

attain high office where he stumbled into the end of the Cold War. Even his conservative supporters have perpetuated this view. Reagan national security adviser Robert McFarlane once remarked, "He knows so little and accomplishes so much."

But a close review of the historical record, and recent interviews with those who knew Reagan best during the 1940s and '50s, show a man profoundly affected by his experiences as a movie star and six-term president of the Screen Actors Guild. He emerges as a complex individual who—through what he once described as intense "philosophical combat"—changed his political ideology. Contrary to assertions (which Reagan himself often encouraged) that he became a Republican because the Democratic Party abandoned him, Reagan actually went from being a staunch liberal who participated in Communist front groups to a stalwart anti-communist because of his firsthand experiences dealing with Communist Party members.

History sometimes reveals the moments and incidents that mold and shape our presidents. Most of Ronald Reagan's occurred here. In part, he is simply a man who loved (as he called them) "pictures"—being in them, talking about them and the business of making them. But it was a growing obsession with politics that sharply diminished his acting career, helped destroy his first marriage, and changed his life forever.

Reagan's involvement with the Screen Actors Guild spanned more than a decade, and even before he became president of it in 1947 (a position that paid him no salary or benefits), he immersed himself in its work. He would often speak extemporaneously for extended periods on the labyrinthine matters of the industry workforce, impressing professional negotiators with his knowledge of thorny labor issues.

The nature of Reagan's role as labor leader isn't the only part of his life that runs counter to the popular perception. In the years after his divorce from actress Jane Wyman in 1948, Reagan was living a life that most who know him best as the grandfatherly president would never recognize. Indeed, Reagan was handsome, rich (spending in excess of \$750 a month on dinners and nightclubs) and dating some of the most beautiful actresses in the business.

Hollywood was booming. It was, as David Niven once described it, filled with great personalities, but controlled by arrogant moguls, overcrowded and smelling of despotism, nepotism and blacklists. Los Angeles supposedly had more swimming pools and private detectives per square mile than any other place in the world.

"THE GIPPER" IS BORN

When Reagan arrived in Hollywood in May 1937, the country was still in the Depression, but L.A. still had a grand style about it. Virtually all of the residences Reagan had here still exist, and are largely unchanged. His first apartment was at the elegant Art Deco Montecito apartment building on Franklin Avenue in Hollywood. Today, as one walks into the lobby and then the unit that he rented, the romance and glamour of the era become obvious.

Barely 12 months later, Reagan's career was in full flourish. By the end of 1938, he had already made nine pictures. "Brother Rat," the story of cadets at the Virginia Military Institute, is perhaps the best among them. More important, he had fallen in love with his co-star, Wyman, and they married just over a year later. The Warner Bros. publicity machine was churning out press releases touting them as the new all-American couple.

Jack Warner typically knew a good thing when he saw it, and from the moment of

Reagan's screen test, he took a liking to the young man from Dixon, Ill. Now, Reagan seemed to be exceeding expectations. For years, he had dreamed about making a movie based on the life of the legendary Notre Dame football star George Gipp, whose deathbed words became a rallying cry for the Fighting Irish. In his spare time, Reagan would make notes about a possible film. And when he heard that Warner had given the green light to a picture about Notre Dame coach Knute Rockne, he saw his chance.

"I've been a great fan of Gipp's throughout his career, and I've read just about everything that's been written on him and Rockne," Reagan told Pat O'Brien, who was signed to play Rockne. "I can play the part. I won't let you down," he pleaded. Studio records show that Reagan beat out both John Wayne and William Holden for the part of Gipp. "Knute Rockne, All American" was released in 1940. And the line "Win one for the Gipper" eventually became as synonymous with a politician as "I like Ike."

By the middle of 1941, Reagan was making almost \$2,000 a week. He and Wyman had built a house on Cordell Drive, just above Sunset Boulevard, with a sweeping view of the city. (Record producer Richard Perry lives there now.) And Warners was about to release "Kings Row," a film that it had been holding for a year, afraid of how audiences might react to its depiction of an idyllic small town that turns sinister. Reagan gives what is arguably the best performance of his career as Drake McHugh, a happy young man with a bright future who wakes up after a train accident to discover his legs have been needlessly amputated. "Where's the rest of me!?" he screams.

