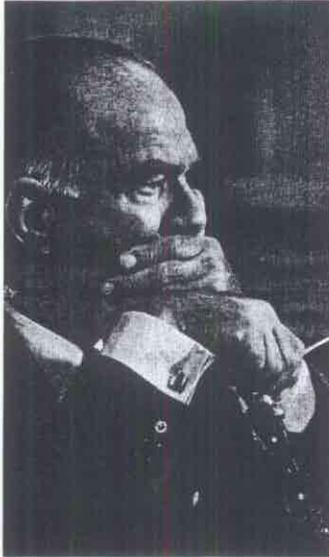


Life 5/13/66

In the center of the arguments over U.S. foreign policy he has stirred up stands Sen. J. William Fulbright, an aloof, thorny, unpredictable intellectual shaped by Oxford and the Ozarks

The Roots of the Arkansas Questioner

by BROCK BROWER



During a Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Vietnam, Senator Fulbright sits by, intent on an exchange between a witness and another committee member.

It's hard any longer to catch the flash of sweet-water Ozark crik that runs through Senator J. William Fulbright's stony eloquence. Mostly, these days, he's keeping to dry, somber, history-minded warnings against the "fatal presumption" that, he fears, could lead America, via Vietnam, to become "what it is not now and never has been, a seeker after unlimited power and empire."

All this, like as not, in the formal rhetoric of white tie and tails. Even when he does take an incidental turn as a plain Arkansas country boy, everybody claims to know better than to believe this. They count him rich enough back home, smart enough all around the rest of the world, and long enough in the U.S. Senate—21 years—to have got over any of that he ever had in him. The countrification is purely for emphasis now, just his way of shooting an extra-hard public look over the top of his tinted glasses at the store-bought Vietnam and China policies of that other hillbilly, Dean Rusk. Otherwise, according to those who see him as the only temperate and credible public critic of a whole series of Administration positions, Senator Fulbright belongs at this critical moment not to Arkansas but to world opinion. The silly mistake too many of these intellectual admirers of his make—even as they put him atop a kind of opposing summit of American for-

eign policy—is to think it's some kind of secret burden for him to have come from Arkansas at all.

"They think Arkansas and the South are millstones around his neck," says one northern urban liberal, who has found out differently since going to work for his hero on the Foreign Relations Committee staff, "but they're wrong. He knows his roots."

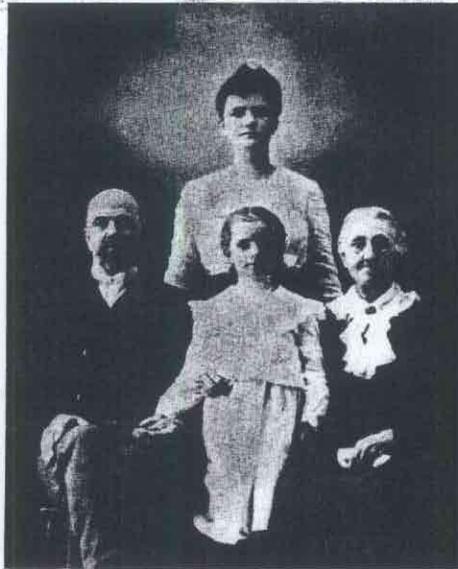
In fact, there is an underlying parochialism in the senator's harshest arguments against the U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia. Vietnam to him is "this god-forsaken, little country" for which any Arkansas traveler, remembering some of the dragged-down patches of the Ozarks, could only feel sympathy if he ever stumbled across it.

"I wonder why these people are so dedicated?" he asks rhetorically about the Vietcong. "Why do these people do this? How do they come by their fanaticism? Well,

coming from the South, with all its memories of Reconstruction, I think I can understand. They've been put upon, and it makes them so fanatical they'll fight down to the last man."

It's an attitude he can see people taking down in his own mountain corner of Arkansas, a place never so far from his mind as some would like to have it; a place, in fact, where he went to live at one earlier time in his life when he left a job in Washington, D.C. and spent seven apolitical years, teaching law part time and living on an isolated hill farm called Rabbit's Foot Lodge.

It was a curious hybrid," he admits, probably the closest thing there'll ever be to an Ozark tea-house. It was built rustic enough, out of adzed logs and clay calking, with lots of wide porches all around. But whoever put it up had clearly been to China and, from down below the spring, looking back up at the muley roofline, it didn't take much of an eye to see it was practically a damn pagoda. For a man who hates even the noise of his wife's snow tires, that Oriental log cabin offered just about the right amount of peace and quiet. In the midst of



At the age of 3½, standing on a chair for a portrait, Fulbright still had long blood curls and bangs and wore an outfit that combined dress and pantaloons.

Fulbright's maternal grandparents, the James G. Waugh, pose with their daughter Roberta (top), the senator's mother, and the eldest of his sisters, Lucile.

Shorn of his long curls and dressed in sensible long pants, Fulbright, at about 5 years old, shows off a tiny fish he has pulled from a rocky Arkansas creek.



the acrimonious hearings over Vietnam—with much of the uproar centering around his own vigorous dissent from the Administration's handling of the war—Senator Fulbright didn't mind thinking an occasional long thought about what it used to be like down there, with no politics "to take time and energy away from the substance of things."

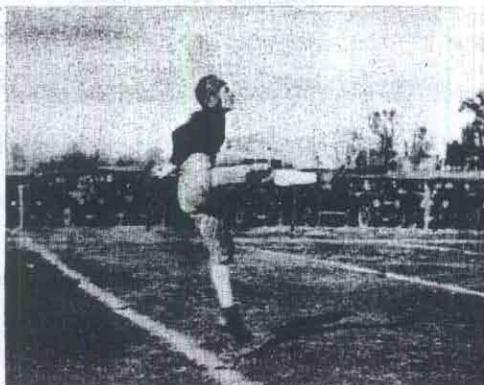
"It's very serene country," he says, brooding a little. He went there to live in 1936, bored with life in the capital as a Justice Department antitrust lawyer. His wife Betty was with him, very far from her own Republican upbringing on Philadelphia's Main Line. "It was just like taking a squirrel who's been in a cage all its life and letting it out in the fresh air. You know that Main Line life? It's ba-ronial!" The squirrel got loose with a pot of paint and had the whole inside of Rabbit's Foot Lodge done over in Colonial White instead of leaving it Mountain Dark, but other than that and kicking all the roopy chickens out of the cellar Betty managed to fit right in with local ways—a handsome, sophisticated woman who could still be "just as plain as pig tracks" with anybody she happened to meet.

