

Rachel Wiegardt-Egel

Austin Graham

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A Fascist in the White House: Anti-Semitism and Anti-Interventionism in Philip Roth's:

The Plot Against America

Philip Roth's novel *The Plot Against America* explores an alternative American history – one in which the aviation hero (and alleged Nazi sympathizer) Charles Lindbergh is elected as president in 1940, instead of Franklin Delano Roosevelt winning his third term in the White House. The consequences that result from this presidential choice are terrifying; America becomes an openly anti-Semitic nation that is eventually subjected to martial law. In Roth's depiction, the creation of a totalitarian state in America is a direct effect of the isolationist movement of the 1940's. The novel is largely a narrative – the “autobiographical” story of a young Philip Roth and how his family was personally affected by the election of Charles Lindbergh and the horrors that followed – and the actual events of the novel are clearly fictional. However, there was indeed an anti-war movement in the 1930's and 1940's, a movement whose spirit was embodied most by the America First Committee organization. Charles Lindbergh was indeed this organization's most prominent, and perhaps most controversial, speaker. The leaders of America First gave many reasons for wanting to keep America out of war: among them were the desire to refrain from entangling America in Europe's affairs, the fear that capitalism could not be maintained in an America at war, and the idea that America's entering the war would be futile and would put the country at risk. There was not an obviously anti-Semitic motive behind the isolationist movement of the 1940's, and certainly not in the mainstream political sphere,

which remained pro-Britain and anti-Germany, if not necessarily pro-war. The America First Committee remained in the minority, and was defeated, by and large, in its goals, as Congress passed every act they opposed. However, there was enough underlying anti-Jewish tension in the views of the leaders of the America First Committee to make Roth's *The Plot Against America* a chillingly plausible account of the anti-war movement. Roth uses the pretext of this movement's being blatantly and unabashedly anti-Semitic to warn that radicalism, even when it exists in groups largely on the fringe, is always dangerous due its ability to infect the minds of millions of impressionable citizens, especially in times of war.

In 1939, when the war in Europe began, most Americans were anti-war; in fact, "in September 1939, polls indicated that Americans above all sought to avoid war" (Doenecke 7). However, the events of the next year were startling to many Americans, forcing them to question whether isolationism was still the best strategy. Adolf Hitler's army had already conquered Denmark, Norway, Belgium, the Netherlands, and France; Britain was undergoing air raids such as had never been seen before, making it uncertain how long the United Kingdom would be able to stave off Hitler's advances. American public opinion shifted dramatically, and "by November 1940, a majority of Americans told pollsters that they preferred all-out war to Britain's defeat" (Doenecke 7). In response to this public shift toward favoring interventionism, the America First Committee was formed in 1940 by students at Yale University. On September 4, the AFC made its principles public. These were: "1) The United States must build an impregnable defense for America, 2) No foreign powers, nor groups of powers, can successfully attack a *prepared* America, 3) American democracy can be preserved only by keeping out of the European war, 4) 'Aid short of war' weakens national defense at home and threatens to involve America in war abroad" (Doenecke 9). Over the next year, the AFC grew rapidly, expanding to contain 450

chapters and approximately 800,000 members by May 1941 (Holbo 44). Many prominent American figures gave their support to this movement. General Robert E. Wood, the board chairman of Sears, Roebuck, was chosen as the acting chairman of the AFC; Charles Lindbergh, the famous aviator, became the chief orator; Henry Ford, the pioneer of the American automobile industry, also joined the ranks of the America Firsters; John T. Flynn, the journalist, wrote many of his columns in support of AFC views; Burton K. Wheeler and Gerald P. Nye, both senators of the U.S. Congress, became avid supporters, each eventually heading investigations into pro-war conspiracy theories. Each of these men had a different motive in becoming leaders of the AFC, but all shared a single common goal: to keep America fully and completely out of the European war.

