

A Review Of The Politician

For years preceding the publication of The Politician, the Liberal newspapers of America were full of quotations and misquotations from it, taken wildly out of their supporting paragraphs and bandied around as a means of smearing the author. But from the very day The Politician was published, and it thus became possible for those who might be interested to read the whole book and judge it for themselves, a conspiracy of silence descended on the scene. A silence so abrupt and so extensive, in fact, as to have been both startling and revealing to many patriotic citizens who had no conception of the degree of Comsymp influence in the American press. These otherwise well informed Conservatives could not believe the precision and completeness with which some hidden power could turn on or turn off at will the flow of what the American public should be allowed to read -- until they saw it happen. And of course the public itself had no way of knowing that this had happened at all.

So, for what has been without question the most controversial book of the past decade, there have simply been no reviews in any of the mass-circulation media. With one rather strange result that the few reviews which have appeared at all have been in Conservative publications of small or comparatively small circulation, and have been almost entirely favorable. With some personal embarrassment because of the too complimentary tone of some of the paragraphs, but with the specific approval and even encouragement of our Executive Committee, we reproduce herewith one of the best and most thorough of those reviews, in full. It is from the AMERICAN PAGES of the August 1963 issue of U. S. /FRANCE REPORT, and our reprinting of the review is by permission of the publisher.

THE EISENHOWER PROBLEM: A REVIEW OF "THE POLITICIAN"

The publication of The Politician by Robert Welch, founder of The John Birch Society, is a unique event in the political history of the United States. There is no precedent with which it can be compared. It is a daring and courageous political act on the part of a single, independent citizen who knows fully the significance of what he is doing and the magnitude of the consequences which may result from it. When the history of this incredible century is finally written, this act alone may well be regarded as the decisive one in the American people's struggle to halt a vast, well-organized and well financed conspiracy from destroying its magnificent, free republic.

The Politician, of course, is Mr. Welch's now-famous political biography of the former President of the United States, Dwight David Eisenhower. In what can easily be described as a remarkable tour de force of documentation, scholarship and research, Mr. Welch has attempted and -- in this reviewer's judgment -- succeeded in demonstrating that for his entire public career -- both military and political -- the former President willingly worked in behalf of the very forces that have been conspiring to destroy the American republic and replace it with what can be loosely described as a Peoples Popular Democracy. Whether one accepts the "willing" aspect of Eisenhower's actions or not, no reader of this book can come away from it without being fully convinced that the sum total of the former President's actions substantially moved our country in the direction the international Communist conspiracy wanted it to go. This is the minimal lesson in history one derives from The Politician, and even those who are most sympathetically disposed toward "Ike" will concede that much, although they will then add that it was stupidity and not, by any means, treason which accounts for the Eisenhower record.

This difference of opinion, of course, is the heart of the controversy which is now being waged over the book, and we shall discuss that aspect at length further on. However, first let us say something about the book itself. The book, as Mr. Welch tells us in the Prologue, was written originally as a long, private letter explaining his own views about Eisenhower to several friends who had become interested in this unorthodox point of view. "I sent carbon copies of this letter to each of the other friends," writes Welch. "And one or two of them immediately wanted additional copies sent to other friends. It was quite a while before I could have a new typing of the letter made, and in the meantime I had added a considerable amount to it.

"The demand and this process continued until, some three years later, the letter had evolved into over two hundred pages reproduced by offset and collated with a plastic link binding. I still considered it a private unfinished manuscript for limited confidential distribution, but a

study which might sometime be further expanded, modified, and probably moderated for formal publication. "

After The John Birch Society was formed, the Communists, seeking some means of destroying this new force, thought they could do so by discrediting its founder, Robert Welch. Since Mr. Welch has apparently led an exemplary life and has no skeletons in any of his closets, they decided to publicize widely his personal views regarding the former President. Lifting statements out of context of an unpublished manuscript, they broadcast loud and wide that Mr. Welch had called Eisenhower a Communist. The Communists reasoned that Mr. Welch would thereby be ridiculed as irresponsible and irrational, and that his following would melt away. The very opposite occurred. Those who knew Mr. Welch for his integrity, his honesty and his rationality, became that much more curious about what he actually did say about Eisenhower, and the demand among them to read the manuscript for themselves increased.

Those who read the manuscript read a well-reasoned, well-documented exposition of historical facts and events of which the public was totally ignorant. For this reason alone, the readers knew immediately that The Politician had to be published so that the public could be informed of its own state of deplorable ignorance and could begin to find out why. Since the manuscript had never been a part of The John Birch Society's materials, its publication was undertaken by Mr. Welch himself. The version which has finally been released to the public has a Prologue, about 300 pages of text, an Epilogue, an extensive bibliography, 73 pages of notes, and an index. For a book its size, it is remarkable for its density of information, its readability, its unvarnished, crisp and direct narrative style, so very conversational in tone, and its many ironic touches of humor. Unfortunately for Mr. Eisenhower, Mr. Welch writes a good book.