Bill Fulbright wasn't doing

CONTINUED



Rabbit's Foot Lodge, on a ridge near Fayetteville, still stands much as it did when the Fulbrights lived there. They sold the place after he went to the Senate.



In 1924, as a senior at the University of Arkansas, halfback Fulbright won his third varsity letter. He kicked the field goal that defeated archrival S.M.U.

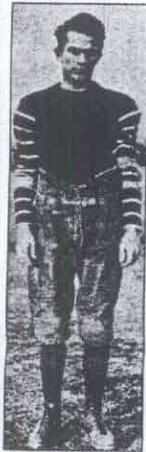
Football hero and Rhodes scholar, he goes off in glory to Oxford

BER 17, 1924

The Football Champions

Wins New Honors

ARKANSAS GRID STAR WINS APPOINTMENT TO RHODES SCHOLARSHIP



Bill Fulbright, star of the Arkansas football team, has been awarded the Rhodes scholarship, which provides for three years' attendance at the University of Oxford, England, beginning next October. The appointment came as the climax to a brilliant career at the university, hardly a detail of which the student body is not fully informed. Fulbright is a real credit to the school as a real credit to the state. He has been named as a member of the Rhodes Scholarship Commission, and is one of the few men in the Southeastern Conference who will be named in his honor. He is a member of the U. S. and T. C. U. players, and last year he was named as the best player in the Southeastern Conference. He has been named as a member of the Rhodes Scholarship Commission, and is one of the few men in the Southeastern Conference who will be named in his honor. He is a member of the U. S. and T. C. U. players, and last year he was named as the best player in the Southeastern Conference.

Do Your Choice

When he won a Rhodes scholarship in 1924, Fulbright made headlines on big-city sports pages.

In plus fours, Fulbright stands near Oxford's Pembroke College, where he studied in 1925-28.



Fulbright in his room at Pembroke immersed himself in history, economics, political science.

At Oxford Fulbright's sport was lacrosse. He sits, crosslegged at right, with Pembroke team.



FULBRIGHT CONTINUED

much besides teaching at the University of Arkansas, scene of his former glory as a Razorback halfback, a few miles away in a little Ozark town called Fayetteville that his family-a-quarter-to-a-half owned. He loved teaching and the life at the university; and when the trustees suddenly decided to make him president at the tender age of 34, he felt pretty well settled. He could even stay right on out at Rabbit's Foot Lodge because the university didn't have any official manse to house its president back then.

The only one who thought to worry about them way out there was Betty's mother. When she opened up her Philadelphia *Inquirer* one morning and saw pic-

tures of bales of cotton floating around in the Arkansas floods of 1938, she wired her daughter: hadn't she "better come north immediately and bring the two children." Betty wired back that the floods were as yet 1,700 feet below them and still 300 miles away. And when a hurricane struck New England later that year, they telegraphed her mother: hadn't she better come down to Arkansas to avoid being hit by a falling elm tree?

That's the way they go about keeping everybody up-to-date and informed down in Arkansas. With a needling kind of courtesy. In fact, nobody's ever going to settle for a simple, straight answer as long as there's time to work one up into a little more elaborate shape. The senator often goes to work in that same way at committee hearings, politely needling the witness in order to elicit the fullest sort of disclosure. He doesn't, for instance, just want to find out what prospects were for free elections in Vietnam in 1956. "Now [the chances] have always been poor, and will be for a hundred years, won't they?" he gently prods Dean Rusk. "That was not news to you. . . . Have they ever had them in 2,000 years of history?" And possibly one of the senator's annoyances with Dean Rusk is that the Secretary keeps giving him the same, simple, straight an-

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FULBRIGHT
CONTINUED

swers—which somehow fail to satisfy Fulbright's own deep doubts about the nature of the war—and won't even try to put his replies into any more instructive form. But the senator can sympathize with the Secretary of State: "It's a hell of a job."

In late 1960, when there was loose talk around that Fulbright might be picked for Secretary of State in Kennedy's cabinet, the possibility thoroughly distressed him: "It's not my dish of tea. I'd hate the protocol, and I'd be damned uncomfortable getting up and giving speeches with which I didn't agree. The poor fella in that job never has time to think for himself."

None of the kind of time for reflection that existed out at Rabbit's Foot Lodge, where the steps down to the spring are too steep to be taken any more than one at a time. "That water was so clear and cold," he likes to remember. He didn't have a single political connection, beyond the coincidental fact that his local congressman, Clyde T. Ellis, had been coming to his classes to pick up a little constitutional law. "I had no idea I'd ever be in politics," he insists. "I sometimes wonder what would've happened if Mother hadn't written that editorial. . . ."

"Oh, I don't mean I ponder over it all that much," he says, quickly dismissing that kind of bootless speculation. Nobody else should give it too much thought either, except just enough to keep in mind that, despite a quarter century in public life, Senator Fulbright is essentially a private man *manqué*. More than any other senator, he comes forward to address himself to issues from the privacy of his own thoughts, and promptly returns there as soon as his opinion has been offered. Not that he doesn't enjoy the measure of political prominence that is his as chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee—always much in the headlines after another mumbled, seminal speech on the Senate floor, and



Fulbright's mother traveled up to Washington in January, 1945 and with her daughter-in-law Betty (right) watched the new senator from Arkansas sworn in.

often seen around social Washington with his wife, who dutifully mends the holes in his protocol. But, as one of his aides explains the difference between him and most senators: "When he's busy, he's busy behind a closed door."

He is an anomaly, especially in gregarious Southern politics, a man of intellect, almost a semi-narian, pursuing an aloof career as an often dissident public counselor—he's been called "the Walter Lippmann of the Senate"—with no more real political base than perhaps those few capricious jottings in his mother's newspaper long ago.