Though Charles Lindbergh would eventually be the man to create heated controversy surrounding the reputation of the AFC, he began his tenure as primary spokesman by arguing what he called the “practical” side of the anti-interventionist movement (Holbo 44)¹. The AFC launched their first major attack of 1941 with speeches advocating against FDR’s lend-lease bill, which proposed limited aid to Britain. In one such speech on April 23, 1941, Lindbergh argued the military strategy side of the anti-war movement, stating that if the United States were to send troops to help defend the Allies, they would have no safe place to be stationed – no stronghold at which to anchor their army – as much of Western Europe had been defeated by the Nazis, and even England was under constant bombardment: “The campaigns of this war show only too clearly how difficult it is to force a landing, or to maintain an army, on a hostile coast” (Holbo 45). Lindbergh, despite his claim that he would “discuss the war from a viewpoint which is

¹See Cole for more information on the life of Charles Lindbergh, and his participation in the America First movement.

primarily practical” (Holbo 44), also appealed to people’s emotional view of the war, using pathos and an allusion to the early American policy of “Manifest Destiny” to try to sway the American people to sympathize with the goals of the AFC: “The time has come when those of us who believe in an independent American destiny must band together and organize for strength. This is why the America First Committee has been formed – to give voice...to the people who must do the praying, and the fighting, and the dying if this country enters the war” (Holbo 47).

Senator Gerald P. Nye was another member of the AFC. Though he later became more of a radical (and was portrayed by the media as an anti-Semite), he originally spoke in favor of the practical, rather than idealistic, side of the isolationist movement. Nye was a senator of North Dakota, and his sympathies were decidedly agrarian and anti-big business. In fact, he believed that big business in the form of munitions makers had coerced the U.S. into participating in World War I, and headed the Senate Committee Investigating the Munitions Industry from 1934-1936 (Schacht 1). This committee concluded that the arms industry had hired lobbyists to bring an end to the Geneva Disarmament Conference of 1927, and that it had made huge profits of the armament manufacturing opportunities created by WWI. The committee went so far as to call the munitions makers “merchants of death” and claimed that war seemed to benefit them alone (Holbo 12). On May 27, 1935, as Europe was beginning to teeter on the brink of another war, Nye expressed these views, which would stay with him through his days as an avid member of the AFC: “Let me make this clear. If the people of the world are told again that the next war is a political war for the noblest possible ideals, those same people will be the ones to suffer not only during the war, but also when the war is over” (Holbo 13). He advocated that the only sensible thing for the American people to do was to stay out of the war that he believed had nothing to do with them – nothing to do with common people in general – and everything to do with profit.

The AFC chairman, Robert E. Wood, had yet another reason to prevent America from entering the war: he held that capitalism could still exist in America even if Europe were to be completely taken over by Hitler, but not in an America at war with Hitler. In October, 1940, Wood stated to the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations that, “Competent observers believe that if the war is prolonged in Europe over one or two years, it will result in communism in all Europe and a species of national socialism in England. If we are involved, it probably spells the end of capitalism all over the world” (Schacht 13). This worry joined Lindbergh’s claim that it would be extremely challenging for the U.S. to win the war on foreign shores with allies who were greatly weakened, and Nye’s fear that big business would be the only one to profit if the average citizens of America left their farms and towns to fight the Nazis, as a major concern of the AFC. The Soviet Union was already communist, and fascism had swept through Europe (with the help of Hitler and Benito Mussolini’s military conquests) in a matter of decades. If the Allies had in fact lost the war to the Axis powers, it does seem conceivable that Wood’s fear could have turned into reality.

The AFC saw its share of controversy, with accusations of being anti-Semitic and pro-Hitler, accusations that only increased after the committee’s two Jewish members (philanthropist Lessing Rosenwald and congresswoman Florence Prather Kahn) resigned, one immediately and the other within a few months. The AFC’s most notorious anti-Semite – and one who won them criticism – was Henry Ford, the auto industry tycoon. Ford possessed a rabid hatred of Jews, and published his views in a journal called the *Dearborn Independent* in the 1920’s. In one such publication, a series of articles called “The International Jew: the World’s Foremost Problem,” Ford claimed that the Jews had gained too much power in the world. He said “To keep American and Christian the school, the church, the legislature, the jury room and the Government, is the

most potent resistance that can be made to the evil influences which have been upon us,” referring to Jewish power as “evil influences” and addressing “gentiles” as “us” (Ford, chapter 80). This work was popular in Nazi Germany, and was even read by Hitler. Hitler greatly admired Ford, and as a result, Ford was the only American named in Hitler’s principal work, *Mein Kampf*. Ford’s anti-Semitism was prevented from soiling the reputation of the AFC as a whole, however, as his membership in the AFC was removed; although Ford publically recanted his previous views, the AFC found association with him to be “embarrassing” and decided to oust him (Doenecke 15). Avery Bundage, president of the American Olympic Association, and another suspected pro-Nazi, was also dropped.

