to fight for land for the peasants, for a better life for the workers, for a bright future for the Russian people." He was by no means a critic of Communism or the stated Soviet ideals. His problem was with the direction the Bolsheviks, and particularly Stalin, had taken the anti-capitalist revolution; not the revolution itself. "Bolshevism," he said, "had dragged the Russian people into the war in the alien interests of Anglo-American capital. England has always been an enemy of the Russian people. It has always striven to weaken and harm our motherland. But Stalin saw a chance to realize his plans for world domination by following Anglo-American interests."

Why did Welch choose to make this anti-capitalist, anti-Anglo-American, Nazi collaborator into a hero? Because it served Welch's conspiracy story and helped him vilify Eisenhower by doing this; facts be damned. Welch's reality-challenged followers and fellow travelers have maintained this same attitude toward truth. It is not something to be assessed from the evidence, the "real" truth is something they already know, and only details that support this are important (be they real or imaginary).

One additional note here: When I Googled, "operation keelhaul eisenhower" and similar wording, I found several links that questioned if Eisenhower, "was a Jew," in addition to labeling him as some type of criminal, Communist, or Fascist. I was a little surprised, but only a little. Those who want to believe in nonsense seek out nonsense and their views are often mixed with bigotry. When it comes to conspiracy theories this bigotry it typically directed toward the Jews and you don't need to look hard to find it.
I understand why the JBS doesn't want to be seen on the fridge side of crazy but their past is their past and they can't get beyond it by lying. It was common knowledge that the JBS believed fluoridated water was part of a Communist plot, some kind of mind-control or mind numbing of the populous, in order to lull average Americans into submission. This view was widely reported on and ridiculed at the time. The FBI even receiving complains from dentists who were given Bircher literature or attended meetings where fluoridation was vilified. Everyone, from conservative icons like William F. Buckley, Jr. to mainstream media outlets stated the JBS position on fluoridated water and Communism as a given fact. During a speech in LA on November 18, 1961, President Kennedy even mentioned it in an attack on the JBS and the radical right, saying, "They find treason in our finest churches, in our highest courts and even in the treatment of our water." The Birchers learned their fluoridated beliefs, at least in part, from Major George R. Jordan, who worked in the lend-lease program during the Second World War, transferring supplies from American to the Soviets (who were our allies against the Nazis, at the time). Jordan later testified before Congress in the investigation of how nuclear secrets made their way from the U.S. to the U.S.S.R. Some of his allegations seemed beyond belief and they only got more extreme with time. On a subsequent speaking tour he claimed, "During the war I learned how the Soviets used fluorides in the drinking water of Siberian prison camps to weaken the minds of their prisoners, to make them dull, cowlike and more resigned to their slavery."

As for the, "opposition to fluoridation... never [being] a major action item of any JBS campaign," I can't honestly saw how we would measure this. Did they spend less time and money warning people about what the Communists were doing to our water than they spent trying to get that Communist Earl Warren removed from the high court for mixing the races? I don't know, nor do I think it really matters. Nutty is as nutty does. The fact that they may have only done this nutty thing part of the time doesn't make it any better. And after decades and decades of Americans not becoming, "dull" or "cowlike," from fluoride, even the JBS has come to realize how silly it was to label this as a Communist plot in the first place. So they lie about their past and continue on with other silly ideas today.
The JBS tries to make themselves sound like reasonable watchdogs of the Constitution who lobby government and try to bring about change through education but anyone who has seriously looked at them knows better. They are a group of conspiracy theorists, or conspiracists, as I like to call them, and like all their brethren they love to play the bait and switch game where, "by definition," conspiracies happen all the time. By definition anyone who lives in North, South, or Central America is an American. However, when people say, "I hate Americans," no one makes the mistake of thinking they are talking about Brazilians, Ecuadorians, or Canadians. In popular speech throughout the world it is common to refer to, "Americans" or "America," when talking about people from the U.S. or the policies and practices of the U.S. By that same token, a conspiracy theorist, or conspiracist, is not someone who acknowledges the simple fact that people conspire. Conspiracists seen world events as being orchestrated by secretive and powerful, nearly all powerful, forces, with agendas that go on for generations. Conspiracists believe the media and the educational establishment reinforce the lies of the ruling class on command, with no one ever breaking ranks to tell the truth. As I have explained elsewhere, “history is not a conspiracy,” and this misconception of reality can poison us all; particularly when it has big financial backers and a network of faithful followers to spread their paranoid message.