Mrs. Roberta Fulbright, an old schoolteacher herself, was the kind of woman who makes the local Rotarians wonder how far she might've gone if she'd ever been a man—only they wonder right out loud and proudly, pleased to see the local library and a university dormitory named for her. Back in 1906 her husband, Jay Fulbright, got the family off the farm in Missouri by setting up his first little, two-person bank in Arkansas and thereafter pushed the Fulbrights' fortunes to an estimable point. But, in 1923, he died suddenly, leaving Mrs. Fulbright with six offspring; Bill Fulbright, their fourth child, was 18 at the time.

"We came very damn close to going to the poorhouse," Fulbright says, exaggerating some, "but she managed to salvage enough of a nest egg to start over again." That is, she let go the

bank stock but kept the lumber business, the Coca-Cola bottling plant, a lot of real estate and a few other Fulbright Enterprises—including a newspaper. Eventually she accumulated enough leverage to clean up the whole county once—but good, throwing out a corrupt courthouse gang and dragging her own man, Buck Lewis, with his big horse pistol, down to Little Rock to get him appointed sheriff.

"But her one big love, besides her family," says Fulbright, "was that newspaper." It's now the Northwest Arkansas Times, and turning a tidy penny. But back then it was *The Democrat*, a sorry investment, mostly useful for printing the columns Mother Fulbright scribbled together after nobody in the family was left awake to talk to her anymore. ("She loved to talk. God, she loved to talk! She'd wear us out, staying up at night.") She'd write until 3 o'clock in the morning about anything from cooking to politics, or sometimes both at once: "Our politics remind me of the pies the mountain girl had. She asked the guests, 'Will you have kivered, unkivered or crossbar?' All apple. Now that's what we have—kivered, unkivered and crossbar politics, all Democrats." And so Mother Fulbright wrote a thing or two about a Democrat named Homer Adkins. In fact, right after Adkins' tri-

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With John McClellan, who was then and still is senior senator from Arkansas, Fulbright spent a summer's day in 1949 visiting with voters of town of Piggott.

FULBRIGHT CONTINUED

umphant election as governor in 1940, she wrote that the people of Arkansas had just traded a statesman, Governor Carl Bailey, for a gladiator and a back-slapper.

Governor Adkins returned the compliment by stacking the university board of trustees high enough to have her son fired as president. So then Congressman Ellis came up to his ex-law professor, almost like it was after class, and said since he, Ellis, was going to announce for U.S. senator next Saturday, "you ought to run for my place."

"I'd have never dreamed of it," says Fulbright. "I hadn't even been in three of the 10 counties in all my life." But he was pretty much at loose ends, so he got around to those last three counties before Saturday and carried all 10 in the fall of 1942 to win the House seat. And when Governor Adkins decided to run for U.S. senator in 1944, so did Congressman Fulbright; and he beat Adkins, and three other candidates—kivered, unkivered and crossbar.

"Homer Adkins," his mother wrote as her final word against her old enemy, imitating his bad grammar, "has came and went." And her son has now been and gone to the Senate for four terms, not so much a political success as an outsized civic achievement for which the whole state of Arkansas feels it can humbly take a worldwide bow: "He's just as smart as \$700." "He's known in every corner of the world." "Who the hell'd've ever dreamed we'd have an international scholar from Arkansas?" "He's an institution. People don't vote against institutions."

"You can beat him," an adviser once told Governor Orval Faubus, who was eager to try in 1962, and might be even more ready in 1968, "if you can get him down off that cloud they got him on."

He's lucky, too, to have that cloud under him, because he really has little taste for the gritty, down-to-earth politicking it normally takes to survive at home and conquer in Washington. He doesn't chew cut with the snuff-dippers back in Arkansas, but he's never been a member of the inner "club" in the Senate—nor much wanted to be—despite his prestige and seniority. In fact, not a few of his colleagues in the Senate view him as a cold and scornful figure, a bit of a cynic, a lot of "a loner," dourly impatient with most lesser mortals—or, in Harry Truman's succinct phrasing, an "overeducated Oxford s.o.b."

There may be a touch or two of truth in that indictment, but the only part of it that could solidly be called a fact is Oxford. He did go there for three years as a Rhodes scholar, from 1925 to 1928, though he prefers to think of that experience as a sort of personal liberation rather than any detriment to his character. It freed him of the local countryside and provided that grounding in the greater world which ultimately—if not exactly at that moment ("All I did at Oxford," he claims, "is have a hell of a good time—played games and studied the minimum")—led to his command-

CONTINUED

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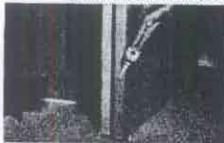
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FULBRIGHT
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ing interest in foreign affairs. "Remember, I'd never been anywhere to speak of," he explains. "I'd never been to New York or San Francisco or Washington or any of those places. And here I'm picked up out of a little village at an early age . . ."—he was pushed in his studies by his father's telling him every summer: "Go to school, or go to work"; and washing Coke bottles bored him— ". . . and suddenly I go to Oxford. It has a tremendous impact on your attitude."

The best of Europe was opened up to the roaming hill boy within him, and he came away from this Grand Tour and his reading of Modern History and Political Science at Oxford with a wide-eyed internationalist outlook that, going right over the top of his squinty mountain conservatism, gave him a very odd expression indeed, especially in later politics. Unreadable, practically.

Of course, it probably has to be unreadable if he is going to make it suit all the various interests that comprise both his Arkansas constituency and his worldwide following. At one extreme are those rich planters from eastern Arkansas—far less liberal than even his own people up in the Ozarks—who control huge cotton allotments and large voting blocks, and often truck "their" Negroes to the polls to swell a highly deliverable part of the total vote for Fulbright. (Even this is an improvement, according to Mrs. L. C. Bates, past president of the Arkansas NAACP. "They used to didn't even truck 'em. They'd be in the cotton fields when they voted 'em.") But at the other extreme is that widespread and admiring conclave of liberal intellectuals who, also for possessive reasons, embrace Fulbright as more "their" senator than anybody they ever helped elect from their own state. His out-of-Arkansas supporters can't vote for him—some are foreign nationals—but they expect a lot from him, and he is well aware of that expectation. So he is trapped, representing east Arkansas at the same time he is trying to function

in somewhat the same intellectual manner as the M.P. whom Oxford University used to send up as its representative to the British parliament. As a result, Fulbright's voting record is crazy-quilt, his politics are pretty much a stand-off, and his public countenance . . . unreadable.

