Guide to the John Birch Society pamphlets

John Hay Library
University Archives and Manuscripts
Box A
Brown University
Providence, RI 02912
Telephone: Manuscripts: 401-863-3723; University Archives: 401-863-2148
Manuscripts: email: hay@brown.edu; University Archives: archives@brown.edu

Published in 2014
©Brown University Library
Collection overview

Title: John Birch Society pamphlets
Creator: John Birch Society.
Extent: 0.5 linear feet
Abstract: The John Birch Society pamphlets consist primarily of pamphlets and reprints of magazine articles that reflect right-wing political views on such issues as the Civil Rights movement, the protests against the war in Vietnam during the 1960's, communism, drug use, popular music and culture, pornography, race relations, and sex education in American schools. Most were published or reprinted by the John Birch Society. The pamphlets are dated from 1928 to 1990, but most are dated between 1960 and 1970.

Language of materials: English
Repository: John Hay Library University Archives and Manuscripts
Collection number: MS.2014.001

Scope & content

The John Birch Society pamphlets consist primarily of pamphlets and reprints that reflect right-wing political views on such issues as the Civil Rights movement, the protests against the war in Vietnam during the 1960's, communism, drug use, popular music and culture, pornography, race relations, and sex education in American schools. The pamphlets are dated from 1928 to 1990, but most are dated between 1960 and 1970.

The pamphlets published by the John Birch Society include copies of the Society's Bulletin as well as reprints from American Opinion and The Review of the News. Many pamphlets were published by the Society's Movement to Restore Decency (MOTOCREDE). The collection also includes a "Support Your Local Police" decal and a packing slip from Robert Welch, Inc.
The pamphlet titled "A Letter to the South on Segregation" was written by Robert Welch, even though his name does not appear on the pamphlet in this collection. This pamphlet, dated 1965, is a reprint (thirteenth printing) of Welch's original September 1956 article in One Man's Opinion.

Other pamphlets in the collection were published by the American Jewish Committee, Athanasius Press, the Daughters of Saint Paul, and Ensign Publishing Company. The two pamphlets published by Pathfinder Press and the Workers Library Publishers reflect left-wing views regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and the civil rights of African-Americans in the United States.

This collection is related to, but is not part of, the John Birch Society records (Ms.2013.003) and the Gordon Hall and Grace Hoag Collection of Dissenting and Extremist Printed Propaganda (Ms.76).

Arrangement

The John Birch Society pamphlets have been organized alphabetically by the name of the publisher and then by title.

Historical note

The John Birch Society was founded in Indianapolis, Indiana, on December 9, 1958. Robert Welch, Jr. (1899–1985), a retired candy manufacturer, led the organization from its founding until his retirement in 1983. The Society's purpose was to combat communism and promote various ultraconservative causes. It was named in honor of John Birch, an American Baptist missionary and United States Army intelligence officer who was killed by Chinese communists on August 25, 1945, making him, in the Society's view, the first casualty of the Cold War. Although it does not release membership numbers, the Society was estimated to have between 60,000 and 100,000 members at the height of its activities during the 1960's. By 1985 the membership was estimated to be about 50,000.

The Society published the periodicals American Opinion and The Review of the News as well as pamphlets from the Society's Movement to Restore Decency (MOTOCREDE). Most of the pamphlets in this collection are reprints from Society publications and reflect right-wing political views on issues such as communism, popular culture and sex education in American schools. Other pamphlets were published by the American Jewish Committee, one of the oldest Jewish advocacy organizations in the United States; the Daughters of
Saint Paul, a Catholic publishing house in Boston, Massachusetts; Ensign Publishing Company in Salt Lake City, Utah, whose publications include works on religion and anti-communism; Pathfinder Press, publishers of works on Marxist theory and socialist political analysis; and the Workers Library Publishers, which published pamphlets for the Workers Party of America. The Workers Party of America was the name of the legal party organization used by the Communist Party USA from the last days of 1921 until the middle of 1929. Athanasius Press, not to be confused with the religious affiliated press of the same name in Monroe, Louisiana, was created by John H. deTar, M.D., in order to published his right-wing political writings.

Access & use

Access to the collection: There are no restrictions on access, except that the collection can only be seen by prior appointment. Some materials may be stored off-site and cannot be produced on the same day on which they are requested.

Use of materials: All researchers seeking to publish materials from the collections of the John Hay Library are requested to complete a Notice of Intent to Publish, prior to reproducing, quoting, or otherwise publishing any portion or extract from this collection. Although Brown University has physical ownership of the collection and the materials contained therein, it does not claim literary rights. It is up to the researcher to determine the owners of the literary rights and to obtain any necessary permissions from them.

Preferred citation: John Birch Society pamphlets, MS.2014.001, John Hay Library University Archives and Manuscripts

Contact information: John Hay Library University Archives and Manuscripts
Box A
Brown University
Providence, RI 02912
Telephone: Manuscripts: 401-863-3723; University Archives: 401-863-2148
Manuscripts: email: hay@brown.edu; University Archives: archives@brown.edu
Administrative information

About the collection

Aquisition: The John Birch Society pamphlets, with one exception, were given to the Brown University Library by an anonymous donor in December 2004. The pamphlet published by the American Jewish Committee regarding Skinheads was donated at the same time by Howard Stone, a Brown University librarian.

About the finding aid

Author: Finding aid prepared by Mary A. Harrison.

Encoding: This finding aid was produced using the Archivists’ Toolkit 2014-02-11

Descriptive rules: Finding aid based on Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS)

Additional information

Related material: Related archival materials include: The Gordon Hall and Grace Hoag Collection of Dissenting and Extremist Printed Propaganda (Ms.76) and the John Birch Society records (Ms.2013.003).

Search terms

Names: Allen, Gary
American Jewish Committee.
Avery, Dave
Buch, Peter
Crow, Joseph R.
Cushing, Richard, Cardinal, 1895-1970
Dean, Paul William
deTar, John H., M.D., 1925-2011
Evans, M. Stanton, (Medford Stanton), 1934-
Fenton, Francis E., Reverend

Granger, Ken
Griffin, G. Edward
Gumaer, David E., (David Emerson)
Huck, Susan
Johnson, Manning, 1907-
Jones, Hardin B.
McManus, John F.
Pepper, John, 1886-1938
Reddin, Thomas
Root, E. Merrill, (Edward Merrill), 1895-1973
Rousselot, John H., 1927-2003
Schuyler, George S., (George Samuel), 1895-1977
Skousen, W. Cleon, (Willard Cleon), 1913-2006
Stang, Alan
Stern, Kenneth S., (Kenneth Saul), 1953-
Welch, Robert, 1899-1985
Wood, Wallis W.

Subjects:
Anti-communist movements--United States--History--20th century
Civil rights movements--United States--History--20th century
Drug abuse--United States
Federal aid to law enforcement agencies
Jewish-Arab relations.
Pornography
Rock music--History and criticism
Sex instruction for youth--United States
Skinheads--United States--History--20th century
United States--Race relations--History--20th century
Vietnam War, 1961-1975--Protest movements--United States

Types of materials: Pamphlets
Inventory