

5/14/71

Power Base for Hard Right

Willis Carto: Liberty Lobby's Unseen Boss

By Paul W. Valentine
Washington Post Staff Writer

Willis Allison Carto—veiled in a gossamer of anti-Zionism, racial philosophy and the vague imperatives of "Western Civilization"—stands today as one of the most influential yet least known figures of the American Hard Right.

Founder and treasurer of Liberty Lobby, a large, successful, conservative legislative pressure group working out of Washington, the trimly-built 44-year-old Carto remains elusively in the background.

His name rarely appears in the Liberty Lobby newsletter. He does not speak in public. He refuses to be interviewed. He shies away from cameras. He keeps an unlisted telephone number. He shields his residence address in suburban Los Angeles from public scrutiny.

He has few personal friends. He writes under a number of pseudonyms (including several he shares with other right wing writers), according to some of those few friends who have been close to him.



WILLIS A. CARTO
... an unlisted number

From this position of obscurity, he leads a strange dual life: he manages the operations of Liberty Lobby and its numerous affiliated organizations—all conservative but avowedly constitutionalist and democratic in purpose; at the same time, he is a guiding star in the more remote political twilight of authoritarianism, racial elitism, aristocracy-over-mass and a kind of nos-

talgia for pre-French Revolutionary times.

Carto is involved in the publication of racist and anti-Zionist literature. He has maintained a personal acquaintanceship with present or former leaders of the Patriotic Party (political arm of the Minutemen), the anti-Semitic National States Rights Party, the National Socialist White Peoples Party and its predecessor American Nazi Party.

He also has been a working associate with such hard right intellectuals as "western culture" advocate Revilo P. Oliver, German Nazi apologist Austin J. App and an admirer of Mussolini and retired Marine Lt. Gen. Pedro del Valle.

By contrast, Liberty Lobby, the political organization founded by Carto, is more conventionally conservative. Its constituency lies in Middle America—small businessmen, housewives, pensioners. It publicly disavows the extra-constitutional aims of either the far right or far left.

See **CARTO**, A8, Col. 1

CARTO, From A1

Its 25,000 pledge members, bers, including Carto, must sign a loyalty oath swearing they do not advocate the violent overthrow of the government.

"Willis has talked to me often about playing the role of a respectable conservative when his true feelings are those of a racial nationalist," says Louis T. Byers, a one-time Carto intimate and hard right activist and theoretician here. "I was as close to being a friend as anyone Carto has known."

"He is a very curious and evasive person," says Revilo Oliver, noted classics scholar at the University of Illinois. "He wants to stay in the background. He thinks he is more effective that way."

His ultimate aim? Byers says Carto has told him it is to use Liberty Lobby's financial and membership potential (25,000 premium pledgers, 400,000 mailing list subscription names and up to \$800,000 in annual income now), plus his own skills as a writer and propagandist, to form a new power base when and if the nation should take a turn to the hard right.

Carto denies this. In a Feb. 25, 1971, letter to this reporter, he said Liberty Lobby "works within the system for constitutional government and fights centralized power and alien ideology on the left or the right. He warned of a possibly "uncontrollable reaction" by moderate Americans against the "excesses" of leftwing radicalism, adding:

"If Liberth Lobby and the other moderates who are trying to arrest the advance of the collectivists do not succeed, then there will be a quite different sort of anti-communism under way in this nation."

Both Byers and Oliver, who ave become disaffected from Carto in recent internal right wing feuding, say they do not now believe Carto is an "idealist" of the right but is seeking only personal power.

Besides his association with key right wing personalities, Carto maintains less visible ties with the American Mercury magazine, the Washington Observer newsletter and a Los Angeles

publishing nouse caueg Noontide Press, which periodically print articles on anti-Zionism, German Nazi apologetics, authoritarian politics and scientific racism (belief in the innate superiority of Caucasians based on biological, anthropoligcal and other scientific research).

Until March, 1969, Carto was treasurer of the Legion for the Survival of Freedom, Inc., the parent corporation of American Mercury, Washington Observer and Noontide Press. He resigned at that time, but several persons who have been close to Carto say he still exercises editorial control over the publications.

Carto also is a central organizer and supporter of the National Youth Alliance (NYA), created to mobilize young persons against campus radicals, black militants and drug pushers. NYA circulates pictorial literature caricaturing Jews and Negroes and urging sterilization of welfare mothers, and relocation of American Negroes to Africa.