"Nobody knows where to put Fulbright," says Jack Yingling, one of his past legislative assistants, trying to explain why the senator's independent manner seems to annoy so many routine-minded politicians. "He pops up here, he pops up there."

He popped up first in 1943 with a mere five lines of legislation that quickly became famous as "the Fulbright Resolution," a historic gesture that put the House of Representatives on record, even a little before the Senate, as favoring "the creation of appropriate international machinery"—i.e., the United Nations—to keep "a just and lasting peace" after the war. Two years later he offered, as a kind of "economy measure," a plan to use counterpart funds from the sale of war surplus overseas to finance a student exchange program, which ended up as the Fulbright Scholarships. He seemed to be casting his total allegiance with those who advocated the extension of U.S. foreign aid programs throughout One World. But he has since popped up as one of the sharpest critics of "the arrogance" with which he believes the U.S. has handled the whole business of helping other countries, too often forcing anti-Communist military ties upon smaller nations, thereby blunting the positive effects of the aid and creating dangers of U.S. entanglement that need never have existed, e.g., in Vietnam.

On domestic issues he pops up most often as a southern conservative, willing to filibuster against the repeal of the so-called right-to-work law and able to vote against civil rights legislation even after President Kennedy's call to conscience in 1963—to the chagrin of his liberal friends, who will never convince labor that he isn't a Bourbon, or the NAACP that he isn't a bigot. Yet the worst political attacks upon him come from

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FULBRIGHT
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the superpatriots of the southern right wing, who suspect, quite correctly, that his heart isn't really in his racial posture and who know that his deeper convictions include a thorough disapproval of "our national obsession with Communism" and a large distrust of the military mind, along with considerable boggling at what it costs to keep that mind at ease with its grim, strategic thoughts.

"He's shocked as a kid by the expense of the military," an aide observes. He has a gut reaction against the amount of money that must go into building an aircraft carrier—money that cannot then be used to build roads and schools in such places as Arkansas—and he is appalled on similar grounds at the expenditures for the space program. ("It's one of our greatest mistakes. I couldn't possibly have the language and power to say that strongly enough. I've made every effort to cut [the space] appropriation down. I don't care about a mild, gentle program. But this thing just blossomed from nothing into five billion dollars!")

On the other hand, he greatly admires the World Bank for offering liberal terms under which a smaller nation can negotiate a generous loan—while still retaining its national pride—and he would prefer to revamp the U.S. foreign aid program to channel most of its millions, with no military strings attached, through that multilateral instrument: "I never heard anybody say, 'World Bank, go home!'"

For this high-minded approach to the amity among nations he has been honored with full academic pomp in country after country as a kind of international culture hero. But usually on these state visits he manages to pop up at the local marketplace, going over the fruits and vegetables and handwork like a junketing 4-H leader. "I like to see what they raise, what they make," he admits, ready to shop Fiji the same way he would War Eagle, Ark.: "You can understand then how the superiority of the Westerner can be so offensive. Sure,

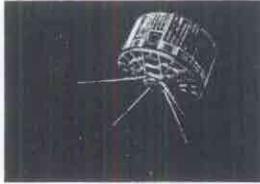
we have a hell of a lot of money and can make bombs, but in the local markets you can see other people showing a lot of talent too." He can no more pass by a busy stall in any of the world's bazaars than he can drive by a fruit stand in the Ozarks without stopping for apples. "Here he is," one of his speech writers remembers from a trip the senator made to the South Pacific, "peering over his half glasses at fresh fruit in Tahiti. And he ends up back at the hotel with five different kinds of mangoes."

In sum, no one position ever really quite leads to another in the unfolding of Fulbright's scattered public stands. The senator himself rather facetiously explains this situation by saying, "I like to feel free to take each issue as it comes. On many issues I don't have an opinion, and then I'll trust another's judgment. But that's voluntary." However, his independence of mind also involves far more complicated mental gymnastics. He happens to have remarkable powers of pre-occupation. "He tends to think of one issue to the exclusion of all others," explains a member of his staff, and often such an issue will assume the proportions of an intellectual crisis with him. "He usually has about one of these a year. Last year it was what to do about the foreign aid program. This year it's the Far East." He closets himself in his senatorial office—much the way a student at Oxford "sports his oak" to study for his examinations—and reads everything he can lay his hands on about what's worrying him. Also: "We bring him people." He mulls over the problem, educating himself in its history and all its possible ramifications, and then finally comes out of his darkened chambers to give a speech or hold a hearing or offer a bill—sometimes to do all three. By then, it is more than likely that the issue has become uniquely identifiable with him—more through his scholarship than his sponsorship: he simply knows the matter best—and sooner or later, in one phase or another, it will acquire his name.

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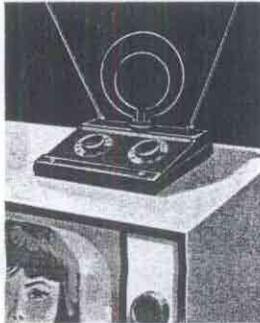
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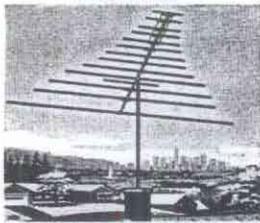
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On civil rights, a disappointing silence

FULBRIGHT
CONTINUED

In fact, it is amazing the number of diverse matters that are named Fulbright, considering he is not generally regarded as a mover of men or a perpetrator of events.

Things occasionally pick up his name even though he has little or nothing to do with them. When a letter was sent to the President by 15 senators expressing agreement with Fulbright's stand on Vietnam, Johnson's aide Jake Valenti began carrying it around the White House as "the Fulbright letter," though it was in no way his; Valenti simply grabbed that letter by the easiest handle. In a sense Fulbright's name, with all its past associations, has become that kind of eponym lately. It identifies a new mode of thinking about international affairs—inquiring, from a sense of history, how a foreign populace may achieve its own political maturity, free of outside prescription, including any based too closely on the American experience.