On a hot July day of that year, Wyman suggested to SAG Executive Director Jack Dales that her husband would be the best candidate to fill a vacant alternate position on the SAG board of directors. "I remember Jane looked at me and said, 'My husband might be president of SAG one day,'" Dales remembers today. "Then she added, sort of jokingly, 'Who knows, he might even be president of the United States.'" With that, Ronald Reagan's life began to take a completely different turn.

A WITNESS TESTIFIES

On April 10, 1951, in Room 226 of what is now the Cannon House Office Building on Capitol Hill, actor Sterling Hayden was under oath, describing to members of the House Committee on Un-American Activities what had caused him to join the Communist Party. "There was something boiling inside of me," said Hayden, whose unforgettable face made him look like one of the toughest characters in all of Hollywood. (Years later, he would play the Air Force general who sets off nuclear war in "Dr. Strangelove" as well as the corrupt police captain in "The Godfather".)

"I felt reluctant accepting the very lucrative and easy life Hollywood had offered me," he said. "All of it planted a seed: If I could do something about the conditions of the world, I could probably justify my position as an actor. I was appalled at what the Communists were telling me. I would get propaganda literature, scan it, and then burn it up."

Hayden said he left the Communist Party after being convinced it was ultimately being directed by Joseph Stalin. "Joining was the stupidest, most ignorant thing I have ever done," he said. Hayden said Communists tried to paralyze entertainment industry labor unions so that all studio workers would eventually be organized under one gigantic union controlled by the party itself, and he was asked what stopped them. "They ran into Ronald Reagan, who was a one-man battalion."

AN FDR DISCIPLE

Although he was a captain in the Army, Reagan spent most of World War II in Culver City, Calif., because his nearsightedness prevented him from being in combat. His responsibility while stateside was to help administer the Army Air Forces 1st Motion Picture Unit at the Hal Roach Studios, making military training and promotional films.

Making "This Is the Army," a 1943 musical for Warners, and watching Franklin Roosevelt prosecute the war, stirred Reagan's longings to be a part of it. It also increased his zeal for the leadership in Washington. "Ronnie really idolized FDR," remembers Dales. "I mean, you have to understand, Ronald Reagan thought Roosevelt was a true savior. And by getting involved with the politics of the Guild, he heightened his reverence for FDR's abilities. There's no question that I think he imagined himself having a major role in our industry that way."

Biographer Edmund Morris once interviewed a man in the Signal Corps who encountered a distraught Reagan all alone on the studio lot just after FDR's death in 1945. "He seemed really stricken, like he had a migraine," said Elvin Crawford. "When he looked at me I saw he was in despair. 'Oh, sergeant, I don't know what's going to happen to this country.'"

As the celebrations of victory in World War II ended, Americans were flush with success in practically every area of their lives. Some 90 million were going to movies every week. And within what seemed like just a moment, Hollywood was on the front lines of the Cold War.

THE ERA OF FBI SURVEILLANCE

Today, the concern about Soviet subversion that gripped the country through the late 1940s and '50s seems odd. After all, the Soviet Union had been an ally during World War II. But once no less an authority than Winston Churchill announced that "an iron curtain has descended" across Europe in his famous 1946 speech in Fulton, Mo., and he warned that the Communist Party was "seeking everywhere to obtain totalitarian control," Americans began to look at Soviet influence in a different light. Washington had become aggressive in its efforts to investigate possible subversion and infiltration from elements deemed loyal to Stalin, and because films and entertainment reached such wide audiences, Hollywood seemed a ripe target for propaganda.

On Capitol Hill, the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) convened hearings in October 1947, at which Reagan testified. Although he cooperated with the HUAC, he resented government interference in the business he loved, later calling the panel (which included another future president, Richard Nixon) a "pretty venal bunch."

