



CONGRESSMAN'S REPORT

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Fright For Sale

For two years now, on every working day, the postman has left on my doorstep 150 or more pieces of mail. Some are newspapers, press releases and routine communications from government agencies. Many are letters from constituents asking for help. Some are thoughtful, constructive comments on great issues of the day. But nearly every morning I find 10 or 15 letters which defy description -- letters filled with fear, suspicion and distrust, not of enemies and potential enemies, but of our own government and the leaders we ourselves have elected to office. For 24 months I have thought this strange, irrational mark of our times would pass. Instead, it persists, defying fact, reason and the lessons of history.

Nearly every week I am told that there is a Liberal-Socialist-Communist plot to turn our government into a dictatorship. Earl Warren, our nation's Chief Justice, is a "fellow traveler" who should be impeached. President Kennedy, a usurper of power, is preparing to turn our armed forces over to the United Nations; as a first step he has removed the words "In God We Trust" from our dollar bills. In the minds of these Americans most of the men and women who serve in Congress, most Supreme Court justices, and nearly all of our executive department officials are left-leaning, Socialist, ultra-liberal, neo-Communist dupes -- if not worse.

Everyone likes to receive mail, but imagine starting your day -- every day -- with messages like the following:

"It seems that the Constitution is a cloak only to be used when the little Kennedy brothers and their Kosher friends need to show their might by invading the State of Mississippi"

"Has any foreign person not a Communist or a cannibal approved our foreign policy?"

"It is regrettable that you liberal-socialists are bent on throwing away for mysterious international reasons everything Americans have had to fight for"

"I am mad clear through ... about what you and our other representatives are doing to us, our country and our heritage down there in Washington."

"Why do you believe Christian-American taxpayers should support an anti-Christian, pro-Communist and alien Jew Rabbi.... ?"

"Many of us... are ashamed of your lying tactics."

"Of all the rats and snakes elected to office in Washington to represent the people and carry out their wishes, you rank head and shoulders beneath the lowest."

The people who write these letters aren't foreigners, or New Yorkers, or Californians. They are Arizonans who live in Bisbee, Phoenix, Casa Grande and Tucson. Some of them may be neighbors of yours.

OVERTONES OF PREJUDICE

To me the most alarming feature of these letters and the pamphlets which so often accompany them is their thinly-disguised or even blatant overtone of racial and religious prejudice. I always shudder in this year of 1963, in a supposedly enlightened and tolerant nation, to find people accepting statements like the following:

** Just last month I was sent the current Gerald L.K. Smith publication (The Cross and the Flag) which declared: "Observers ... have known for many years that international Jewry plotted the complete liquidation of the German race." This is history turned topsy-turvy, for the Germans systematically put to death 6,000,000 Jews. Yet an Arizona lady writes: "There never was any execution of 6,000,000 Jews as they would have us believe."

** I'm also served almost daily with the words of another "authority", Myron C. Fagan, who with Smith is a prime mover in the current hysteria over disarmament. Fagan tells his readers -- and many believe him -- that the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, working with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, has a plot to get control of our communications media -- "you know what for" -- along with other "treasonous activities."

** Another "authority" is the Rev. Carl McIntire of Collingswood, N.J., whose daily radio program is heard in our state. In the name of Jesus Christ -- the greatest exponent of charity and brotherly love -- he regularly preaches hatred of Pope John (for his final encyclical "Peace on Earth"), the Roman Catholic Church ("the harlot church and the bride of the anti-Christ"), the National Council of Churches ("apostate, Communist and Modernist"), the United Presbyterian Church and Evangelist Billy Graham ("a compromiser"). McIntire attacks the peaceful demonstrations of Negroes in Birmingham, implying they are "Communist-organized" and "Communist-controlled."