The JBS, as noted above, has claimed that President Eisenhower, Chief Justice Earl Warren, the entire Civil Rights movement, and the fluoridation of water were all part of a Communist Conspiracy to take over America. Robert Welch even expressed the belief for a time, as noted by Bill Buckley, that the State of Alaska, "was being prepared to house anyone who doubted his doctrine that fluoridated water was a Communist-backed plot to weaken the minds of the American public." From their inception, at their first meeting in 1958, Welch and the Birchers have seen the world in an unrealistic, conspiracist way.

As recorded in The Blue Book (a transcript of Welch's first presentation to the original eleven JBS members) "Obviously the place for us to begin is in the United States, for two reasons. First, because it must be our most earnest hope and goal to break out of this straight jacket, woven of pretense, deception, audacity, and terror, before it completely encompasses ourselves. And second because the American support of the international Communist conspiracy is now the backbone of its strength, and has been for many years. If and when we can reach the point of turning just the American government from actively helping the Communist conspiracy everywhere in the world, we shall have won a most important battle in the war ahead."

America, not the Soviet Union, was, "the backbone of [the international Communist conspiracy's] strength," and the process of slipping into, "Soviet rule," was, "so gradual and insidious that... they can no longer resist the Communist conspiracy as free citizens, but can resist the Communist tyranny only by themselves becoming conspirators against established government." A few years later, in 1961, Time magazine would cite the JBS as saying that the U.S. Government was, "40 to 60% controlled by the Communists." Welch dismissed potential criticism by explaining, "You may think I am an alarmist. Frankly I am. For in my opinion, based on many years of intensive study of the methods, the progress, and the menace of the Communist conspiracy, there is ample reason for extreme alarm; and I hope to make you alarmists too. It seems to me that all you need, to cause you to share my alarm, my fears, and my determination, is simply to get a map of the world and Look at the Score!"

As William F. Buckley would later note, "The fallacy [here] is the assumption that you can infer subjective intention from objective consequence: we lost China to the Communists, therefore the President of the United States and the Secretary of State wished China to go to the Communists." China, and earlier Russia, went Communist for their own domestic reasons; thinking they could replace their repressive and corrupt
establishments with a Utopian dream overnight. Their people were angry and desperate for something to change, so they changed it, and ended up with greater tyranny. These were not carefully choreographed efforts, backed by a sinister cabal with a clear plan that everyone followed. These struggles were the collimation of many competing forces and personalities that could have ended differently, and which no one ultimately controlled. It is true that the international "score" looked bad, very bad, in the latter half of the Twentieth Century, but today it looks far better. There have never been so many democratic societies as we have today or so many people talking about human rights and market forces. Once again, the current state of the world reflects was not scripted by anyone to play out this way; it is the product of competing forces and personalities coming together in various ways.

For the JBS and their fellow travelers - who cannot explain why their doomsday predictions haven't arrived - everything is simply part of a greater, more mysterious plot. Despite all the years the JBS spent warning about the impending Soviet threat, the downfall of the U.S.S.R. is now seen as just another piece of an ongoing plan for world domination in which the 9/11 Attack was coordinated by Russian Intelligence, using Muslims as a false front for their agenda; but even the Russians are just another false front in the overall scheme. According to the current JBS President John F. McManus, there is, "a conspiracy that began in the eighteenth century, the conspiracy of the Illuminati," and it is very telling for our understand of, "what mankind faces today." Because the conspiracy we face (the one the JBS had always use to attribute to the Communists), "is a conspiracy just like the Illuminati, if not actually an extension of it, continued down through six, seven generations." Can you imagine the paperwork necessary to pull off a seven generation conspiracy? It boggles the mind.