Of course, not all things Fulbright are universally popular. He has come in for some heavy criticism about his views on Vietnam. But there still is no doubt that once his name is attached to a particular position, even his boldest detractors are forced into a grudging respect for it. He can never be dismissed as a maverick, the way Senator Morse of Oregon can, even when they hold practically the same views.

Fulbright has stratagems that assure him this respect; he is deftly courteous, even with a needling question, and he can be deftly elusive—even seems to enjoy being elusive—trailing off through a series of elliptical qualifying remarks that end suddenly with an abrupt, barely related question tossed back at his original interrogator. (He'll discuss his practically nonexistent religious views this way or, for that matter, anything touching himself too closely.) But he is also accorded genuine respect because of the astonishing breadth of view he does, in fact, possess.

From up on his Ozark hilltop—territory more Pioneer West than

Geetele Southern—he really can see all the way from east Arkansas to the farthest reaches of the greater world and he is always very cannily relating the one to the other. He will strike just the right note, for instance, with a delegation of visiting Africans after they have explained their difficulties, by saying, as he did recently, that he can understand their problems: "You're about where we were 30 years ago in Arkansas."

And, if he measures the greater world by Arkansas, he is equally willing to measure Arkansas by the greater world. "I come from a very poor state," he never ceases to reiterate, and he likes to talk about Arkansas as if it were an underdeveloped country that had just shaken off the yoke of Arkansas Power and Light's oligarchical rule but still had to depend on foreign aid. He investigated the Reconstruction Finance Corporation in the early 50s, he says, to protect it from politics, since he believed the RFC was "the major agency for aid to the underdeveloped states." He has consistently voted for federal aid to education, although voters in Arkansas distrusted Big Government moving in on them, because he believes better schooling is clearly the one best hope for an emergent people. "They forgave me because, 'Well, he's an old professor,'" he thinks. But there are certain internal problems which, he argues, no emergent people will allow anybody from Washington to touch at this stage in their development.

Fulbright did not intervene during the 1957 integration crisis at Central High School in Little Rock, though that incident made Faubus' name almost infamous enough to cancel out Fulbright's own around the world. Fulbright was in England at the time, and he stayed in England for what some caustic wits said "must have been the second semester at Oxford." The NAACP's Mrs. Bates, for one, will never forgive him: "I've never quite understood him. He's an intelligent guy. Why does he have to sell his soul and his people like that? This man has a

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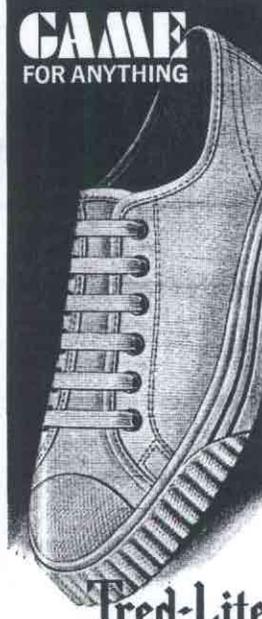
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Vietnam in the 50s seemed unimportant

CONTINUED

brain and he's shown in every way where he stands. The majority of the liberals here told us he wouldn't sign the Southern Manifesto [a pledge by southern congressmen to fight the Court's segregation decisions]. But he did. No, I'll listen to Faubus more than I'll listen to Fulbright." But Fulbright, thinking of the enfranchised among the emergent people of Arkansas insists, "You don't trifle with them, especially about what concerns them socially." Congressman Brooks Hays publicly supported school integration and was widely applauded for his courage. Fulbright was not. But Brooks Hays shortly lost his seat as congressman from Little Rock.

Fulbright personally is a gradualist who approves of the fact that both the University of Arkansas and Fayetteville's public schools have been integrated. He tries to explain his quandary by saying that he will not buck a white majority "in a matter of this deep an interest, in an area where they have knowledge and experience equal or superior to my own." With this rather flimsy justification, Fulbright rides out any and all criticism of his votes against civil rights, arguing that it is simply a question of his political survival. He insists he is then left free to go against his constituents on matters where their knowledge and experience are not equal to his own—on foreign aid, for instance, for which he originally voted, "even though I felt they did oppose it, because they thought they needed it [aid] more."

Lately, however, Fulbright has been wondering if his own people in Arkansas couldn't have done a better job with U.S. foreign policy than anybody in the federal government, including himself. "Maybe their instincts about foreign aid were right," he ponders. "As you know, I've been having second thoughts myself. After all, how did we get mixed up in Vietnam? You could say this whole thing started out of an aid program."

That was a long time ago, however, and his own tardiness in taking cognizance of the situation in Vietnam causes him considerable chagrin. Fulbright remembers Vietnam, from the '50s, as "a very small operation. I wasn't at all concerned. I was entirely preoccupied with Europe. I don't recall we ever had a hearing on Vietnam." But early this year Fulbright sported his oak for another period of intense study—"a Europe man" setting out to learn a whole new field; the other side of the world—and when he came out again, he started a long series of hearings that eventually brought him to some grim conclusions of his own.

In Vietnam he feels that the U.S., at worst, inherited the position already lost by the French in an abandoned colonial war; or that, at best, we interfered misguidedly in a civil struggle that might have resolved itself sooner had the U.S. not intervened. The Communist involvement in the war is not, for Fulbright, the deciding factor; and, indeed, he is doubtful about that whole line of reasoning: "Everytime somebody calls it [a people's movement] 'Communist,' it's a reason for intervention." He's convinced this approach has caused the U.S. to initiate too many mistaken troop movements—particularly into the Dominican Republic not too long ago—and that's "another thing that poisons me in this direction."

