

## Attacking JBS

by Arthur R. Thompson

*A Conspiratorial Life*, by Edward H. Miller, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021, 456 pages, hardcover.

**T**he cover jacket of Robert H. Miller's *A Conspiratorial Life* is black.

What other color would it be if it is a story of Robert Welch and The John Birch Society? It immediately puts the potential reader in a dark mood before reading about the life of Robert Welch and the organization he founded.

The author, Northeastern University Professor Edward H. Miller, has a sense of humor. He must have one, to be able to write in the manner he does about Robert Welch, belittling the man while at the same time telling of his importance and influence within the anti-communist and conservative movement.

On March 8, 2021, *The New Republic* published an article Miller co-authored titled "The John Birch Society Never Left: Why it's foolish to think the modern GOP will ever break with its lunatic fringe."

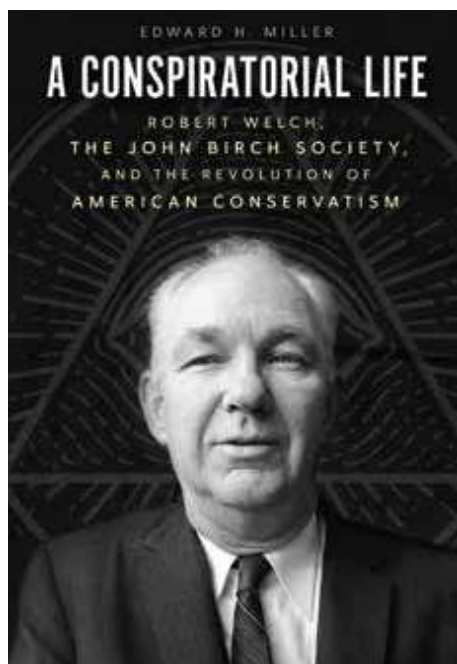
Reading this book is much like listening to a State of the Union speech by Joe Biden, incredulous and full of twists and turns.

The only reason *The New American* has bothered to review this book is that it has gained some attention within the media as a means to besmirch the political future of Donald Trump, saying that Trump's campaign positions are essentially those of Robert Welch and The John Birch Society.

Certainly, there is some truth to this, not because of a conscious effort on the part of Trump, but due to the obvious fact that more and more people are realizing there are problems in this country, and that they exist due to what has become popularly known as the Deep State or Swamp.

The jacket of the book states, "As his book makes chillingly clear, regardless of whether you know his name or what he created, it's hard to deny that we now live in Robert Welch's America."

While Miller makes the point that much of the thinking of the American people



now reflects that of Robert Welch, he does all he can to denigrate Welch.

One of the techniques he uses to do this is planting thoughts in the mind of the reader all throughout the book that somehow Robert Welch was a racist. He starts this off by saying that the county in which Welch was born and grew up, Chowan County, North Carolina, at the beginning of our country had a very large percentage of slaves in the population. He claims that the great-grandfather of Welch owned slaves, but that even before the Civil War the branch of the Welch family Robert came from did not own slaves. Nonetheless, the idea is planted in the mind of the reader that somehow this affected the attitude of Robert Welch about black Americans.

While trying to convince the reader that Robert Welch probably harbored anti-Semitic ideas, on page 71 Miller states, "Welch probably did not voice such epithets, at least publicly, as he worked closely with many in the Jewish community."

Without a shred of evidence that Welch harbored anti-Semitic ideas, Miller goes on to say that Welch needed to work with Jewish people in his industry, implying that he could not express his true feelings because of this. He doesn't point out that Robert Welch asked a man of the Jewish faith to serve on the National Council of the Society.

Further into the narrative, the author makes the claim in Chapter 21 that Welch allowed anti-Semitic members to remain in

The John Birch Society, and even allowed them to join. Anyone who has worked in the Society, as has this reviewer, knows that they were never allowed to recruit anti-Semites into the organization, and that people who did become known to the Society as anti-Semites had their membership revoked.

Shortly after this attempt to tar-brush Welch, the author calls Ronald Reagan wacky, to give the reader an idea of his political feelings.

On page 195, when discussing the founding meeting of the Society, Miller states, "Robert also explained how the John Birch Society would function. Critically, it was not a secret society, like the Ku Klux Klan; it was, rather, an anonymous society."

In this manner, Miller plants the idea in the mind of the reader that somehow The John Birch Society could be compared to the KKK, and that it is, at least, semi-secret.

While detailing the path Welch took to found the Society and maintain it against all odds, Miller shows the men Welch supported in Republican politics, many of whom supported Welch in building the Society. In every case, when discussing the Republican personalities, Miller does so in a manner that disparages their personality or political positions.

In almost every case, he tries to create doubt about or challenge the thinking of those who were concerned about the growing influence of Marxists in America and around the world.

In belittling Welch, though, Miller says that his influence was so great that we are now living in Robert Welch's America. But by giving Welch that much credit (and Welch is deserving of much credit!), how can he totally negate any positive influence of the man in the reader's mind? What he apparently attempts to do is prevent the reader from ever becoming involved in The John Birch Society because, in his mind, the organization is racist. Indeed, that is the theme of the Left today — disagree with us, and you are a racist — without offering any proof whatsoever.

For readers who know more than the average person about the history of Robert Welch and The John Birch Society, Miller's book is a very difficult read, since all too often the facts are bent and distorted to present an image quite different from reality. ■