In reality, the Illuminati was a secret society founded on May 1, 1776, during the Enlightenment, in Bavaria. They were secret because the ruler of Bavarian wasn't a fan of opposition groups questioning his use of power and advocating for things like the education of women and gender equality. The Illuminati were banned and broken up in 1785, with the approval of the Roman Catholic Church, who didn't like the Illuminati's anti-superstition/anti-religious beliefs. Claims that the Illuminati had not be destroyed and they were actually manipulating or directing world events began with the French Revolution (1789-1799) and since then have included nearly everything that has ever happened. Now, for the Bircher and others, the Illuminati are the real power players, or at least the role model for the power players behind Communism, and most everything else that has shaped our reality, which sounds to me a lot like the Nazi theory that Communism and Capitalism were created by the Jews to take over the globe by offering us false alternatives.

Alex Jones is a present day conspiracy guru and Bircher fan who describes himself as an, "aggressive Constitutionalist." He is also a radio talk show host and the creator of INFOWARS.com, who believes, "the quintessential primer to understand the New World Order," is the 1972 book, None Dare Call It Conspiracy, by Bircher Gary Allen. On YouTube I found a clip of Jones interviewing Bircher President John McManus in May of 2009, in which Jones proclaimed, with a straight face, "Everything you guys [the JBS] talked about has unfortunately come true." If by, "everything" he meant, "nothing," then this would be true, but, once again, conspiracists don't like to be bothered by facts. After complementing McManus on his great work, the two men proceeded to play around with history in ways that reinforce each other's fears. Then McManus threw in a false quote, attributed to Mayer Rothschild, about how you need to control a nation's money supply more than you need to control the politicians. It seemed obvious to me that he was trying to appeal to that ever-popular segment of the conspiracist crowd who are also Jew haters. And that's the point at which I stopped listening to his nonsense, because it was making me sick. These guys are nothing but, "a group of conspiracy theorists."
William F. Buckley, Jr. was a conservative hero for more than half a century. As former Speaker of the House of Representatives Newt Gingrich put it, after Buckley's death, "[he] became the indispensable intellectual advocate from whose energy, intelligence, wit, and enthusiasm the best of modern conservatism drew its inspiration and encouragement." Years earlier, Buckley's good friend, President Reagan had called him, "our clipboard-bearing Galahad" (a reference to the noblest of King Arthur's legendary knights) who fought against the, "knights of darkness." Reagan had refused to be associated with the JBS since he first ran for California Governor and part of that "darkness" that Buckley opposed was the radical right; particularly JBS's founder, Robert Welch. Buckley was one of the key individuals, along with Russell Kirk, who convinced Sen. Barry Goldwater to disassociate himself from the JBS, so long as they adhered to Welch's views. Goldwater echoed Buckley and Kirk's thinking when he described Welch as, "far removed from reality and common sense." Goldwater felt, "We cannot allow the emblem of irresponsibility to attach to the conservative banner," which is why he had no choice to separate himself from the JBS in favor of Buckley's responsible conservatism.

It is understandable why Birchers have such animosity toward Buckley, and why they have hit him with their most stinging attack; he was, "for the Establishment." To be sure, some establishments need to be fought against or even overthrown, and all establishments could stand for some degree of change, because they were all made by imperfect human beings. Nevertheless, the JBS (the Tea Party and the rest of the radical right) have a distaste for all things establishment that reaches pathological levels and has nothing to do with conservatism. Conservatism is a mature philosophy, which recognizes the need for respecting the establishment, because you can't have a society to conserve, let alone a civilized one, without having an establishment. The reactionary, reality challenged, conspiracist, "real" conservatism, super patriotism that reflexively goes after the establishment and everyone associated with it, is an immature philosophy, and listening to its adherents complain about an icon like Buckley reminds me of listening to a misbehaving little boy who can't stand his father telling him, "It's time for bed."
As I pointed out above, the JBS may not be made up entirely of racists, but they were happy to be associated with White Supremacists and anti-Semites when they thought it might work out well for them. Even if you take their present day spin on this at face value, what they are advocating is an unConstitutional and impractical position; particularly in light of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments, and the new birth of freedom that came out of the Civil War. To expect that citizens of the U.S. should check with each local community they may be in to see if they are permitted to eat at a restaurant, use a restroom, or go to a public swimming pool, library, or school, is to presuppose that that individuals have no rights that a "community" is obligated to recognize and respect. For a group that claims to be all about upholding our rights the JBS and their fellow travelers seem to have a very communal (dare I say, Communist) attitude when it comes to Civil Rights; thinking that the majority can do as it pleases because it has some communal rights that are greater than individual rights, while simultaneously believing that any interference from the Federal Government on behalf of individual is proof that the Feds are, "out-of-control."

