

something less than rigorous: "a more rational economy with a more equal distribution of power and responsibility and a more sensible use of resources." It is to his credit that he perceives that "democratic socialism" is easier to invoke as an ideal than to imagine being put into practice. As with so many on the American left, McWilliams embraces socialism mainly as a rhetorical weapon with which to criticize the workings of the capitalist system.

In the final analysis, he is happiest imagining himself as an independent radical. That self-definition indicates no small part of his ideological problem. Radicals, he says, "never feel part of the existing order and are invariably critical of it"; or again, "the radical is the perpetual outsider, the odd man (or woman) out, constantly critical of the power structure and of things as they are." But where, politically speaking, does one go from there? If one is not a revolutionary

(and McWilliams nowhere hints that he is) and if one has no positive vision of how things ought to be (and McWilliams never suggests a program of change), what does radicalism mean other than a chronic rebelliousness suggestive of nothing so much as a state of perpetual political adolescence?

None of this should make us forget the valuable, even heroic, contributions McWilliams has made in specific areas of public policy. But if we follow him in political theory, we are led to a style of permanent rebellion that makes no more sense, in the end, than Trotsky's vision of permanent revolution. His is also a prescription for a politics of endless self-hatred. By refusing even the possibility of coming to terms with his own necessarily imperfect society, McWilliams demonstrates as well as anyone could the fecklessness of so much of the native American radical tradition. [WV]

hysteria and demagoguery.

Gary May's book is extensively researched, fully documented, and convincingly organized. It depicts a highly competent American citizen who chose the Foreign Service as a career, and Chinese affairs as his field of specialization, during the turbulent period of China's transition into the modern era. John Carter Vincent began his Foreign Service career as a young vice consul in China in the agitated 1920's, studied for two years in Peking to qualify himself as a China Service officer, served in various China posts during the period of Sino-Japanese conflict that began in 1931, and in 1942 became counselor of the American embassy in the Nationalists' wartime capital of Chungking. In late 1945 he was made director of the State Department's Office of Far Eastern Affairs. John Carter Vincent, as evidenced by the record, was eminently qualified as an American Far Eastern expert.

However, as Gary May notes, Washington during wartime had already developed the habit of "ignoring the realities of Chinese politics." His book depicts a foreign affairs apparatus moved by forces other than expertise. It gives examples of lack of bureaucratic coordination between the White House, the State Department, the War Department, and the embassy at Chungking. The White House and War Department are shown as often making foreign policy in flat disregard of the recommendations of the State Department's area specialists. The president's special envoys and political appointees, such as Patrick J. Hurley, the American ambassador to Chungking during the final critical year of the war, commanded sympathetic attention in the Executive branch for laudatory expositions about the strength and stability of the Nationalist regime, while the more knowledgeable appraisals of career diplomats were all too often downgraded or ignored.

As director of the Office of Far Eastern Affairs, Vincent consistently opposed deeper American involvement in the Chinese civil war that began in 1946. This brought him into collision with the Pentagon view—and of course also with that of the China lobby, which had become active in support of the Nationalist cause. May recounts how, in June of 1947, the Joint Chiefs of Staff argued in a Pentagon study that the Chinese Communists "should be re-

China Scapegoat: The Diplomatic Ordeal of John Carter Vincent

by Gary May

(New Republic Books; 370 pp.; \$15.95)

O. Edmund Clubb

Speaking in May, 1978, in Peking, American national security advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski asserted that the American approach to relations with present-day China was based upon three fundamental beliefs: "that friendship between the United States and the People's Republic of China is vital and beneficial to world peace; that a secure and strong China is in America's interest; that a powerful, confident and globally engaged United States is in China's interest." In December of last year President Jimmy Carter announced with obvious pleasure that the United States was severing ties with the Nationalist regime on Taiwan and establishing normal diplomatic relations with Peking, effective January 1, 1979. And now there are those who view China as the natural ally of the United States against the Soviet Union and would arm the Chinese with modern weapons.

It wasn't that way thirty years ago.

The cold war had begun in 1947, prominent political figures purported to perceive a threat by "international communism" to the American way of life, and the Chinese Communist overthrow of the Nationalist regime in 1949 sparked the rhetorical question in the American political arena, "Who lost China?"

The question as phrased betrayed a deep ignorance of the revolutionary convulsion that had occurred in China, but it had a domestic political effect—which was of course its purpose. It was leveled at the Democratic administration in office, and someone had to pay. In the nature of things, where first incompetence and then pro-Chinese communism were suggested, the culprits were to be sought in the State Department and its Foreign Service. The case of John Carter Vincent, as set forth in Gary May's *China Scapegoat*, is outstanding for its revelations regarding American political life in an era of

garded as tools of Soviet policy” and that “Communist domination of China...would jeopardize the military security of the United States.” Also in 1947, in the face of increasing clamor from his political opposition, President Truman inaugurated a Federal Employee Loyalty Program. It was quite logical for the domestic opposition to assume that such a program was needed to combat disloyalty in government.