The FBI conducted surveillance on thousands of prominent Americans, including Reagan. But Reagan was also helping J. Edgar Hoover gather information about others, and agents first visited him in 1941. While most of the information Reagan provided pertains to possible Communist influence, the FBI appears to have been interested in anything politically controversial. In 1943, for example, he told an agent about a party where anti-Semitic statements were made. "Captain Reagan became highly incensed and withdrew from the conversation," according to the report contained in Reagan's partially declassified FBI file. "He said that he almost came to blows" with someone who had spoken disparagingly about Jews.

In every war, there is injustice and unfairness, and the Cold War was certainly no different. Careers were sidetracked, others destroyed. Actress Jane Wyatt (TV's "Father

Knows Best") is one example of someone who was inadvertently caught up in organizations that eventually turned out to be Communist front groups. Wyatt was blacklisted, and in order to work again, she had to publicly criticize the party.

Director John Huston, who worked at Warner Bros. during Reagan's time there, was sympathetic to those on the blacklist. In his memoirs of Hollywood published in 1980, he wrote: "There is no doubt in my mind that the Communists were out to proselytize, to win converts. But there is also no doubt in my mind that activity in no way posed a threat to national security. The Communists I knew were liberals and idealists, and would have been appalled at the idea of trying to overthrow the United States government."

HOLLYWOOD HAS NO BLACKLIST

Part of the journey to understand how this backdrop influenced Reagan's life and eventually the presidency takes one to—of all people and places—Hugh Hefner and the Playboy Mansion. Hefner recalls that in 1960, he had heard about a dinner with Reagan and Homer Hargrave, a friend of Hefner's who was the son of silent film star Colleen Moore. It came just after Playboy had published a favorable story about Charlie Chaplin, who was then a stalwart supporter of the Soviet Union. "Thank God for Communism," Chaplin said in 1942. "They say Communism may spread all over the world. I say, So what?"

In addition, Playboy had also published an article about the Academy Awards by screenwriter Dalton Trumbo, a member of the Communist Party from 1943 to 1948. He famously refused to answer questions from the House Un-American Activities Committee and served 10 months in prison in 1947 for refusing to testify. He rejoined the party briefly in 1954.

Starting in November 1947—in response to charges that the industry was infiltrated by subversives—the studios adopted an industry-wide policy forbidding the hiring of anyone suspected of communist sympathies. For Trumbo, the blacklist period was a financial hardship, but like many on the blacklist, he continued to write scripts under pseudonyms. And in 1960, he again began to work under his own name when Otto Preminger announced he'd hired Trumbo to write the script for "Exodus."

"When Trumbo wrote his story for us, he was just starting to come out of the shadows," remembers Hefner. Reagan and Trumbo had both been members of the liberal Hollywood Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences and Professions (HICCASP, as Reagan called it, "pronounced like the cough of a dying man"), later revealed to be secretly supported by the Communist Party. At the dinner, Reagan told Hargrave that considering Chaplin and Trumbo's defiant attitudes about communism, he found Hefner's support for them galling. Hargrave mentioned the remark to Hefner.

"When I heard what Reagan said, I wrote to him," says Hefner. "I liked 'Kings Row' and all that, but I was also unhappy about what had happened during the blacklist era. And so I told him."

What Hefner received in response—six pages, handwritten on Reagan's personal stationery—is, perhaps, a more precise rendering of the former president's personal and ideological transformation than has ever appeared in the legion of books and articles written about him. It surfaces very briefly in Morris's book on Reagan, but until now the 1960 letter has never been published in its entirety.

JULY 4

DEAR MR. HEFNER: I've been a long time answering your letter of May 13 and my se-

lection of—The 4th—as an answering date is coincidence plus the fact that Holidays are free time—days around our house:

Your letter has been very much on my mind and I question whether I can answer in a way that will make sense to you. First because I once thought exactly as you think, and second because no one could have changed my thinking (and some tried). It took seven months of meeting communists and communist influenced people across a table in almost daily sessions while pickets rioted in front of studio gates, homes were bombed and a great industry almost ground to a halt.

You expressed lack of knowledge about my views, political back ground etc. Because so much doubt has been cast on "anti-communist," inspired by the radicalism of extremists who saw "Reds" under every "cause," I feel I should reveal where I have stood and now stand.