Moreover, Fulbright feels that something is basically wrong when the U.S. can become so inextricably involved in the woes of a tiny country like Vietnam that a land war with China looms as a larger threat to the world than ever did the most painful destiny the tiny country might have found for itself: "I'm ashamed that the United States—a big, magnanimous country—is picking on the little countries, trying to squash 'em. Why don't we challenge Russia or China directly, if that's how we feel?" He has now come to suspect that what has happened is that the U.S. has gone into too many areas of the world with an abundance of good intention all wrapped up in aid to 83 developing countries—83 possible sources

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'I hate like hell to be in the minority'

FULBRIGHT
CONTINUED

of commitment, and subsequent overbearance—and that one or another of these ties was bound to ensnare us in an unwanted conflict. He has supported foreign aid since the proposal of the Marshall Plan in 1947; but, "Back when all this started, I didn't think the United States would be so arrogant about it."

That, for Fulbright, is the abiding error. As one of his staff puts it, he has "a strong distaste for the destructive psychological effects of the donor and the suppliant. That's at the core of his reasoning. You don't humiliate people. He appreciates the pride a little country has in telling off a big country."

Indeed, Fulbright feels that the best hope for peace lies in reaching some general accommodation with Communist China so as to save the little countries of Southeast Asia neutrally whole, and he has gone on the Senate floor to argue that position.

So far, nobody has exactly leaped to the support of his proposals and, indeed, nothing of Fulbright's vigorous dissent from Administration policy has yet emerged as anything concrete, even from his own committee. The President is still the power broker: "As long as he's there and there's a two-to-one majority, he's running the show. He has control of this Congress, including my committee. I have a lot of the younger members with me, but they're afraid to expose themselves. They know they can be gutted." Fulbright uncomfortably lacked committee support even for an amendment to the Vietnam aid appropriation that would have dissociated the Senate from any implied approval of Johnson's present course of action.

"I hate like hell to be in the minority," he admits. "It does give me pause." But it's far from a new position for him, and he has always had the inner resources to last it out until he is proven right or wrong. Actually he is really at his best when he is unhesitatingly outspoken.

"One thing you damn soon find out," recalls one faculty member who knew him at the university as a teacher, "and that's what Bill Fulbright feels." It's something he gets partly from the Ozarks, but it's also something he gets from having been a professor. When he speaks out, he sounds almost as if he were exercising tenure as much as his rights as a senator. His dissents from majority opinion seem almost scholarly obligations—as if he wanted to offer a lesson in civics, full of learned references, as much as set down his own opinion. On such occasions he is especially prone to quote Alexis de Tocqueville, the traveling Frenchman who more than a hundred years ago analyzed the intellectual danger of too much conformist thinking in this country in his classic, *Democracy in America*. "De Tocqueville says things so much better than I could. About the tyranny of the majority. I always have the feeling that book could have been written about America 10 years ago."

Ten years or so ago Fulbright was quoting De Tocqueville in his at-the-time lonely public opposition to Senator Joseph R. McCarthy, whose tactics violated—above all else, for Fulbright—"the code of the gentleman that our democratic society presupposes." Fulbright has always believed that decent conduct within the Senate, one member toward another, is needful for its survival; and when the majority of senators didn't at first seem to find this true, he vigorously dissented. It is still the vote in which he takes the most pride, the only nay that was cast against the appropriations for McCarthy's investigations in 1954. The Ozark part of it was that Fulbright didn't actually make up his mind to do so until he was on the Senate floor and McCarthy insisted on a roll-call vote.

"That put the clincher on it," Jack Yingling remembers. "Fulbright was damned if he was going to be on record as voting for it."

The professorial part was that he promptly rose to speak against the "swinish blight" of anti-intellectualism—and from time to

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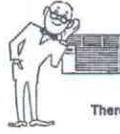
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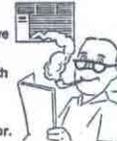
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Senator 'Half-Bright' stood up to McCarthy

FULBRIGHT
CONTINUED

time thereafter dropped quotations from the Bible and Jonathan Swift into the Congressional Record as gibes at McCarthy's loudness and smear tactics. Fulbright considered McCarthy to be "like an animal."

McCarthy kept up a noisy stream of abuse against "Senator Half-Bright"; but Fulbright waited him out, standing up as the only one willing to be counted, until other senators gradually joined him in sufficient number to pass the censure motion that toppled McCarthy. ("This idea that everything is done by an 'inner group,'" an old congressional hand scoffs. "What they do, they're forced to do by people like Fulbright.") The senator has been a whipping boy for the right wing ever since; and whenever he stirs up another ruckus over superpatriotism, as he did in 1961 with a memorandum to Secretary of Defense McNamara concerning military sponsorship of civilian seminars in anti-Communism, the letters pour in.

But for all its intellectual flair, his clash with McCarthy really lacked the majestically banked thunder of his loftier disagreements with presidents of the United States, which have almost become a habit with him. So far, he has crossed every Chief Executive of the last two decades at least once: Truman over RFC scandals, Eisenhower over Dulles' Middle East policies and Kennedy over the Bay of Pigs invasion.

Indeed, Fulbright may have been slow in getting around to crossing Johnson, and he has been criticized for that. If he was so opposed to U.S. involvement in Vietnam, why did he act as floor manager in August, 1964, for the Bay of Tonkin resolution, which Johnson has used ever since as a color of congressional authority to take "all necessary steps" to repel aggression?

"I was derelict there," Fulbright admits, another result of his tardy realization of the true situation in Southeast Asia. "It would probably have been healthy to have gone into conference and had some discussion. But Gold-

water had just been nominated. You know how the lines were drawn."

Fulbright was for L.B.J. "publicly and privately"—much closer to Johnson than he had ever been to any previous president. Truman and Fulbright are friends now, but that was hardly the case when Fulbright was investigating influence peddling in the RFC. Kennedy—or the Kennedys, really—he'd never gotten to know; they struck him as a cold lot. Stevenson was much more his candidate; and then, for reasons of long friendship and some mutual understanding, Johnson. They used to sit next to each other in the Senate when Johnson was majority whip, and Johnson invariably deferred to Fulbright on foreign policy matters: "See Bill. He's my Secretary of State." In return, Fulbright looked upon Johnson as "a political genius," backed him for the presidential nomination in 1960 and campaigned strongly for him in Arkansas against insurgent Goldwaterism two years ago.

But they are really antipodal human beings, and even back in their days together in the Senate there was fatal indication of what would eventually happen in Fulbright's realization that "Johnson just wants to pass bills—he doesn't care what's in them" and in Johnson's impatience with Fulbright's inability at Foreign Relations Committee meetings to "for Chrissakes, settle it" in time to get home for supper.