However, the AFC managed to avoid major scandals, and controversy stayed fairly low until Lindbergh’s infamous Des Moines speech. On September 11, 1941, Charles Lindbergh delivered a speech that would permanently change the way the AFC was viewed by the rest of the political world – a speech in which he stated the “Jewish people” were among American pro-war groups, publically delineating the Jews as “other” than the rest of Americans. The tone of anti-Semitism was particularly noticeable, and particularly threatening, when he stated, “Instead of agitating for war, the Jewish groups in this country should be opposing it in every possible way, for they will be among the first to feel its consequences. Tolerance is a virtue that depends upon peace and strength. History shows that it cannot survive war and devastation” (Lindbergh), seeming to imply that the persecution happening to Jews in Europe could also happen to Jews in America if the country were to be pushed into a disastrous war. This speech was widely criticized for being anti-Semitic.² However, instead of reproving Lindbergh and removing him

² For more information about the reaction of Americans – particularly that of Jewish Americans – to Lindbergh’s 1941 Des Moines speech, see O’Neill.

from his current status as primary speaker for the committee, the AFC released a statement denying that Charles Lindbergh and its other members were anti-Semitic, and blaming the interventionists for bringing the issue of race into the national political discussion.³ Furthermore, Jews were given an open invitation to join the AFC. However, instead of currying favor with Americans, this speech and the committee's response merely discredited the AFC. John T. Flynn, the muckraking journalist and prominent member of America First, foresaw this damage in a teletype message he sent the next day to both Wood and R. Douglas Stuart, Jr. (the original founder of the AFC): "I am profoundly disturbed about the speech of Col. Lindbergh last nite. It seems incredible to me that Col. Lindbergh without consulting anyone literally committed the America First movement to an open attack upon the Jews...I thought his speech at Oklahoma City was a most unfortunate one, but the one in Des Moines might be almost fatal to us" (Doenecke 395). Though it didn't destroy the AFC (their disbandment occurred only after Pearl Harbor, only after the U.S. had entered the war they had fought so hard to keep it out of), it did do permanent injury to its reputation.

Another such controversy arose in 1941, when U.S. senator Burton K. Wheeler decided to head a committee investigating the interventionists in the motion picture industry, only to find that most studio heads were Jewish. This led him to allege that those of foreign birth had been given control over the media, a tool he worried would be used to influence millions of Americans. This finding brought accusations of Wheeler's being an anti-Semite. On September 21, 1941, the New York Times reported that "A third resolution as originally put forward by Dr. Frank Kingdon denounced Senator Nye and Charles A. Lindbergh for 'introducing Nazi

³ See Cypkin for a discussion of modern opinion as to whether or not Lindbergh's speech was, in fact, anti-Semitic.

techniques' by an 'appeal to anti-Semitic prejudices.' On a motion from the floor, the resolution was amended to include the name of Senator Wheeler" ("Pecora Rebukes Hoover on Russia").⁴ However, members of the AFC continued to deny the charges of anti-Semitism. Frederick Libby, the first American ace – a pilot credited with five or more aerial victories – of WWI (and therefore of all time), and another prominent member of the AFC, wrote to R. Douglas Stuart, Jr., complaining of these charges and suggesting the Senator Wheeler publically refute them: "He should say...that the current distortion of the facts by the interventionists, in order to smear the three recognized leaders of the anti-war movement, is a plain exploitation of the Jews for the promotion of interventionism" (Doenecke 394). While this statement was a bit too radical for even Senator Wheeler to adopt, the AFC persisted in standing behind, and supporting, its members, even as they were accused of being obviously and almost openly against Jews.

