

Terrell Drinkwater:

We offer now an interview with Gerald L.K. Smith, the leader of the Christian Nationalist Crusade. Mr. Smith has been called a racist, rabble-rouser, and by Mark Sullivan, an oratorical spellbinder. He has been active in the far right of American politics since the early 1920s. Mr. Smith describes himself as among the first to warn America of communist treason and International Jew Zionist tyranny. This interview is titled "Crusader, Traitor or Neither" and is conducted by Terrell T. Drinkwater.

Mr. Smith, do you think you are now, or have ever been, or will be a genuinely popular political figure?

Gerald Smith:

In answer to that question, Mr. Drinkwater, we'll say that I'm rather indifferent concerning the outcome of my relationship to the public as between a popular figure and an unpopular figure. I like to think of myself as a crusader; however, I do not want to appear self-righteous. My contempt for self-righteousness is almost as great as my contempt for alcoholism or crime. But seriously, I believe I am a crusader, and a crusader must be prepared to live and die a misunderstood man, but this does not necessarily indicate any reflection on the truth for which he stands. Many men have been able to live long enough to realize popularity based on the truth they have spoken. Others have had to be many years in their grave before the public recognized the truth spoken and written by the crusader.

Terrell Drinkwater:

Do you think you'll live long enough? I am familiar with your long, long career, and meeting you again here a few days ago after not having seen you for a couple of years, I was impressed, as I think many have been, by your continued vigor. Will you live long enough? Do you think the day is coming?

Gerald Smith:

Well, recently *Life* magazine published an article - I don't know just what issue it appeared in - concerning the mood of the American people concerning certain subjects. And in effect, the article said that at least 40 million people are already on our side of many of the issues for which I stand. I believe that the reason these 40 million people have not been mobilized and crystallized on our side is because we have been given the silent treatment by the press. Powerful forces opposed to what I stand for are preventing the public from hearing and reading what we have to say concerning certain issues. This formula will not permanently cripple our movement, but it may delay it. In other words, the grapevine is slower than the network in getting truth to the people.

Terrell Drinkwater:

But you see progress, or you see the first signs of it?

Gerald Smith:

I not only see progress, I see geometric progress. I see a turning of the tide in such rapidity in certain areas that it almost shocks me.

Terrell Drinkwater:

And pleases you?

Gerald Smith:

Well, it should please me, but I feel my own inadequacy so completely and I am so conscious of the shortage of leadership in our - among our people that it might create a responsibility for some people who are not quite prepared for it.

Terrell Drinkwater:

And do you think you're prepared?

Gerald Smith:

I don't take myself too seriously along that line. I don't think of myself - my enemies' reports notwithstanding - I don't think of myself as a leader spelled in capital letters. I mean, I don't have a leader complex.

Terrell Drinkwater:

Were you misquoted when in 1945 you said, "My time will come in the postwar period. The flame will spread and the extreme nationalists will come to power. When chaos comes, I'll be the leader." Was that a misquote then?

Gerald Smith:

It was sort of a garbled quotation growing out of my discussion of leadership. I even remember when that statement was made. I was in Portland, Oregon, I believe, and a reporter - of course, the romantic enemy was anyone that showed any initiative, anyone that resisted the trend. Anyone that contradicted Mr. Roosevelt and his ilk was built up by the enemy as a potential Hitler or a potential Mussolini or a potential fascist or something of that sort. Of course, that was romantic misrepresentation. I'm just a plain old-fashioned Bible Belt Christian American that believes with all his heart in the principles that gave rise to our constitutional republic and our Christian civilization.

So this young man asked me what I thought of leadership. He says, "What is a leader?" Well, I said, "Regardless of what office a man is elected to, he may not be a leader." Well, he said, "What is a leader?" Well, I said, "A leader is a man that starts in one direction and when he looks around, there's people following him, whether he holds an office or doesn't hold an office."

Terrell Drinkwater:

You've had people following you for a long, long time.

Gerald Smith:

Yes, I think so. I have no complex concerning the power and influence of my leadership, but our mail and the contacts I have in all the 48 states would indicate that we have several million people committed to the same things to which I have given my life coming back to that leadership discussion.

Terrell Drinkwater:

Yes.

Gerald Smith:

I felt then, just like I feel now, that every person, regardless of how insignificant or humble he may be, will be challenged with a responsibility of leadership when this tide turns.

Terrell Drinkwater:

And you see it turning?