My first four votes were cast for F.D.R., my fifth for Harry Truman. Following World War II my interest in liberalism and my fear of "neo-fascism" led to my serving on the board of directors of an organization later exposed as a "Communist Front," namely the "Hollywood Independent Citizens Comm. of the Arts, Sciences & Professions"! Incidentally Mr. Trumbo was also on that board.

Now you might ask who exposed this organization as a "Front"? It was no crusading committee of Congress, the D.A.R. or the American Legion. A small group of board members disturbed by the things being done in the organization's name introduced to their fellow board members a mild statement approving our Dem. system and free enterprise economy and repudiating communism as a desirable form of govt. for this country. The suggestion was that by adopting such a policy statement the board would reassure our membership we were liberal but not a "front." The small group who introduced this measure were such "witch hunters" as James Roosevelt, Dore Schary, Don Hartman, Olivia de Havilland, Johnny Green & myself.

Leaders of the opposition to our statement included Dalton Trumbo, John Howard Lawson and a number of others who have since attained some fame for their refusal to answer questions. I remember one of their group reciting the Soviet Constitution to prove "Russia was more Democratic than the U.S." Another said if America continued her imperialist policy and as a result wound up in a war with Russia he would be on the side of Russia against the U.S. We suggested this "policy statement" was perhaps a matter for the whole organization to decide—not just the board. We were told the membership was "not politically sophisticated enough to make such a decision."

When we resigned the organization went out of existence only to reappear later (minus us) as "Independent Citizens Committee of the Arts, Sciences & Prof." in support of Henry Wallace and the Progressive Party.

The "seven months" of meetings I mentioned in the first paragraph or two refers to the jurisdictional strike in the Motion Picture business. There are volumes of documentary evidence, testimony of former communists etc. that this whole affair was under the leadership of Harry Bridges and was aimed at an ultimate organizing of everyone in the picture business within Mr. Bridges longshoreman's union.

Now none of what I've said answers your argument that "freedom of speech means freedom to disagree," does it? Here begins my difficulty. How can I put down in less than "book form" the countless hours of meetings, the honest attempts at compromise, the trying to meet dishonesty, lies

and cheating with conduct bound by rules of fair play? How can I make you understand that my feeling now is not prejudice born of this struggle but is realization supported by incontrovertible evidence that the American Communist is in truth a member of a "Russian American Bund" owing his first allegiance to a foreign power?

I, like you, will defend the right of any American to openly practise & preach any political philosophy from monarchy to anarchy. But this is not the case with regard to the communist. He is bound by party discipline to deny he is a communist so that he can by subversion & stealth infuse on an unwilling people the rule of the International Communist Party which is in fact the govt. of Soviet Russia. I say to you that any man still or now a member of the "party" was a man who looked upon the death of American soldiers in Korea as a victory for his side. For proof of this I refer you to some of the ex-communists who fled the party at that time & for that reason, including some of Mr. Trumbo's companions of the "Unfriendly 10."

Hollywood has no blacklist, Hollywood does have a list handed to it by millions of "movie goers" who have said "we don't want and will not pay to see pictures made by or with these people we consider traitors." On this list were many names of people we in Hollywood felt were wrongly suspect. I personally served on a committee that succeeded in clearing these people. Today any person who feels he is a victim of discrimination because of his political beliefs can avail himself of machinery to solve this problem.

I must ask you as a publisher, aside from any questions of political philosophy, should a film producer be accused of bigotry for not hiring an artist when the customers for his product have labeled the artist "poor box office," regardless of the cause?

I realize I've presented my case poorly due to the limitations of pen & paper so may I ask one favor? Will you call the F.B.I. there in Chi. ask for the anti-communist detail, then tell him of our correspondence (show him my letter if you like) and ask his views on this subject of communism as a political belief or a fifth column device of Russia.

Now my apologies for having taken so long in answering your letter and my appreciation for your having taken the time to write in the first place.

Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN.

I asked Hefner whether he took Reagan's advice. "Growing up," he answered, "FBI agents were my heroes. I saw Cagney in 'G-Men' when I was a kid. But by the '50s I had already had visits from them, and they had harassed my ex-wife. So to say that Reagan's suggestion fell on deaf ears is an understatement."