A split was bound to come between the man interested in substance and the man of politics. The issue turned out to be Fulbright's dissent over U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic: "I was reluctant to do it. I'd have preferred that an opposition member do it. But they're all for him. My final consideration was, here's all of Latin America wondering about us. Somebody ought to give the other point of view."

Fulbright tried to couch his speech of last September as a criticism of bad advice given the President, but it still made Johnson furious. Afterward, besides

CONTINUED

The icy end of the L.B.J.-W.J.F. mutual admiration society

FULBRIGHT
CONTINUED

delivering a series of petty social snubs, Johnson lessened any meaningful communication with Fulbright on foreign policy down to a point where he conferred in whispers with Dean Rusk during the entire time that Fulbright made his last effort to propound his views on Vietnam at a White House meeting of the congressional leadership.

"I have to defend my position whether I like doing it or not," Fulbright said just before beginning the public hearings on Vietnam late in January. But he has managed to accomplish something far more significant than that. He has used the pressure within Congress for an open airing of the whole range of U.S. foreign policy—pressure that has come particularly from younger members of both houses—to pull the Foreign Relations Committee together again after several frustrating years of chronic absenteeism and foundering morale.

"We were always so plagued by the foreign aid bill," he explains. "That cursed thing took up three quarters of our time. No member really liked it. They were bored with it. It about destroyed the spirit of the committee."

But from the beginning the policy hearings revived everybody's spirits, including Fulbright's—at one particularly low point, he had thought of resigning from his chairmanship—in part because he allowed the Vietnam hearings to develop in a much freer style than is normally his custom.

In the attempt to debate Vietnam and understand our China policy, Fulbright threw a heavy burden upon other senators during their allotted 10 minutes of questioning. Much to his delight, most of them came forward with informed contributions.

"I've never seen them enter into it so deftly," Fulbright says of his colleagues. "I was surprised by the intelligence of some of their questions. They were extraordinarily good." The whole exercise brought the Foreign Relations Committee out of its intellectual doldrums to serve once



more as the classic American forum for probing—and, indeed, doubting—presidential certainties about foreign policy, whether they are Wilson's Fourteen Points or Johnson's.

This is a considerable accomplishment for Fulbright—and much in line with his desire to substitute "new realities" for "old myths" which he believes Americans learned too well during their Cold War childhood—but it has not been without its political hardships. Despite his penchant for privacy, he is not immune to the deliberate coldness with which he is being treated by the White House, where his intransigence is being met with a policy of containment and isolation. Also, there has been some speculation as to how well that cloud his constituents have him on would hold up back home, what with Faubus, his eye on '68, trying to fan it down with outbursts against Fulbright's hampering the war effort. But Arkansans, for some reason,

Fulbright talks with Defense Secretary McNamara before the Secretary was questioned on the Vietnam war by Fulbright's Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

seem to be equally proud of both Faubus and Fulbright these days, and nobody back home wants to see a confrontation that would lose Arkansas either one or the other. Fulbright can pretty much depend upon their many mutual backers doing everything over the next couple of years to keep them well apart, despite Faubus' obvious wish to close with him in mortal combat.

Besides, it's nearly impossible to bring Bill Fulbright to care much about that kind of danger anyhow. "Maybe you can say I've been here long enough not to give a goddam," he says, almost apologizing for his perseverance in the hearings. But the matter goes much deeper than that. Carl Marcy, staff director of the Foreign Relations Committee, can tell if he's off base in any

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A yen for reason in a graceless world

FULBRIGHT
CONTINUED

suggestion he offers if Fulbright snaps back at him: "But you're giving me *political* advice!" The senator doesn't want it. Often, when told something isn't good politics, he'll reply, "Wait two or three years. It will be."

"His is the approach of reason," a long-time associate concludes, "and if it doesn't appeal to his reason, it doesn't appeal to him at all."

But that does not mean that Fulbright's reason is a cold, purely cerebral kind of instrument. It is actually just the opposite: a bit old-fashioned, the kind of reason associated with Edmund Burke's great 18th Century political appeals for liberty within tradition and limited human circumstance. "I do have a habit of liking old things," Fulbright smiles. "Old cars, old shoes, old wives." He's had the same Mercedes for 10 years and won't paint it because then he'd have to worry about scratching the paint. One pair of shoes from London he wore for 30 years, and "I mean," says one Arkansan who greatly admired them, "they were *all* cracks." And Betty, the senator says, is part of that feeling of security he's always had, so that "It never bothered me that I might be defeated." Reason, he feels, is the force by which such little instances of human feeling are kept politically alive, wherever possible, in a dangerously graceless world. "He finds it increasingly difficult to understand these grandiose abstractions about society," one staff man observes. "He'll often oppose some particular approach to a problem simply because 'Nobody says anything about *people* being involved.'"

He is very much people himself, right down to his foibles. Ever since his father's early death, his own mortality has worried him, and at 61 he follows a strict regimen that includes constitutionals before breakfast and bloodletting games of golf. ("Sinking that putt," says his wife, "is a passionate thing with him.") Lots of times he doesn't think anybody near and dear to

him has a grain of sense, and he lectures them at length and accordingly. He can be tight as a burr with money. "I'll tell you something," one Arkansas millionaire says, "if both his legs were cut off at the knee and you offered him yours for a nickel, he wouldn't have no use for 'em." And he has his petty moments—even during public hearings when his dislike of generals sometimes escapes his taut courtesy. Yet, with all these personal quirks, he retains a remarkable simplicity—"the kind of simplicity," as one staff man puts it, "that is beyond sophistication."

A story is told of Fulbright's trip to Naples in 1962 to participate in some ceremonies of acclaim for his student-exchange program, during a time when the U.S.S. *Forrestal* happened to be gaudily and mightily in port. The aircraft carrier seemed to attract any number of junketing congressmen that spring—mostly those concerned with military appropriations—and Fulbright happened to run into a party of them in a Neapolitan square one day. They tried to drag him along to visit this vast tonnage of floating American glory, but he insisted his own business lay down a different street—at the binational center where American "Fulbrights" gather with Italian students to carry on the important business of simply hearing each other out, much the way he himself once did at Oxford. Finally, after he'd politely put off the congressmen and turned back in the direction of the cultural center, he shook his head and said to one of his staff, "Those fellas just don't know where the real power is."