Gerald Smith:

Oh, it's inevitable, because we have been the victims of so much fraudulent history. For instance, Mr. Roosevelt - even Jesse Jones, Mr. Roosevelt's biggest jobholder from Texas, when he wrote his book said that Mr. Roosevelt was a total politician and he had to be elected. He had to have the Second World War in order to be elected for the fourth term. Now what's going to be in the minds of the American people when the real truth concerning that war conspiracy comes out?

Terrell Drinkwater:

Maybe that's the problem of leadership. Maybe enough - not enough people - the people who think as you do have been true politicians. Do you think of yourself as a true politician?

Gerald Smith:

Well, my definition of a patriot is a politician with character.

Terrell Drinkwater:

Who are some of the politicians with character? The patriots that you have lived and worked with if...

Gerald Smith:

Well, of course, the chief this century and generation, whom I count as a personal friend, is General Douglas MacArthur. Some short time ago, Mrs. Smith and I were invited to be the guests of General Douglas MacArthur in his apartment in New York City. We didn't talk about the weather. We didn't talk about Chinese art, although his apartment was filled with Oriental objects for which Mrs. Smith and I both have some intelligent appreciation. We didn't - we scarcely passed the time of day. We spent three hours solid discussing the great issues of this generation. I discovered that General MacArthur was quite familiar with my career, and I wouldn't have been surprised if I had received from him some fatherly advice over on the conservative and constructive side of things. But I was inspired and we were both inspired, Mrs. Smith and I, when General MacArthur followed us to the door, put his arm around me and took Mrs. Smith by the hand, and gave us this final admonition, "Never weaken." And as far as I'm concerned, I'd rather have those words from General Douglas MacArthur than a Congressional medal from Franklin Roosevelt or Harry Truman, or even Dwight Eisenhower.

Terrell Drinkwater:

Yet MacArthur hasn't held political office. Is - this is something you consider one of the wrongs, do you not, if I recall your writings?

Gerald Smith:

Well, there...

Terrell Drinkwater:

One of the real wrongs...

Gerald Smith:

I've had - I've had two great personal friends in this century that I thought made a mistake on the side of modesty and inadequacy from the standpoint of self-estimation. And that sounds a little ambiguous, but...

Terrell Drinkwater:

No, I get your point.

Gerald Smith:

I think you know what I mean. I'm talking about Colonel Charles Lindbergh, who is my personal friend, and at the time of the World II crisis when he was being branded as a - oh, what name did Franklin - you refresh my memory. What did Franklin Roosevelt call Lindbergh?

Terrell Drinkwater:

Many things.

Gerald Smith:

Well, it was the synonym for traitor during the Civil War and I can't think of the - I can't think of the word. But, anyhow, he relieved him of his commission and represented him as a pseudo-traitor to the people of the United States. Mrs. Smith and I spent an entire evening with Mr. Lindbergh at that time in Dearborn, in the Dearborn Inn. That was a time when Mr. Lindbergh was in the experimental laboratory of the Ford Motor Company at the invitation of Mr. Ford, Sr. I said, "Colonel Lindbergh, why don't you step out now and become a political leader in the United States?"

Terrell Drinkwater:

What year was this? Forty-two or so, wasn't it?

Gerald Smith:

Around - yes, it was '42. It was the first year of the war when anyone associated with Charles Lindbergh or Henry Ford or Gerald Smith or Father Coughlin politically was considered the worst of the worst in the conventional press and among the mind washers that were making war propaganda. In fact, the *Jewish Examiner*, the largest Jewish newspaper in American, wrote an editorial about that time and suggested that the Russian system would be the best for the liquidation of such as Lindbergh, Smith and Coughlin, namely stand them up against a brick wall and shoot them down.

Terrell Drinkwater:

Have you ever prescribed a similar fate for people in the Anti-Defamation League and others of your enemies?

Gerald Smith:

Oh, no, on the contrary. The reports of my enemies notwithstanding, I believe that the only legitimate Christian American road to political victory is in the realm of public sentiment, honestly educated and exercised in the ballot box, and my whole life has been consistent with that statement. I'm not - that's not just a soft remark coming here in the mature years of my life. It has been the principle by which I have lived.

Terrell Drinkwater:

Let - let's get back here again to this question of leadership and Lindbergh and MacArthur and the others.

Gerald Smith:

And patriots.

Terrell Drinkwater:

All right, and patriots. I interrupted you. What - Lindbergh never made that decision, did he?

