



Written by [John F. McManus](#) on September 13, 2017

# The Boston Globe Attacks The John Birch Society With Falsities

Mr. Ted Widmer from the [Boston Globe](#) wrote a nasty August 24th article about Robert Welch, the founder of The John Birch Society. Starting with insult-laden labeling of Welch's followers as a "troll army," the piece was filled with errors, misrepresentations, and downright falsehoods. Anyone who finds a need for some verifiable history about Massachusetts would be wise to look somewhere other than the Massachusetts Historical Society where Widmer is advertised as a "trustee."



A great deal of the piece is simply dead wrong. Other parts are shaded to make Welch and the Society he formed seem like unreliable, even libelous, miscreants. For the record, here are some corrections and comments about his screed.

No one in The John Birch Society ever warned that the UN was "going to invade Texas." For all the years of my association with the Society (I joined in 1964, accepted a staff position in 1966, and stepped aside as a full-time employee in 2016), I either saw other staff personnel put down such rumors or I initiated the put down myself. Same about Obama being born in Kenya and 9/11 being an inside job. Same about numerous other rumors that the Society helped to squelch.

Welch was indeed a "boy genius" but, contrary to the assertion, he never claimed that label for himself. Others who took the time to get to know him, his history, and his prodigious intellect found that indeed, he was a prodigy at an early age.

While a student at Harvard Law School, Welch sought to correct Harvard Professor Felix Frankfurter who insisted that labor and management were "enemies" whose distaste for each other would always be a key to U.S. economic woes. Welch defended the traditional stance that labor and management were partners in productivity, not enemies — an attitude that counters the kind of Marxist divisiveness that Frankfurter spent his life promoting.

The "loss" of China to Mao Tse-tung's murderous forces wasn't merely a "so-called" historical event. The government under Mao took the lives of so many innocent millions that he won a place in the Guinness Book of Records as history's greatest mass murderer. Yet Mr. Widmer termed Welch's seeking to alert the American people about such an enormous tragedy as an example of "extremist views." Incredible!

Welch's letters in the 1950s weren't photocopied because photocopying hadn't yet been invented. (Small point but evidence of sloppy journalism.)

The Welch-led Society opposed fluoridation of water, not because of its supposed health benefits, but because it amounted to government forced mass medication, something advocated by the likes of Adolph Hitler. Shortly after the Society found itself victimized by charges that its stand, absent the



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reason for its position being given, was worthy of your type of ridicule, a professor at Tufts University suggested that the then-rising U.S. population could be countered by adding birth control substances to the water supply. And he pointed to fluoridation of the water supplies as a precedent that could be followed. Even the *Boston Globe* published this man's totalitarian suggestion.

About Welch's 1963 book presenting the career of Dwight Eisenhower, no facts in its 300 pages have ever been shown to be false. Even today, readers find the revelations collected and published by Welch to be important history. All of it should be worthy of the time of a "trustee" of any state's Historical Society.

Earl Warren was never "hated" by any member of the Welch-led Society. What he did to advance the cause of Communism within the U.S. caused domestic Communists to hold a huge rally in New York City to salute the Supreme Court leader and the help he was providing to further communism's subversion. Pointing this out, and showing fellow Americans the harm created by the Warren-led court, wasn't "hate." It amounted to supplying facts and perspective needed by Americans.

The Society recommended letter writing. It formed a speakers bureau. It gathered people into rallies. And, yes, it either employed tactics or made recommendations that even Communists were using - each of which was morally based, legal and sensible. But Communists use moral and legal tactics along with immoral and illegal means to carry out their work. Communists have always published a newspaper. The *Boston Globe's* owners publish a newspaper. But the Society never accused the *Boston Globe's* owners of adopting a Communist practice in publishing their newspaper.

The Society is frequently pilloried for not publishing its membership lists, thereby earning the charge made by Mr. Widmer and others that it is a "secret" organization. But the Boy Scouts, the League of Women Voters, and many other organizations also don't publish their membership lists. Mr. Widmer seems to have no appreciation for easily understood practices followed by many. Publishing a membership list would violate a trust accorded to members, which is why so many organizations refuse to do so.

The Society never, I repeat never, labeled Martin Luther King a Communist. Its publications did show that he hired communists, accepted funding from communists, attended communist training sessions, and frequently started demonstrations that turned into communist-led rioting and destructiveness. It was these associations that led former Attorney General Robert Kennedy to wiretap King's phone and take other steps to thwart what King was doing. When J. Edgar Hoover labeled King the "most notorious liar" in America, he had plenty of reason to do so.

Mr. Widmer also claims that some of "the beliefs that Birchers held were racist." That charge is odious, something our black and Jewish members would eagerly resist.

It goes on to describe members of The John Birch Society as a "merry band of radicals." Shame on him for denigrating some of the finest people in our nation with that slur.

He and many other opponents of our Society rely on the claims of William Buckley to buttress his attacks. But Buckley betrayed his own beliefs when he announced support for abortion, when he suggested that colleague Joseph Sobran and ally Patrick Buchanan were tainted with anti-Semitism, when he accepted membership in the world-government-promoting Council on Foreign Relations, and more. As the "Pied Piper" for the Establishment he once opposed, he became the favorite of numerous liberals who despised constitutional conservatism.

Enough! Mr. Widmer has discredited himself enormously. That the *Boston Globe* would publish his



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rantings discredits the Globe.

An apology is due. If one comes, I will gladly have it reprinted here (at [InsideJBS.org](#)).

*John F. McManus is president emeritus of [The John Birch Society](#). This column appeared originally at the [insideJBS](#) blog and is reprinted here with permission.*



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