There was a time when such thinking was far more common across the conservative movement. William F. Buckley and Sen. Goldwater both opposed Federal Civil Rights legislation, but they came to regret this. Only "real" conservatives (e.g. some libertarians and all White Supremacists) still hold on to this distorted view of Constitutional rights and what America should stand for. Even if you accept that the Federal Government today is too large and intrusive, as many people do, it does not logically follow that the passage of the Civil Rights in 64-65 was a turning point in history that the JBS was right to oppose. That is like arguing that because a police officer used excessive force on someone today, the murderer he arrested twenty years ago should be set free. There is simply no logic to their position.

**Myth: The JBS is nothing more than controlled opposition, pretending to be a friend to the cause of liberty. Robert Welch sold his candy company to the leftist, internationalist Rockefellers.**

**Fact:** Robert Welch was out of the candy manufacturing business (retiring in 1956) when his brother (for whom he used to work) sold the James O. Welch Candy company to Nabisco in 1963. JBS has never been funded by any Rockefeller money. Nelson Rockefeller publicly attacked JBS, and JBS has exposed the Rockefeller support for the United Nations and its goal of a new world order more than any other organization.

When you live by conspiracy theories you are bound to be accused of being a secret part of, or front for, an even more elaborate conspiracy (such is the nature of conspiracist thinking, paranoia breeds paranoia). For those who fear the, "internationalist Rockefellers," and believe the, "new world order," is hiding behind every intergovernmental agreement, there is no limit to the list of agents or the disinformation they will employ to cover up their mind-numbing schemes. This Hollywood brand of conspiracies, where a Candy Mogul is in collusion with a Oil Barons, to trick us into a U.N. plot that takes generations to accomplish, makes sense to people who think like the JBS but it is not of this world.
The longtime anti-Communist head of the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover, testified before the Warren Commission and was asked about conspiracy theories, specifically the JBS articles published in their American Opinion magazine, which purported to uncover a communist conspiracy behind the former President's assassination. Hoover replied, "I have read that piece. My comment on it is this in general: I think the extreme right is just as much a danger to the freedom of this country as the extreme left. There are groups, organizations, and individuals on the extreme right who make these very violent statements, allegations that General Eisenhower was a Communist, disparaging references to the Chief Justice and at the other end of the spectrum you have these leftists who make wild statements charging almost anybody with being a Fascist or belonging to some of these so-called extreme right societies."

Hoover went on to say, "Now, I have felt, and I have said publicly in speeches, that they are just as much a danger, at either end of the spectrum. They don't deal with facts. Anybody who will allege that General Eisenhower was a Communist agent, has something wrong with him. A lot of people read such allegations because I get some of the weirdest letters wanting to know whether we have inquired to find out whether that is true." Now days we can all share in this weirdness to our hearts content, thanks to the magic of the Internet. The Web is full of conspiracists spinning their lies and accusations, while trying their best to sound reasonable. No matter what their stated political leaning are, however, the record of the John Birch Society, over a half a century long, should serve as a cautionary warning against all conspiracist thinking; none of these people can be taken seriously, let alone trusted. It should come as no surprise that each group likes to point figures at the others and say, "they are part of the conspiracy," but there is no reason why we need to keep listening to any of them.