The main issue, however, as we mentioned before, is the final implication inherent in Mr. Welch's thesis -- that the former President willingly and knowingly lent himself to the conspiracy for their ultimate purposes. The strategy of the conspiracy, as far as their interest in Eisenhower was concerned, was to create in him -- with his consent and cooperation -- the irresistible image of a military hero and national leader in whom the American people would gladly place its full trust and blind faith. This man, capturing the American people with his famous smile and amiable manner, would lead the American people in any direction the conspiracy ordered him. This, incidentally, was the identical formula used by the conspiracy with regard to de Gaulle, whose god-like image, too, was created during World War II.

Thus, we begin with the great image build-up during World War II, so that Eisenhower, despite his inferiority to MacArthur, Patton, Clark and others as a military man, emerged head over heels as the

hero of World War II. From there the image was nurtured and cultivated so that it would be ready for when it was most needed -- in 1952.

For the next eight years -- while McCarthy was being slowly ground into the dust -- the American people were hypnotized by the Eisenhower smile, radiating warmth and security. "I like Ike" was the national slogan and times were good. The image, the facade, shining down on America, was like the sun itself. Thus, one is somewhat shocked when one reads the following passage in Emmet Hughes' article about Eisenhower in Look (December 4, 1962):

"His mere mood of the day was unpredictable and volatile. The more anxious White House aides watched even the color of his suits, as he appeared each morning, fancying that they here discerned a cipher to warn them of the emotions ahead But some baseless criticism would ignite an explosion of temper almost fiercely physical. His voice would shout, his cheeks flame with rage, his arms wave threateningly. "

This, to be sure, was not the Ike we saw on television.

Another fact of the Ike image which was conscientiously cultivated for public consumption was the "spiritual" side of the man. It was suggested that here was a man of fundamental religious faith. Yet Emmet Hughes, in the same article, described Eisenhower's spiritual character in the following manner:

"Perhaps no adjective figured so prominently in his political vocabulary as 'spiritual,' and his spontaneous speeches were rich with exhortations on America's 'spiritual' strength. Yet his personal concern with either religion or philosophy appeared casual at best. He enrolled in the Presbyterian Church in Washington after his election, in a spirit suggesting merely that he viewed the act as vaguely appropriate to the Presidential office. And the ritual of the Cabinet prayer was performed with the same perfunctory air. More than occasionally, Eisenhower would slip and forget to ask Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Benson for the opening prayer. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles would quietly voice a reminder, and Eisenhower would blurt out boyishly, 'Oh, my gosh! And I really need all the help we can get from up there this morning. Ezra, please. . . . ' "

The more one reads -- whether it be Emmet Hughes, Sherman Adams or even Eisenhower himself -- the more one becomes convinced that Welch is right. Thus it is obvious that acceptance of Mr. Welch's thesis depends a good deal on how much one brings to the book in the form of previous knowledge, both factual and psychological. There can be little dispute over the facts. It would have been suicide for Mr. Welch to build so important and explosive a thesis on a factual foundation of sand. He has marshalled the facts. It is in the final interpretation of

them that the dispute lies.

Make no mistake about it, the debate is on -- in private letters, in conversations, and over the phone. All genuine anti-Communists are asking the question: Is he or isn't he? The fact that they are seriously asking the question is already a tremendous triumph for Robert Welch. But what of the question, and what of the answer? Actually, Welch identifies three possible conclusions to which one could come after reading The Politician:

1. That Eisenhower is simply a smart politician, entirely without principle and hungry for glory, and only the tool of the Communists -- "the shell through which the Communist mix of action and propaganda is extruded."

2. That Eisenhower is simply too dumb to understand what he is doing.

3. That Eisenhower's motivation has been more ideologically honest than shallowly opportunistic. "Or, to put the matter bluntly, that he has been sympathetic to ultimate Communist aims, realistically and even mercilessly willing to help them achieve their goals, knowingly receiving and abiding by Communist orders, and consciously serving the Communist conspiracy, for all of his adult life."

Thus, the reader has three choices, although the second choice is scarcely tenable as a rational conclusion considering the mountain of evidence available. Yet, this is the conclusion most Americans would prefer to accept. It is psychologically hard for them to see the smiling Ike as a smart, unprincipled politician, and impossible for them to consider that he could be sympathetic to ultimate Communist aims. Thus they prefer to think of Ike as dumb, gullible and easily manipulated by smarter and more unscrupulous men around him.