The Anti - Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the Institute for American Democracy, and Group Research, Inc. — the three principal right wing "watchers" and political research organizations in the United States — agree that Carto, with his intricate network of committees, fronts, mailing lists and publication outlets, now is one of the most formidable leaders of the American right.

The organizational structure of Liberty Lobby and its various appendages is formidable and complex.

Officially registered as a political lobbying organization in Washington, Liberty Lobby also is a dominant constituent member of the United Congressional Appeal (UCA), an election campaign fund-raising committee here.

In addition, there are several affiliated or merged groups, such as the Friends of Rhodesian Independence, National Taxaction, Inc., and Americans for National Security, Inc., all woven into the Liberty Lobby infrastructure to raise money and disseminate information on various conservative causes.

Liberty Lobby employees

do most of the clerical and bookkeeping work of the affiliates, as they do for UCA. All are housed in the Liberty Lobby building on Capitol Hill at 3rd Street and Independence Avenue SE.

At the top of Carto's organizational pyramid is a corporation called Government Educational Foundation, Inc. (GEF).

GEF is Liberty Lobby's landlord and a housekeeping corporation. It owns the building in which the lobby

is housed, a large, 30-room, three-story Edwardian edifice on Capitol Hill at 132 3d St. SE. GEF also owns all office machines, equipment and furniture in the building.

Just as he is treasurer of Liberty Lobby, Carto is treasurer of GEF.

Liberty Lobby general counsel Warren Richardson and other lobby executives minimize claims of business, promotional and financial connections between the conservative Liberty Lobby and Carto's more right wing involvements.

Carto himself, however, acknowledged in a deposition made last Dec. 11 but not yet filed in U.S. District Court in connection with a civil suit here, that Liberty Lobby and the American Mercury/Washington Observer complex use each other's mailing lists.

Liberty Lobby also sells Noontide Press literature through its offices and occasionally advertises Noontide books in its newsletter.

Lobby employees have given clerical assistance to the National Youth Alliance, served as officers of the NYA corporation and rented it portions of the lobby mailing lists.

"I handled their (NYA's) mail in 1969," says former lobby staff worker Mae Hall. "NYA postage was paid with Liberty Lobby checks."

In addition, Carto set up a paper organization called the Council on Dangerous Drugs in 1969 to raise money primarily for NYA, according to Rick Norton, former West Coast representative for Liberty Lobby. Liberty Lobby mailing lists were used to solicit the

money, he said.

According to black nationalist Col. Hassan Jeru-Ahmed, Carto attempted to launch a program of voluntary repatriation of American Negroes to Africa. But Jeru-Ahmed head of the Blackman's Development Center here, says he became disenchanted with Carto's "white supremacist views" and the plan died aborning.

An energetic and high-strung man often known to work 17 and 18 hours a day, Carto manages his multiple operations with a direct, personal and at times iron hand.

Several former Liberty Lobby executives say Carto makes all major decisions, delegates little authority and trusts hardly anyone. After a recent rash of vandalism and thefts (including removal of copies of the lobby's mailing lists), most employees are now subjected to lie detector tests administered periodically by a private polygraph firm.

Harold Shifflet, business manager from 1967 to October, 1969, says, "I had the title of business manager — but that's all. Carto ran the place."

"It seemed to me there was no one around there with any real power except Carto," says Robert J. Jones, executive director of the Friends of Rhodesian Independence (FRI) "desk" at Liberty Lobby from May, 1969, to September, 1969.

"Although I was executive director," he said, "I was never brought in on the inner planning." He said he never handled incoming contributions and did not know how they were handled. "I really felt hamstrung," he said.

Norton, the lobby's West Coast representative until last September, says Carto often made major financial policy decisions without calling a meeting of the 12-member board of directors or notifying them afterward.

Martin A. Larson, one of the present board members, says he never has been called to a meeting in his two years on the board but has been polled twice by mail on policy issues and spoken with board chairman



FRANCIS P. YOCKEY
... author of "Imperium"



REVIDO P. OLIVER
... former associate



LOUIS T. BYERS
... once close friend

Curtis B. Dall twice by phone.

Little is known of Carto's current public or private life outside his small circle of associates and friends. Even less is known of his earlier years before he founded Liberty Lobby in 1957.

Associates say Carto speaks little of his past. He turned down a written request for an interview by this reporter but in his two-page letter of Feb. 25, asserted his "vigorous support of the pro-American, Constitutionalist position of Liberty Lobby."