Gerald Smith:

Well, no, Lindbergh - Lindbergh - his reply to me was "I'm just not made for that world." He said, "I don't know how to meet the press after some reporter like Walter Winchell has announced to the world that my wife's going to have a baby next June." He said, "My vocabulary has not been developed to compete with that sort of people. It would be about as though my wife would be asked to go out and stand by the entrance - the back entrance to a bar - and battle with women of the street."

Terrell Drinkwater:

Yes.

Gerald Smith:

He said, "I just don't know how to fight in that realm. I'm going to disappear in the realm of science," said Mr. Lindbergh, "and I'm going to try to make myself useful to the limit in this war emergency," and of course, he carried out that - that commitment literally and completely and heroically.

Now you want to know my opinion concerning who are patriots that have become public officials. In other words, who are my ideals in government, present and past? Well, if I - if I praise a man, Mr. Drinkwater, please do not think I am making a namedropper out of myself. If I praise a man for one thing, that's no sign that you should assume that he's agreed with me on every detail.

Terrell Drinkwater:

Or that you would praise him for...

Gerald Smith:

No, there's some things he might do that I might disagree with him.

Terrell Drinkwater:

But generally, who are these figures who come closest in your mind?

Gerald Smith:

Well, I think that United States Senator Robert Taft was a great statesman and a great man. Now he and I would disagree on some things. I think that Senator Taft was very naive on the political science and technique of Zionism. In other words, I think the Zionists took him. But, on the other hand, he was a man of great character and courage. For instance, he knew and said that the war crime trials following World War II were unjust and un-American and barbaric, and he, at a time when it looked politically unpopular

for him to do it. It could have defeated him in Ohio. He took a stand in defense of justice, even for war criminals. Of course, I was a - I am and was a great admirer of Senator Joseph McCarthy.

Terrell Drinkwater:

You put him in the same category in your mind as Senator...

Gerald Smith:

No, McCarthy - McCarthy was a - was a youthful, naive, natural, sincere boy who just couldn't believe that he could come back from a heroic life in the armed services and be condemned for exposing traitors. He got the shock of his life. I maintained a liaison contact with Senator McCarthy all during his public career. Because of the fact that I was so completely smeared by the conventional press, we didn't consider it wise to be seen together.

Terrell Drinkwater:

And...

Gerald Smith:

But...

Terrell Drinkwater:

But you did communicate with McCarthy?

Gerald Smith:

Through a man who was in his office all the time, whose name I cannot give you. So McCarthy said to me through our liaison, "Mr. Smith, I'm going to fight this communism without getting smeared the way you have." He just couldn't believe that you could roll over a log and find a traitor and get your throat cut by people who were supposed to be patriots.

Terrell Drinkwater:

Do you think McCarthy ultimately took a wiser course than you have?

Gerald Smith:

Well, of course. The same smear machine that was released on him was released on me. I mean, theoretically speaking, we were both completely destroyed. When you're ostracized socially, when you're assassinated...

Terrell Drinkwater:

You honestly feel...

Gerald Smith:

... characteristically...

Terrell Drinkwater:

Well, you feel he was assassinated, don't you?

Gerald Smith:

No, assassinated as far as his character was concerned.

Terrell Drinkwater:

Well now, I...

Gerald Smith:

He was a victim of character assassination. Now - now don't be premature in your question because I'm going to answer the one you had in mind.

Terrell Drinkwater:

I was at a very interesting meeting sometime ago in Los Angeles and you talked on the subject about McCarthy's...

Gerald Smith:

Yes, well, the first thing happened - the first thing that happened was to assassinate his character. And Senator McCarthy, you know, was a very tender man. He wasn't a bombastic, hard, calloused man. He had vanity and pride and sensitivity. He loved to be loved. He enjoyed...

Terrell Drinkwater:

And was by many people.

Gerald Smith:

Oh, yes. He loved the love that was bestowed upon him by the people. He loved popularity. Who doesn't?

Terrell Drinkwater:

Do you?

Gerald Smith:

Why, anyone does. I mean, of course, the Scripture does say - there are two - of course, the Scripture doesn't contradict itself. We can lift it out of context and get contradiction. "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches and loving favor more than silver and gold." But another place in the Scripture it says, "Beware when all men speak well of you."

McCarthy - I think McCarthy was a bit naive when he entered the anti-communist fight. He was a smart, Irish politician. He'd been smart enough to be elected to the United States Senate on the Republican ticket in a state where most of the Catholics are Democrats.

Terrell Drinkwater:

Yes.