Despite their growing numbers and prominent speakers, the America First Committee was never accepted by the mainstream Republican Party; they remained somewhat on the fringe. In fact, the position of the Republican Party itself was quite different from that of the America First. Though Wendell Willkie never held a fully anti-war standpoint, by 1941, the Republican presidential candidate of 1940 was urging America to offer full aid to Britain, saying, "We cannot keep Britain afloat with mere words...And where the strengthening and the defense of freedom requires that we act, let us act like Americans. Let us act like a people who have known what freedom means – who value it, and who are determined never to be deprived of it" (Willkie). This was a major step toward interventionism for the Republican Party. However, if Pearl Harbor had not been bombed in December 1941, it is difficult to know what would have

⁴ For an in-depth study of this case, the role of Jews in the media, and the presence of anti-Semitism in Hollywood, see Carr.

happened – whether the alleged anti-Semites of America First would have taken over the organization and made it openly anti-Jewish, and whether the America First Committee would have risen even more in prominence and number as the United States continued to be on the verge of entering a European war.

In Philip Roth's *The Plot Against America*, both of these possibilities come to fruition. Anti-Semites in the America First Committee take control of both the organization and the country, with Charles A. Lindbergh elected President, Burton K. Wheeler as Vice President, and Henry Ford as Secretary of the Interior. These men were arguably the most extreme of the America Firsters, and were the main members to face charges of anti-Semitism – with perhaps the addition of Gerald P. Nye, whom Roth mentions as Lindbergh's nominator (Roth 15). It is alarmingly plausible that, had the country gone on a slightly different course, or had America not been attacked by the Japanese, the America First organization could have taken control of the Republican Party, and these men could have taken control of America First. They were the staunchest members, and arguably the most charismatic, as Lindbergh and Wheeler were the chief orators of the committee. Roth's choice of leaders, in itself, reinforces his theme of the danger of radicalism – the power of a small number of extremists to sway the public opinion of an entire organization, or even an entire country.

Roth's depiction of Lindbergh's Des Moines speech is accurate, and his declaration that the AFC continued to support Lindbergh after this infamous incident, with Lindbergh remaining "the most popular proselytizer of its argument for neutrality," is also historically correct (14). However, in Roth's version of history, instead of discrediting the entire America First organization, this speech awakens an anti-Jewish, anti-war fervor in Americans:

When Lindbergh...warned against...“infiltration of inferior blood”... he was recording personal convictions shared by a sizable portion of America First’s rank-and-file membership as well as by a rabid constituency even more extensive than a Jew like my father with his bitter hatred of anti-Semitism...could ever imagine to be flourishing all across America (14).

The choice of the word “proselytizer” to describe Lindbergh is extremely appropriate, for the zealotry of American support for Lindbergh is very nearly religious. The “rabid constituency” has begun to worship Lindbergh practically as a religious figure. At the Republican Convention, the conventioners rise to their feet and chant “Lindy!” for “thirty glorious minutes, and without interruption from the chair” (15). Furthermore, Roth refers to this display of hero-worship as a “spontaneous pseudo-religious drama” (15). The implications of this switch from the America First Committee’s being a mostly rational organization in reality, to being a quickly-growing, almost cult-like group under the leadership of a radical few are truly frightening, especially as it mirrors the near-religious fervor of the early days of Nazi Germany. The echo of Nazism extends not only to the way in which the people seem to revere Lindbergh, but also to the very core of what Lindbergh says; the mention of “inferior blood” in reference to the Jews is distinctly Nazi-like, and is especially shocking to hear coming from a man soon to become the president of America, a country supposed to have been founded on the idea that everyone is equal. Lindbergh does not go so far as to blatantly state the superiority of the Aryan race that Hitler was so fond of, but it is ominously implied. It is not just to the readers of this novel that the echo of Nazism is evident, but to the characters as well. Roth writes, “People had oddly forgotten about FDR and the bulwark he was against oppression. The sheer surprise of the Lindbergh nomination had activated an atavistic sense of being undefended that had more to do

with Kishinev and the pogroms of 1903 than with New Jersey thirty-seven years later” (18). Just as the radicalism of Lindbergh and his fellow AFC leaders triggers the “rabid” fanaticism of the anti-interventionists, it “activates” the primal fear of the Jews. Wisely so, for Lindbergh’s administration will soon take an extremist, anti-Jewish path – merely a milder version of Hitler’s reforms in Germany. Roth depicts this early, devout fascination of Americans with Lindbergh as a warning sign that the dangers of radicalism can exist in any country, even one in which democracy is as sacred as it is thought to be in America. Roth suggests that this is this case especially in war time, when people are living in a constant climate of fear and vulnerability to the outside world.