A REPUBLICAN SPEAKS OUT

Senator Thomas Kuchel, the able, moderate California Republican often mentioned as a possible Presidential candidate, has become so concerned about the volume and virulence of this kind of

mail that he recently made a remarkable speech of conscience detailing the common experience of all of us who have the honor to serve in the greatest legislative body in the world.

In a systematic way Senator Kuchel went down the line of charges currently being made by what he termed the "fright peddlers." He inserted into the Congressional Record reproductions of some of the stupid, inflammatory and fraudulent pamphlets distributed by the John Birch Society, Smith, Fagan and various self-styled "patriotic" organizations. He told the Senate:

"Do these people really believe, I ask myself -- and now I ask them -- that a gigantic and incredible and unprecedented conspiracy has occurred in America in which the President and his Cabinet, 99 percent of the Congress, 99 percent of the Nation's journalists, and even the U.S. Army have all taken part to sell out our country? If they do, the only reasonable reply I can give to them which they will understand is the honorable, 100 percent red, white and blue expression: 'Nuts.'"

(This speech by Senator Kuchel is so important that I have obtained several hundred copies and will make them available to those readers who wish to pursue the matter further.)

'AGREE WITH ME, OR YOU'RE A TRAITOR'

My staff and I have spent many hundreds of hours compiling patient and reasonable answers to the people who write these letters, but there can really be no intellectual exchange or respect for honest differences of view. You either agree 100 percent with them or you become, at best, a well-meaning dupe or coward and, at worst, a traitor.

Even conservative Republicans are not immune to such wild charges. My able colleague, Congressman John Rhodes of Phoenix, was attacked as a "coward" when he refused the request of a member of the Arizona House of Representatives to sponsor impeachment of President Kennedy for sending troops to maintain order in Alabama. The attack was so intemperate that it prompted the Phoenix Gazette to comment, "To vilify a public official personally because he disagrees with an extreme suggestion is piling extreme upon extreme."

America has always had its hate peddlers and other fright-purveyors, such as the German-American Bund and Father Coughlin of the 1930s and the "Barn Burners" and "Know Nothings" of Lincoln's time. Yet I doubt that we have ever had such a consistent, sustained, well-financed, long-lived outpouring as the kind we are observing today.

THE VESTED INTERESTS

Most of the people who write me are sincere, law-abiding citizens who are honestly concerned. Many are whipped into the frenzy of suspicion and fear by a whole battery of well-financed organizations which pour out a steady stream of pamphlets, newsletters and radio broadcasts. Behind many of these organizations are devious people who have a stake in frightening their fellow Americans.

Some of the authors of this vicious literature undoubtedly are disturbed people -- paranoid personalities of one type or another. Others are in it for a more obvious reason; they have a vested interest in frightening the American people.

If Americans believe that the Cold War is going well despite problems in some places, that we are succeeding in some places and holding our own in others, that we are maintaining a majority of the United Nations on our side, these purveyors won't sell many pamphlets or lecture tickets. But if they can make Americans believe that we are losing everywhere and the Reds are winning everywhere, that we can do nothing right and the Reds can do nothing wrong, that every country that isn't 100 percent pro-American is 100 percent pro-Russian, then they can sell their pamphlets and lectures, and they can get "sacrificial pledges" from radio listeners throughout the country.

Thus, these people constantly repeat and embellish every rumor, however absurd it may be, to serve their purposes. An example was the widely-reported rumor that 16,000 African soldiers "with nose and ear rings" were to participate in a United Nations exercise in Georgia, real purpose of which was "a war to invade America." The truth was that 124 foreign military officers from various allied nations observed a U.S. Army exercise in guerrilla warfare called "Operation Water Mocassin."

"Vested" too is the term for the interest of certain persons of extreme wealth in these campaigns of frenzy. H. L. Hunt, the Texas billionaire, is the founder and principal financial supporter of "Facts Forum" and the "Life Line" radio broadcasts and bulletins. While scaring Americans is their stock in trade, these activities also advance the views of Mr. Hunt, who wrote a book proposing that "if you accept state aid because you are poor or sick, you cannot vote at all, and you're denied an old-age pension." Mr. Hunt's "democracy" would also provide that "the more taxes you pay, the more votes you get."