Gerald Smith:

He loved that popularity. Naturally, being a Catholic, he was opposed to communism because, as a Christian denomination, the Catholic Church is probably more intelligent on the menace of communism than any religious group. He felt that to attack communism would increase his political popularity with the great Catholic vote of Wisconsin, as well as the nation, and the intelligent foes of communism in every realm and every religious group. I think when he went down to West Virginia and made his attack on communism, I think he was just a smart boy doing something that he thought was a good political turn for his party.

Terrell Drinkwater:

Have you ever used witch-hunting phrases, red herring - have you used those phrases ever in describing McCarthy, in this - that talk and others?

Gerald Smith:

You mean - I've never used those words sympathetically because the word "red herring" and "witch hunting," that's the vocabulary of the Communist Party. That's a - that's a dirty word instrument that they've used to destroy patriots who are sensitized to treason.

Now when he named those communists that were in various departments of the government, he got kicked in the stomach, and he got his teeth knocked out, and figuratively speaking, he got his nose bloodied. Well then, he discovered that he was like the policeman that went in to say hello to the cigar girl and discovered that it was the headquarters of a gang, and whereas he was only in there to get a piece of chewing gum, the gang that occupied the hotel figured they were being covered by the law, and so, as the old saying goes, "the guilty flee when no man pursueth." And it's my theory, Mr. Drinkwater, that any public man who displays early in life intelligence, courage, and capacity may get his throat cut just on the basis of his potentialities, before he even does much, because the enemy says, "My gracious, if that man ever gets loose, he's going to destroy us."

Terrell Drinkwater:

But this - this didn't - this doesn't seem to bother you. The same sort of thing has happened to you many times. It doesn't bother you and it does - did bother McCarthy, as you just said, and he - if I may anticipate you here - you felt that this was the beginning of his downfall. This was...

Gerald Smith:

Well...

Terrell Drinkwater:

This was his character assassination and then...

Gerald Smith:

Yes...

Terrell Drinkwater:

...then what happened?

Gerald Smith:

...it was the beginning of his death because he wasn't, as we use the old - as we used to use - as the old expression we used to use, he wasn't "case hardened." He wasn't calloused for the fight. He hadn't reached the place where he realized that that battle might cause - cost him complete political suicide, social ostracism, and universal smear, and it brought disillusionment. You know, after all, a young soldier fresh from the Great War, he's incapable of believing that a man could get smeared and hurt and condemned and censured by the most exclusive legislative club in the world - the United States Senate - for fighting treason.

And so this broke his heart, and it reduced his physical resistance, and it made him - he was wide open for the first germ or bug that jumped on him. And I'm not so sure but what some of those bugs and germs had some human assistance. Only God knows the answer to that, and I propose not to continue that discussion because I do not want to substitute imagination for fact.

Terrell Drinkwater:

Let's continue then by talking more about political leaders. Here you mention four - Lindbergh, MacArthur, Taft, McCarthy. How about Huey Long? You had a long association with him and...

Gerald Smith:

Well, I'm glad you brought that up because he's the smartest - he was the smartest human being I've ever known. His innate capacities, his - that thing that he carried between his two ears and above his chin was the best developed piece of machinery I've ever seen on the shoulders of a human being. We were young men together, you know.

Terrell Drinkwater:

Yes. And very closely associated, were you not?

Gerald Smith:

Oh, yes, we were - I enjoyed his - his complete confidence. Now, there might have been people in the world in whom he had more confidence on the subject of political sagacity, because I was junior to him. But, on the other hand, he had much confidence in my potentials along that realm - along that line and in that realm. He - this sounds a little boastful, I presume, although it might be greatly to my discredit in some areas for me to say that I enjoyed his complete admiration as a man and his character.

Terrell Drinkwater:

What other political leaders then - and we've named five here - do you come closest to being patriots?

Gerald Smith:

In other words...

Terrell Drinkwater:

Your definition.

Gerald Smith:

...you're trying to find out who my patriarchs are, I mean, who are my ideals?

Terrell Drinkwater:

Right.

Gerald Smith:

Am I a hero worshiper of any individual? I wish I could name such people, but when you are - when you are blazing a trail - when you are a pioneer in certain realms of thought, there are not too many people that you can just say, "Now he is the personification of everything I stand for."

Terrell Drinkwater:

Yes.

Gerald Smith:

My theory is that it's - that even among the best of the contemporary public officials, it takes about 10 of them to make one statesman. It's like paring down apples that have been in the cellar too long. It takes a whole peck of them to make one pie. But I can go through the United States Senate and I can pick the good out of this man, the good out of this man, the good out of this man, and put them all together, and if they could just be one composite man, then we'd have one great statesman.