In January, 1947, Vincent was nominated to be minister to Switzerland. Normally, his approval by the Senate would have followed pro forma, but those were not normal times. Alfred Kohlberg, a moving spirit in the China lobby, inveigled Senator Styles Bridges of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee to move to block approval of the Vincent nomination. Senator Bridges informed committee Chairman Arthur Vandenberg that Vincent had “notoriously and harmfully distorted the American position” in the Far East. Although Vincent’s appointment as minister to Switzerland was actually confirmed in July, this turned out to be only a brief interlude in what was to become a long ordeal.

The story takes on the bizarre character of a purge fantasy that Americans would have thought possible only in a society governed by ideological orthodoxy. Senator Joseph R. McCarthy entered upon the scene and made Vincent his celebrated “Case No. 2.” In November, 1951, the State Department’s Loyalty Security Board formally charged Vincent with having been “pro-Communist” in his views and sympathies in the period 1940-47, with having been a member of the Communist party, and with having or having had “contact or association with individuals concerning whom the Board had certain derogatory information”—individuals duly named.

The sequel is a horror of inquisitorial procedure. Vincent had hearings before the Loyalty Security Board, the House Un-American Activities Committee, and the Senate Internal Security Committee. Cleared by the State Department’s Board in February, 1952, Vincent was summoned to face the Loyalty Review Board, headed by ex-Senator Hiram Bingham, for a new grilling. In March he was informed that the Loyalty Review Board had found “reasonable doubt” regarding his loyalty to the United States and had recommended his dismissal.

The board had found, for one thing, that Vincent had been critical of the Chiang Kai-shek regime “throughout a period when it was the declared and established policy of the government of the U.S. to support Chiang Kai-shek’s Government.” May quotes a relevant comment of the *Washington Post*: “The Bingham Board has hoisted a warning to every member of the Foreign Service. He is given to understand that any enterprise on his part to find out, assay, and assess is taboo. He is informed, in short, that honest reporting is *verboten*.” Secretary of State Dean Acheson conferred about the matter with his designated successor, John Foster Dulles, and commented: “If disagreements on policy were to be equated with disloyalty, the Foreign Service would be destroyed.”

President Truman appointed an independent panel of five distinguished citizens to examine the record and determine whether Vincent should be reinstated or dismissed. But Dulles, on taking up the post of secretary of state under President Eisenhower, arbitrarily ruled that he would personally decide the case without the panel’s advice. He ordered Vincent home again. In a meeting with Vincent, Dulles informed him

that he had shown poor judgment and would either retire from the Foreign Service at once or be fired and lose his pension. Vincent retired. His ordeal had lasted for six long years. Gary May gives a summary assessment: “Ironically, Vincent’s strengths as a diplomat made him vulnerable to attack from the partisans, the zealots, the extremists who suffered from an excess of emotion—from a passionate attachment to Chiang [Kai-shek], and inveterate antipathy toward Russia. There was no place for John Carter Vincent among the ideologues who made the United States a slave of rabid anticommunism in the 1950s.”

The prediction by Secretary of State Acheson and the *Washington Post* was borne out by events: The government’s area specialists were effectively silenced, and the cold war was waged by military and civilian ideologues without major bureaucratic opposition. There followed thirty years of American alienation from the Chinese nation, and the Korean and Vietnam wars with their towering costs to the United States. The Gary May account is an important contribution to understanding how equating disagreement with disloyalty distorted our postwar foreign policy. [v v v]

Money Rush by Andrew Duncan

(Doubleday; 373 pp.; \$10.95)

Arabia: A Journey Through the Labyrinth by Jonathan Raban

(Simon & Schuster; 344 pp.; \$11.95)

Raymond Nadeau

These two timely books provide the most accessible, informative, and entertaining picture of modern Arabia and the oil-producing countries to have appeared to date. As sources for our continuing assessment of the predictably dramatic political and cultural developments in the Middle East, they are invaluable.

Of the two, Andrew Duncan’s *Money Rush* is the more thoroughly researched. It is a superior work of popu-

lar journalism charged with a vigorous penchant for speculation and underscored by a mordantly British sense of irony. Traveling for over a year in Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the OPEC states, Mr. Duncan interviewed many heads of state and spoke to numerous practitioners of “money rush diplomacy,” including bankers, businessmen, confidence tricksters, university presidents, salesmen, and planners who “scramble over each other to flatter, bribe, and cajole