STANDING UP AGAINST COMMUNISM

A scene from 1946, once recounted by Reagan: The setting is the posh residence of a top star, a meeting of the HICCASP. Reagan is running late, and arrives to grab a seat next to MGM studio head Dore Schary.

"Lots of people here I didn't think I'd see," he says.

"Stick around," answers Schary.

FDR's son James stands to propose adopting a statement denouncing communism and the Soviet state. "I was amazed at the reaction," remembered Reagan. One musician stands to assert that the Soviet constitution is superior to the American one. A screenwriter says he'd volunteer for Russia if war between it and the United States ever broke out. "I decided that an Irishman couldn't stay out, and took the floor and endorsed what Roosevelt said." Pandemonium. Reagan recalled one woman having a heart attack.

The meeting breaks up. Schary tells Reagan, "We're meeting up at Olivia de Havilland's apartment."

Reagan goes over to find about a dozen HICCASP members celebrating how they'd just smoked out the Communists.

Reagan is looking at de Havilland, grinning.

"What's so funny?" she asks him.

"Nothing," he says, "except I thought you were one."

She looks at him, smiling, "I thought you were one. Until tonight, that is."

RIVAL UNIONS

Aside from Dales, the man Reagan worked mostly closely with during his days as SAG president, it was Roy Brewer. An FDR New Dealer, Brewer had grown up in Grand Island, Neb., and at age 19, as a projectionist at the Capital Theater, ran the 1927 version of "The Jazz Singer," all 15 reels of it.

Brewer became a top labor official in Nebraska, and rose quickly to prominence in the International Alliance of Theatrical and Stage Employees (IATSE), part of the American Federation of Labor. When he arrived in Hollywood in 1945 on a mission to mediate what appeared to be a jurisdictional strike, he walked into a dispute between his IATSE members and a rival labor group, the Conference of Studio Unions, headed by Herbert Sorrell. What he also discovered was an industry that during the war had attracted a wide variety of characters—some who thought Hollywood was their ticket to fame and fortune, and a very small minority who were pushing political agendas.

Reagan was initially on the side of the strikers, but after he became convinced that the real objectives of those behind the strike were detrimental to the industry, he became a fast ally with Brewer. The two were soon confidants, and were featured together in Fortune magazine as two of the most influential figures in the business. By 1948, Reagan and Brewer were co-chairing the Hollywood campaign for Harry S Truman's reelection.

Reagan and Brewer believed Sorrell's group was trying to force the entire film community to accept an industry-wide union headed by Harry Bridges, leader of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union, who had attained fame from organizing the San Francisco waterfront strike of 1934. Records that have emerged since the end of the Cold War seem to support this claim, and also show that Bridges was a Communist Party member.

"Ronnie and I saw that the way things were going, it would be impossible for the studios to produce any movies at all," Brewer says today. Historians on both sides of the political spectrum now estimate there were approximately 300 party members in Hollywood during this era, and some of them have since admitted that while a concerted effort was underway to insert propaganda into films, the more important immediate goal was to seize control of the unions because they held the financial keys to all of the industry.

Reagan's increasing involvement in the affairs of the industry seemed to come at great personal cost. Threats were made against his life, and Warner's issued him a .32, which he began wearing in a shoulder holster.

A union transcript of a divisive SAG meeting late one night at the Knickerbocker Hotel during October 1946 shows Reagan aggressively confronting rival union organizer Sorrell:

"I have had to have guards for my kids because I got telephone warnings about what would happen to me because of my activities in trying to settle this strike."

"Now, smile. I don't know where the telephone calls came from. I know I took them

seriously and I have been looking over my shoulder when I go down the street. Now, I know there are people from both sides in the hospital. I know it has been a vicious and deplorable thing in our business. I have never given up for one minute trying for peace, because I believed if the two factions wanted peace, there must be a grounds upon which they can meet. . . .

"Herb, as far as I'm concerned, you have shown here tonight that you intend to welsh on your statement of two nights ago [about settling the strike], and as far as I am concerned, you do not want peace in the motion picture industry."