To come out with a statement like that, Fulbright had to put a lot of what normally passes for sophistication far behind him. But he is more than willing to do so. Indeed, he anxiously searches for ways in which "the real power" can be brought to bear upon problems that so far have not been solved by such mighty exhibits as the U.S.S. *Forrestal*. He wants people to begin to "think the 'unthinkable,'" to search

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The problem of the Private Man: ought he bid for leadership?

FULBRIGHT
CONTINUED

among what he terms realistic, if unsettling, alternatives—and not solely among soothing myths—to find some rational way other than war to settle problems.”

“I don’t for a moment think that we’ll get rid of all wars,” he cautions. “We’ll have to accept the fact that there are going to be local wars and then try to be very discriminating about them.” Even that, however, will take more patience than he is at all sure—following De Tocqueville’s ancient doubts about a democracy’s handling of foreign policy—Americans can summon up.

“Fulbright has a pretty modest conception of what you can do,” says another aide, “but he will take great satisfaction in a modest achievement.” And he does indeed take great satisfaction in the modest achievements of the past few months, during which he feels committee witnesses have helped Americans become a lot more “discriminating” about “a local war” in Southeast Asia.

The question, then, naturally arises whether Fulbright should be satisfied with this modest achievement. Should he perhaps attempt to become more than a thoughtful critic: a forceful critic and, for once, go after support for his position instead of waiting, as he always has, for interested parties to come to him?

That would go against his whole nature. It is hard to imagine him at the head of anything so formal-sounding as a Loyal Opposition, even if its objectives were the embodiment of his own thinking. His impress, on the contrary, continues to depend upon his utter independence, which allows him to raise a voice that carries great influence, if little—or no—power in the deliberations of the Senate.

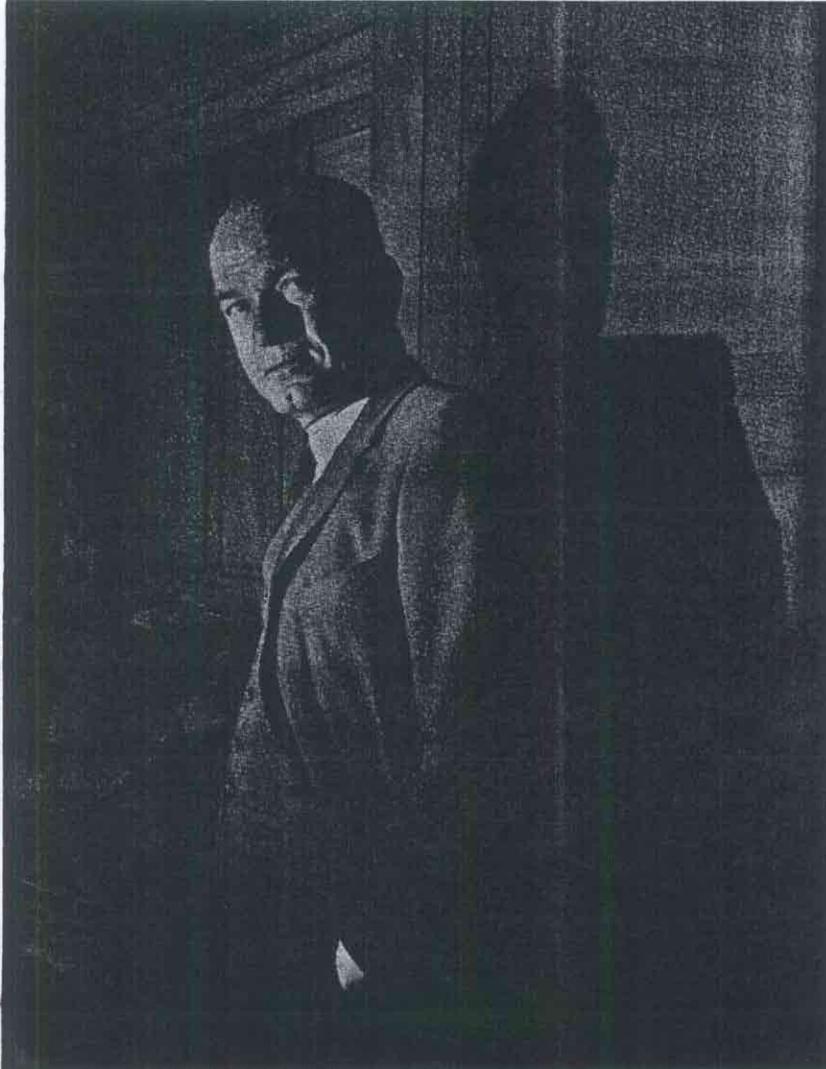
“It’s sort of like the inventor

and the manufacturer,” an aide says. Fulbright helped invent the McCarthy censure, for instance, but he was only minimally involved in its eventual manufacture. “It’s the machinery that runs the Senate,” Fulbright insists, and he wants never to be a part of a machine. In fact, there is an inherent repulsion within him against the whole modern mechanization of human affairs,

such as to lead him to protest against something as big as a moon shot or as minor as the replacement of the commodious old wicker cars in the Senate subway by a clanking train.

“A man has to act within the possibilities of his own personality,” says a close aide, “and Fulbright is a private man. He could do more to solicit support. But he doesn’t, partly because he thinks

it’s bad taste to bother people. If they like what he says, they’ll say so.” But this same aide admits that he himself is worried sometimes by the senator’s political quietude and has pressed him on occasion about the possible disappointment he may give his loyal adherents everywhere in the world. Should he not possibly face up to the inevitable obligations of his clear private thinking: to leadership? “When you talk to him about that, he squirms,” the aide says. But he notices one small sign of concession: “I don’t really get the idea he wants me to stop talking.”



At the end of a long session of his committee, Fulbright returns to his office, where he can close the door and find needed quiet to pursue his solitary studies.