Much later in the novel, the extreme anti-Semitism that is fostered in the first chapter is unleashed upon America. With Walter Winchell’s announcement that he will run for president, the hatred spawned and encouraged by the Lindbergh administration manifests itself in an American *Kristallnacht* in Detroit. Jewish shops are broken into and looted, Jews are beaten in the streets, and crosses are burned on the lawns of Jewish homes. “Anti-Semitic agitators hunted Winchell down at every crossing” and “the candidate came close to getting himself mauled each time he stepped onto the soapbox to denounce ‘the fascist in the White House’ and to assign responsibility directly to the president’s ‘religious hatred’ for fostering ‘unheard-of Nazi barbarism in the American streets’” (264). The use of bestial diction – “hunted,” “mauled,” “barbarism” – reflects Roth’s belief that once extremism has been allowed to have any kind of legitimacy, once hatred is given the opportunity to reach millions of impressionable people through the voices of the powerful and charismatic, it is nearly impossible to rein it back in. It becomes its own entity, animalistic and uncontrollable. Once Lindbergh is given the office of president, and his views are accepted as representing the public opinion of America, his beliefs

do become in fact become the beliefs of ordinary Americans. These Americans believe strongly enough in Lindbergh's ideas that they are willing to become brutal and cruel in their obsession with supporting them. Furthermore, in a state in which radicalism is allowed to become the norm, violence is not only employed by a few citizens as a means of sustaining the policies of the state through vigilante justice, but is said by the majority to be action necessarily taken. After the Detroit riots, the *Detroit Times* supports them, stating that they were the "unfortunate but inevitable and altogether understandable backlash to the activities of the trouble-making interloper the paper identified as 'the Jewish demagogue whose aim from the offset has been to incite the rage of patriotic Americans with his treasonous rabble-rousing'" (266). A "nationwide pogrom" has begun in America, and the idea that the act of openly subjecting a people to hate crimes and acts of violence is seen as "patriotic" is horrifying (267); America has drifted so far from its original ideals that terrorizing fellow Americans is seen as patriotism. The fact that this is said to be happening less than two years after the Lindbergh administration takes power suggests the ease with which civilian minds can be changed from their previously strongly-held opinions once they develop a pious and devout admiration for leaders they deem to be almost godlike.

Near the climax of the novel, America takes yet another turn, changing from a state in which anti-Semitism is clearly present, but which still maintains the illusion of democracy, to a state which enforces martial law. This change occurs when President Lindbergh disappears, and Vice President Wheeler steps in to take his place. Soon after, the chaos that existed under Lindbergh is calmed: "Under martial law, America remains calm" (310). However, this "calm" is purchased at the price of America's becoming a totalitarian state. Lindbergh is said to have been kidnapped by a "conspiracy of 'Jewish interests'" (309); Roosevelt and nearly all high ranking

government Jews are arrested; the anti-Semitic riots are also said to be a result of the plotting of a “far-reaching Jewish conspiracy intent on undermining the country’s morale” (315); the First Lady is “said to be suffering from ‘extreme nervous exhaustion’” and, in an act of what is practically kidnapping, is taken to an army hospital, where she is straitjacketed and held prisoner (316). The country’s future is completely uncertain; it seems just on the brink of becoming another Nazi Germany. Before this point in the novel, the federal government’s actions and stance on the Jews are somewhat ambiguous, and the actions against Jews are committed by citizens themselves. However, at this point, the federal government blatantly applies a Hitlerite phrase – “Jewish conspiracy” – to American Jews, and takes direct action against them by arresting the country’s most prominent Jews. The new American calmness is also marred by the fact that the “Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan and the leader of the American Nazi Party have jointly called upon the acting president to ‘implement extreme measures to protect America from a Jewish coup d’état’” (310). At this point, the America in the world of the novel has become “extreme” enough that it is plausible that the president of the United States would begin to take policy advice from the leaders of extremist, violent, racist organizations. Even the phrase “coup d’état” exhibits how very unsteady and dangerous the country has become. The radicalism originally touted by a few rogue leaders of a minority organization has now become an accepted part of American society. Radicalism advocated by a few can be poisonous to an entire country’s way of thinking, a point Roth continues to return to throughout the entire novel. Therefore, the urging by groups even more radical than the America First Committee for even more violent measures to be taken against the Jews – a people who have already been brutalized in a country they believed was perhaps the last stronghold of safety and democracy – seems to foreshadow a catastrophic end to the novel. It appears to be an omen of even more destruction to come.