Those who would know Reagan later in life say these experiences shaped his presidency, and eventually the way he approached the Soviets. "That era was a major influence on him," says Edwin Meese, attorney general under Reagan. "He said it gave him a good sense of the tactics used by the Communist Party, and a sense for their methods of subversion. There's no question it was pivotal."

But it was also devastating to his marriage. In early 1948, Wyman sued him for divorce, complaining that her husband's life revolved around the union. His discussions "were far above me," and "there was nothing left to sustain our marriage."

Said Reagan: "Perhaps I should have let someone else save the whole world and saved my own home."

MOVING ON

By the early 1950s, with the back of the Communist Party in Hollywood now essentially broken, Reagan found that securing work for former Communists and others who were innocently caught up in the blacklist was one of the responsibilities of his volunteer job. Along with Brewer and Dales, Reagan would vouch for actors and others in the industry who publicly broke ranks with the party.

It was this role that partly accounted for his first substantive meeting with actress Nancy Davis in 1949. Of course, Reagan was an eligible bachelor, and Nancy knew it.

But she also wanted Reagan to protect her, and make sure industry leaders knew she wasn't politically controversial. "I told her director, Mervyn LeRoy, that I'd take care of it—having made the switch from Ronald Reagan, actor, regrettably to Ronald Reagan, SAG president," he once wrote. Davis herself tried to make sure that politics never jeopardized her career, and became a member of the Guild's board of directors in August 1950, a position she would keep for more than a decade. The Reagans' first real date, though, is now the stuff of legend. It began with both of them saying they needed to be home early and ended sometime after 3 a.m. In 1952, they married.

Shortly thereafter, Reagan, who had a ranch at the beach, landed his first position in public office: honorary mayor of Malibu Lake. Within hours, California car dealer Holmes Tuttle came calling, saying he and others were prepared to back Reagan for the U.S. Senate. On that occasion, Reagan turned him down.

Hollywood has remained a constant in Ronald Reagan's life since the day he arrived here in 1937. Often it appears in the most curious ways. Screenwriter and producer Douglas Morrow once tried to find Reagan a role when no one else seemed to be offering one.

Years later, in 1979, Morrow, who had connections in the aerospace industry, arranged for Reagan to make a secret visit to the North American Defense Command headquarters deep in the mountains of Colorado. Seeing firsthand that the United States had no defenses against nuclear strikes moved him, and stoked his fire for a missile defense system.

When Washington conservatives were nervous about President Reagan giving away the store to the Soviets at Reykjavik, and sent Lyn Nofziger in to urge him to be cautious and remain stalwart, Reagan responded: "Don't worry. I still have the scars on my back from fighting the communists in Hollywood."

HOLLYWOOD'S GUIDING LIGHTS

When he came back from Washington, Reagan was approached about possibly returning to films for a special cameo, but always politely declined the overtures.

Reagan's personal office now overlooks the 20th Century Fox studios, and is in a building that has served as the site for numerous films. A parade of dignitaries from Gorbachev to Thatcher has visited him there, but Reagan always seemed to especially relish the industry people who would appear at his door.

On Tuesday, in a house high above the city, Nancy Reagan will mark her husband's 90th birthday with him, without fanfare. And perhaps, at the end of it, as the sun goes down and the lights of the City of the Angels come up, Ronald Reagan will have a fleeting glance of the town where an American president found his destiny.

MR. McCAIN. Mr. President, today, we celebrate the birthday of a giant, Ronald Reagan. America is indebted to President Reagan for reviving our national spirit and ensuring that we prevailed in that "long twilight struggle" against soviet totalitarianism. His leadership not only revitalized our economy, but gave us a rebirth of patriotism and national greatness.

My fellow Vietnam Prisoners of War share a special affection for Ronald Reagan. Word of his steadfastness against aggression even reached us in our cells thousands of miles away from freedom. When we were released, he befriended and supported us. He understood and appreciated the "noble cause" for which so many brave Americans made the ultimate sacrifice.

Today, America enjoys unprecedented peace and prosperity largely due to the policies of Ronald Reagan. So, to celebrate your 90th birthday, we salute you President Reagan, a brave soldier in the battle for freedom.

MR. SMITH of New Hampshire. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize and celebrate the 90th birthday of our 40th President, Ronald Wilson Reagan.