SOME FACTS THAT WON'T SELL PAMPHLETS

It shouldn't be necessary to assure Americans or Arizonans in the year 1963 of some of the following things, and I am a little ashamed to have to do it. But let's get a few facts straight, even if they won't sell any pamphlets or tracts:

** The President, his Cabinet and Members of Congress are patriotic Americans. There isn't a Socialist or a Communist in the lot. The vast majority of them are overworked, underpaid, sincere and effective public servants.

** The State Department is not filled with Communists, Socialists or One Worlders. Ninety-five percent of these employees served under President Eisenhower. The backgrounds and loyalty of every State Department official have been checked and rechecked by the FBI.

** There isn't going to be any unilateral disarmament on the part of our country, and there is no plot to surrender our sovereignty to the United Nations or anyone else.

** Dwight Eisenhower, Earl Warren and John F. Kennedy are sincere, dedicated and loyal Americans working for the best interests of our country. No one of them is a party in any way to any scheme to deprive us of our liberties, transform our way of life, or turn our country over to some foreign power.

** The U.S. Army is not training cannibals in Georgia to invade our country and enforce integration and intermarriage.

A PRODUCT OF OUR TIMES?

I don't know what a psychiatrist would say (the prophets of fear, appropriately, are opposed to "mental health"), but I think much of this fear and distrust is a product of the dangerous times in which we live.

Prior to 1941 America went its own way. Attack or invasion by a foreign power were out of the question. There were several great powers in the world. Today we are the leader of the free world. The United States and the Soviet Union are the only great powers left, and they are engaged in a great economic and political struggle. In foreign affairs we can't always have our way, but we are deeply involved in most world events. Whether Eisenhower, Kennedy, Goldwater, Romney or Rockefeller is President, we will have some successes, some failures, and some mistakes in our foreign policy.

At home we have domestic problems of a staggering magnitude. Our country grows by 3,000,000 people every year. Since 1946 we have experienced an industrial and technological revolution that rivals in quality and quantity the mechanical changes between 1850 and 1917. An engineer or scientist who graduated in the 1940s would find his training inadequate if he were to step abruptly into the technological world of 1963.

Failure to understand and adjust to this changed world is, I think, a major factor in the fear psychology we are observing in our country today.

FEAR AND SUSPICION -- OR TRUST AND RESPECT?

The greatest need in America today is not fear or suspicion. The greatest need is trust. We need to trust and respect and support the leaders our people have elected. Democracy finds a ready mechanism for changing its leaders whenever the majority of the people desire a change.

Americans have been notoriously poor judges of their contemporary leaders. Those who arrogantly and with complete certainty cast doubt about the patriotism of Presidents Eisenhower and Kennedy would do well to read with humility what their counterparts of 1863 said about President Lincoln.

Ask any American today to name our two greatest Presidents, and he will surely name Lincoln as one. Yet Lincoln was bitterly denounced in his own era by many intelligent leaders of the day as ignorant, prejudiced, corrupt, utterly incompetent, atheistic and insane. In 1863 Richard Dana, a respected writer and political figure, concluded a typical attack by declaring:

"The President has no admirers, no enthusiastic supporters He is an unutterable calamity to us where he is."

Ask any American to name the greatest pronouncement of an American leader, and he is likely to name the Gettysburg Address. Yet the correspondent who covered that speech for the influential Chicago Times sent a description of the speech which ended on this note:

"The cheek of every American must tingle with shame as he reads the silly, flat, and dish-watery utterances of the man who has to be pointed out to intelligent foreigners as the President of the United States."

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If my faithful readers will pardon me, I must end this report and read a new batch of incoming mail.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Merrill Lyda", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.