But as Welch writes: "The role he has played . . . 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. In either case the Communists are so powerfully entrenched by now that, even if Eisenhower disappeared from the scene, all the momentum and strength of the forces we have seen at work would still have to be overcome before we would be reasonably out of danger. The firm grip on our government, of the forces that have worked through Eisenhower, is more important than Eisenhower himself."

We could hardly dispute that conclusion, and therefore the question becomes: how do we approach the future with this knowledge at hand? First must come a complete repudiation of Eisenhower as a Republican political force. Second must come a repudiation of those Eisenhower

Republicans -- like Sen. Thomas Kuchel of California and Gov. Hatfield of Oregon -- who still have influence in the Republican Party. These two gentlemen, incidentally, have been in the forefront of the attack against The John Birch Society. Senator Kuchel's speech in the Senate on May 2, 1963 about the "Fright Peddlers" has already been given wide circulation by such left-wing organizations as Freedom House. In commenting on that speech, Senator Mansfield (D-Mont.) said:

"When an organization in this country brands as a Communist or as a Communist dupe a person of the stature of the former President, General Eisenhower, or the late Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, who I believe was one of our great Secretaries of State, or his brother, Allen Dulles, the former Director of CIA, Gen. George C. Marshall, or others in that category, every decent and right-thinking man should stand up and be counted against that kind of slander and that type of organization."

It was obvious that the attack against The Politician or The John Birch Society would not come from Eisenhower himself. Nor would it come from the Democrats. For the Eisenhower problem -- although it is of national significance -- is primarily the problem of the Republican Party and will have to be resolved within the Republican Party. The Eisenhower-Rockefeller clique understand this all too well, as witness Senator Javits' congratulatory remarks to Senator Kuchel. The Senator from New York is a staunch Rockefeller Republican:

"Mr. President, I should like to add my congratulations to our distinguished friend from California . . . However, it is important that we do what the Senator from California has done in speaking out against those who would spread hate and plant the seed of suspicion in the hearts of men. The thing to do is to take the rascals on frontally, as the Senator has done, and speak out against organizations like the Birch Society -- and not every member of the Birch Society feels that way -- and speak out, not only here on the floor of the Senate, unchallenged, but also in campaigns, as he has done, where it can be a political danger to do so. . . . I speak with deep feeling, and can only pledge to my colleagues in the Senate my undying alliance in this struggle."

Thus, as Mr. Welch affirms, the Eisenhower problem is far more important than Eisenhower himself. The latter's power rests strictly on his prestige within the Republican Party, and although a massive attempt will be made to prop up the badly undermined Eisenhower image by the publication of the former President's Memoirs, the battle to capture public opinion is secondary to the battle to control the Republican Party. Thus, essentially, as could have been predicted, the Eisenhower problem has undergone metamorphosis and emerged as the Rockefeller problem. In other words, the forces that have worked through Eisenhower have had to come out into the open and face the challenge inherent in The Politician and everything it represents. Thus,

The Politician is already having the singular political effect of smoking out the real opposition into the open.

In an age where the collectivists have waged an incessant and merciless war against individualism, it is tremendously stirring to see individualism reaffirmed in the powerful action of a single man. The writing and publication of The Politician reaffirms the power of the individual -- with sovereign judgment, adhering to the strict facts of reality, and completely impervious to wishful thinking -- to speak out against the conditioned attitudes of an entire nation. This requires an intellectual confidence and moral courage of a rare order.

Perhaps the entire tragedy of our country is best summed up in these lines from the Epilogue of The Politician:

"Finally, let me say that the publication of this book is not for me a happy occasion. We live today in a world which none of us -- except the conspirators who have made it that way -- wanted. Our consciences, and our sense of responsibility to those who come after us, bring up duties and drive us to actions which we do not welcome, and which are beyond all of the normal expectations of our lives. . . . I do not relish the experience of condemning others, nor of living myself amid a torrent of protests and condemnations. But it takes a great deal to wake up even those perfectly good and patriotic citizens who have had so skillfully and patiently bestowed on them so large a vested interest in error. And I hope that this bit of history will ring and continue to ring like a disturbing alarm clock in the minds of many men."

No American, in our opinion, interested in the survival of himself or his family, can afford not to read The Politician.

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It may be wise to point out, and emphasize again, that The Politician is not a part of the official materials of The John Birch Society in any way. In fact it is far less so than any of the twelve books in the ONE DOZEN CANDLES, to which several pages of this same bulletin are devoted. For each of those books, although many of them are by authors who do not even belong to the Society, are both published and distributed by American Opinion. The Politician is neither published by nor dis-

tributed by, nor is it even available from, The John Birch Society or any of the Society's divisions or subsidiaries. But since the book has proved so useful an aid to recruiting, it has seemed entirely proper to the Executive Committee and to myself for the bulletin to give it this present attention and support.

THE JOHN BIRCH SOCIETY

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