Interviews with Carto associates and examination of public records here and in California, now Carto's home state, sketch this patchwork biography of the man:

Born in Fort Wayne, Ind., on July 17, 1926, he graduated from Southside High School there during World War II.

He then entered the U.S. Army, served with the American Division in the Philippines and was wounded twice, receiving the Purple Heart, according to a Washington Observer newsletter.

After the war, he lived briefly with his parents, Willis F. and Louise Carto, in Mansfield, Ohio. His higher education is not clear, except for a statement in a court deposition that he attended a few courses at the University of Cincinnati Law School.

He worked for a while in

Cincinnati for Procter & Gamble Manufacturing Co., then moved to San Francisco where he became a collector for Household Finance Corporation.

He married Elisabeth Waltraud, a German citizen, about 12 years ago. They have no children.

Carto has one brother, David L., who still lives in Mansfield near his parents. The Carto family is of Huguenot background, and the name was anglicized from Cardeaux several generations ago, according to a Carto nephew, David S. Carto of Columbus, Ohio. Other members of the Carto family generally have refused to discuss Carto's background.

Carto first became active in rightwing politics on the West Coast during the early 1950s. He traveled among a small circle of rightwing intellectuals.

One man who he had never met up to that time but admired from afar was Francis Parker Yockey, a brilliant and embittered American attorney who quit his job at the Nuremberg war crime trials in 1946 because of dissatisfaction with the Allied prosecution.

In 1948, Yockey wrote "Imperium," a massive philosophical tome filled with Spenglerian gloom about the welfare of "western civilization." The book warns against the "culture distorting" influences of Jews, Negroes and other minorities in northern Europe and America and urges the maintenance of Aryan and Anglo-Saxon hegemony through immigration control

and avoidance of imperialistic entanglements and the consequent acculturation of "alien" influences abroad.

Few copies of "Imperium" were published, and Yockey dropped out of public sight during the 1950s. In June, 1960, he was arrested in Oakland, Calif., on a passport fraud charge. Eleven days later, while in jail, he committed suicide.

Carto learned of Yockey's incarceration and visited him at least once in San Francisco County Jail and attended two of his court hearings.

Carto later wrote that he was "fascinated by this man," and found him "pensive, sensitive, magnetic." Once, he said, when Yockey turned toward him at a court hearing, their eyes met, and "in that instant, we understood that I would not desert him."

After Yockey's death, Carto arranged to have "Imperium" republished and distributed through Noontide Press and wrote a 40-page introduction to it. Noontide also published a paperback edition in 1969.

The introduction provides some measure of Carto's thinking.

With a few specified exceptions, he praises the message of "Imperium" and has a number of judgments of his own:

"Western civilization" is in a "position of unqualified superiority to every other culture," he says.

"Negro equality or even supremacy, for example, is easier to believe in if there are no Negroes around to destroy the concept," he adds.

"The individual enjoyed far more liberty in Europe under the monarchs than in America today," he says.

Carto's introduction, written in 1962, also refers to the formation of a European Liberation Front by Yockey and some of his friends in England about 13 years earlier in 1949. Yockey's "brilliance shone through," said Carto, in organizing this "constructive movement." Its manifesto, not included in "Imperium," is the Proclamation of London. It calls for:

- "Immediate expulsion

of all Jews and other parasitic aliens from the soil of Europe."

- Similar action to "drive the Jewish-American forces into the sea."

- Abolition of "liberal democracy," parliamentarianism, finance capitalism and other elements of "19th century materialism and rationalism."

- Replacement of these with "authority, faith, discipline, duty, order, hierarchy, fertility, will-to-power."

The origins of Carto's public shift from this hard right position to the milder "centrist" and "conservative" posture of Liberty Lobby date back to at least 1956.

At that time, he was living in the San Francisco area. He was executive director of a right wing organization called Liberty & Property and was involved in publication of a newsletter called "Right," which pushed anti-Zionism, scientific racism, Nordic culture and a broad range of related subjects.

A Liberty & Property year-end report published Jan. 18, 1956, announced that the time had arrived for the American right wing to go beyond its traditionally narrow "anti-communist and anti-internationalist attitude" and to promulgate a "really common and positive issue," which must attract persons "who are normally outside the scope of the right wing." The common issue was not specified.

Nineteen months later, in the September, 1957, issue of "Right" newsletter, carried an article by Carto announcing the creation of Liberty Lobby in Washington.