No more devastation occurs at the hands of the Lindbergh administration, however. The end of the novel is a whirlwind of history setting itself back on the course of actual American history. Mrs. Lindbergh escapes her incarceration as a mental patient and goes on the radio, begging the country to take measures to return to its normal way of life. She asks Congress to remove Wheeler from office, and states that she will not yield to intimidation from the current administration. Though it is unclear why everyone listens to, and obeys, Mrs. Lindbergh, obey her they do: Wheeler is removed from office, there is an emergency presidential election to coincide with the Congressional election, and FDR wins his third presidential term as Democrats win the majority in the House of Representatives and the Senate. A mere month later, in December 1942, Pearl Harbor is attacked, and America enters World War II. Wheeler is pardoned by FDR to “spare the country the ordeal of such a criminal prosecution against a former Acting President,” and Lindbergh is never seen again (320).

This kind of anticlimax is an unexpected ending to a novel that seemed as if it were building toward some huge, apocalyptic event. It seems to suggest that not only is radicalism a possibility in America, but also that Americans have the eerie ability to forget their past extremist wrongs. There are echoes of the wrongdoings of slavery – the slaves and freed blacks being the only other people to experience a similar kind of mass terrorizing at the hands of fellow Americans as the Jews in this novel experience, though the slaves’ was a much more direct subjugation. There are suggestions of the Japanese internment of the actual history of WWII – an action taken by a pro-war 1940’s America rather than the anti-Jewish stance taken by Roth’s anti-war 1940’s America. Though the institution of slavery and the Japanese internment are perhaps not as much a part of our current national conversation as they should be, the Americans Roth depicts are even more quick to forget the ills they have done to the Jewish

people, without even the cushion of several generations to help them forget. History continues to move forward, with the terrors of the Lindbergh/Wheeler administration remaining a two-year blip in the country's storyline. Americans have no one left to blame: Lindbergh has disappeared; Wheeler is pardoned; Ford is barely mentioned, if ever, after Lindbergh's disappearance. Now that those who turned them to radicalism are gone, the Americans have no one to blame for their horrific actions against the Jews. Instead of blaming themselves, they simply continue with their lives, choosing a new hero to worship (FDR instead Lindbergh), and a new cause to believe in (defending America against the fascists, rather than the pro-war American Jews). The apparent ability of people to quickly forget the evils their country has committed against its own people gives Roth's theme an even more frightening tinge: radicalism can quickly become the accepted policy of a country, terrors can be committed with the intention of protecting the ideals of this radicalism, and, perhaps worst of all, these terrors can be forgotten as people simply move on, once those who led them into extremism are gone or replaced by other ideologues.⁵

Though the anti-Semitism of the isolationist movement was never as flagrant in reality as it is in *The Plot Against America*, though the anti-Jewish opinions of Lindbergh and Wheeler were at least somewhat concealed under the guise of protecting America first and foremost, though the America First Committee continued to deny that its members were against Jews, there was enough anti-Semitism revealed over the course of America First's one-year existence in national politics to make the organized chaos depicted in *The Plot Against America* seem an actual possibility. The America First Committee was already supporting its members in very nearly overt displays of anti-Semitism, and the AFC was rapidly growing even in the days before

⁵ See Novick for a discussion of how much Americans knew of what was happening in Europe at the time of the Holocaust, and the ways in which the Holocaust has remained a part of the American national conversation.

its demise. It is not improbable that, had the U.S. not been attacked by Japan, the AFC would have continued to grow both in power and in willingness to be blatantly anti-Semitic, perhaps even to the extent that Roth describes. Roth's novel can therefore be read as a cautionary tale against allowing radicalism to become rooted in national politics, and as a warning that America is not as immune to it as most Americans would probably like to think. The country very nearly took a radical turn a mere seventy years ago. Roth's work conveys the disastrous consequences such a turn could create. Given the echoes of the abominations of slavery and the Japanese internment, it becomes impossible to deny that the tragedy depicted in the novel could indeed happen in America if Americans allow radicalism and extreme prejudice to infiltrate their thoughts and opinions. Radicalism is an ever-present threat – radicalism based on race, on religion, on sexual orientation – and it can happen and take control of a nation of minds in any place. In any time. Even in America.