He explained: "Washington, D.C. is an occupied city," dominated by "economic, religious, racial and foreign pressure groups," all part of a system that "needs to be thrown out."

"In the meantime, how can we cope with these grasping pressure groups? We must compete with them. We must compete with them on their own terms until such a time as

the entire pressure group system can be eliminated and government re-established in consistency with American traditions.

"Such a strategy requires the establishment of a beachhead on the battleground of Washington; an actual office must be set up. . . . It will contact legislators on matters deemed vital to America by speaking for the citizen's whole and long-range interest, rather than his limited and shortsighted temporary interest. It will be a lobby for liberty and national sovereignty: a LIBERTY LOBBY!"

Thus Liberty Lobby began operations in late 1957 and has grown steadily since. It now employs more than 40 staff workers, maintains computerized mailing lists and has grossed close to \$1 million annually in recent years.

Its spokesmen constantly stress the "centrist" and "constitutionalist" stance of the organization, as distinct from any right wing authoritarian views that Carto may hold personally.

"Liberty Lobby has no philosophical connection with 'Imperium,'" said Carto in his Feb. 25 letter to this reporter.

Not so, says Louis Byers, now president of the Arlington-based National Youth Alliance, the overtly Yockeyst organization developed in part by Carto in early 1969.

"When NYA was being formed," Byers said, "Carto told me Liberty Lobby was a temporary institution which would eventually be 'undercut' by NYA and fade out of existence. 'Undercut' was the word he used."

Several disillusioned Liberty Lobby employees have since quit, said Byers, "because through Carto's association with me and NYA, they saw their little constitutionalist bubble beginning to break."

Byers and Carto, for that matter, have split up, too. Their breakup comes at the end of the tangled if brief history of NYA.

The organization was originally a mailing list spin-off from the national Youth for (George) Wallace committee after the 1968 presidential election.

Carto took over NYA and put Byers, then a close friend, in charge, Byers said.

The organization pushed "Imperium" and other Yockeyst literature, called for violence when necessary to wipe out campus radicalism

and black militancy and endeavored to raise money with the old Youth for Wallace mailing list.

Byers says Carto promised to help underwrite the infant organization but did not do so. NYA ran into debt. Last fall, Byers formally broke with Carto, incorporated a new NYA in suburban Arlington and joined forces with William L. Pierce and Robert A. Lloyd III, both defectors from the National Socialist White Peoples Party, formerly the American Nazi Party.

In the meantime, a competing NYA group in suburban Detroit, Mich., announced its formation under the leadership of Patrick Tifer, who had been ousted in the early days of the original NYA, according to Byers. Tifer now claims the allegiance of Carto. He published a letter of endorsement from Carto in February and described him as the "founder" of the "original" NYA.

Though Carto has access to large sums of money through his organizations, his personal life is one of moderation.

He lives in a small unassuming apartment in Redondo Beach, Calif., a suburb of Los Angeles. When in Washington, he stays in a sparsely furnished apartment in the basement of the Liberty Building.

He wears inexpensive suits and drives a 1965 Dodge Dart. He often dines at the Mike Palm Restaurant, an inexpensive eatery on Pennsylvania Avenue near the Liberty Building.

"He doesn't drink much," says Byers. "Maybe one or two beers now and then before dinner and occasionally an Old Fitzgerald afterwards." Carto does not smoke.

Several employees who recently quit Liberty Lobby in disgruntlement describe Carto as tight-fisted, suspicious, moody and quick to anger.

Others who are still there say just the opposite. "He is a very fine person to work for," says head bookkeeper Clara Sandahl. "In six years here, I've never had any cross words from him."

After a smooth upward course during the 1960s, Liberty Lobby suffered a decrease in contributions in 1970. This coincided with the alleged theft of lobby mailing lists and eruption of several disputes and civil court actions between Liberty Lobby and competing organizations and individuals, some of them Liberty Lobby defectors.

Finally, the Internal Revenue Service has now filed claims of tax deficiencies against Liberty Lobby totaling \$56,762 for 1966 and 1967. Lobby attorneys are contesting the claims in court.

Though besieged now by the Establishment, Carto says his organization still is against both left wing radicalism in the United States and a possible severe backlash against it.

"I, who strive to prevent this eventuality," said Carto in his Feb. 25 letter, "should be the last person to be blamed for the event, if it comes to pass."