It is ironic that today this body is debating the merits of a tax cut. Almost twenty years ago, President Reagan introduced and helped to pass the largest tax cut in our Nation's history. Nearly two decades later, we are still enjoying the economic benefits of that tax cut. Our economy has had real growth every year since 1982, with the exception of a tiny 1.2 percent dip in 1991.

Thanks to President Reagan's tax cut, we have experienced by far the longest run of economic growth in American history.

President Reagan's main reason for supporting tax relief was not to provide an economic stimulus, although that was an inevitable result. His main reason was to promote freedom. Freedom from the heavy hand of Government. Freedom to spend one's own hard-earned money on whatever one wanted.

Back in our country's colonial days, the colonists would tar and feather tax collectors because they had to pay around one percent of their wages. One percent! The famous Boston Tea Party was another way that our forefathers protested a relatively small, by our modern standards, tax increase.

But by 1980, our highest tax rate was an enormous 70 percent!

President Reagan understood that such a tax rate was indefensible. It was unjust, oppressive and against everything for which our Nation stands. He supported and got a 25 percent across the board tax cut. He knew that the American people, not the American Government, knew best how to spend their own money. Pretty revolutionary thinking.

President Reagan also took office at the height of Communist expansion around the world.

The Soviet Union had just invaded Afghanistan. Southeast Asia was still experiencing the dreadful repercussions of Pol Pot. Communist insurgents were wreaking havoc all over Central America. The embryonic Solidarity movement in Poland was being brutally repressed. The voice of Democracy was being stifled around the globe. Our own armed forces were in a shambles, both in terms of morale and military readiness.

But our President did not waver. He knew that as the most visible leader of the Free World, he must stand up for freedom and democracy. And despite facing strong opposition, at home and abroad, from those who considered the dominance of the Soviet Union to be inevitable, President Reagan stood up and helped change the course of history.

It was his military buildup that showed the Soviet Union that we meant business. He knew that the Communists could not withstand an arms race. He knew that eventually the voices of freedom would drown out the nightmarish cries of Communist regimes.

He knew that our country's character, dedication, industriousness and resolve would push the Soviet Empire into the abyss. All our Nation needed was a leader. And because of his visionary leadership, the Berlin Wall came crumbling down, democracy spread across Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union collapsed. Today millions of Europeans view President Reagan as their liberator, and our economy has been further helped along because of the "peace dividend."

President Reagan was known as the "Great Communicator." Sometimes this was used as a derisive term against him, as though the only reason ordinary Americans liked and trusted him was because the former actor had somehow pulled the wool over their eyes.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The American people saw an uncomplicated man, much like themselves,

who held the same traditional values as they did. They saw a man who personified class. They saw a man who led by example, a man who never took off his jacket in the Oval Office because he held The People's sacred trust in such high esteem. Most important of all, they saw a man who trusted them to run their own lives.

No wonder the American people love Ronald Reagan. No wonder we elected him twice by overwhelming margins. He proved to everyone, at home and abroad, that "Government is not the solution—Government is the problem." He gave us hope for the future. He gave us hope for our country. He gave us hope in ourselves.

He told us that it was "morning in America" again and that our great Nation is a "shining city on the hill."

Although President Reagan's voice has been silenced by Alzheimer's, we can still hear the echoes of freedom ringing from his writings and his presidency.

We can still pay homage to his deeds by recognizing the woman behind the man, his wife, Nancy. Mrs. Reagan, we salute you.

Today we honor the life and leadership of Ronald Wilson Reagan. Without his shining example, our country, and our world, would be a much darker place.

Happy Birthday Mr. President!

ONLINE ACCESS TO CONGRESSIONAL DOCUMENTS

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I am pleased to join today with Senator McCAIN to introduce a Senate resolution to provide Internet Access to important Congressional documents.

Our bipartisan resolution makes certain Congressional Research Service products, lobbyist disclosure reports and Senate gift disclosure reports available over the Internet to the American people.

The Congressional Research Service, CRS, has a well-known reputation for producing high-quality reports and information briefs that are unbiased, concise, and accurate. The taxpayers of this country, who pay \$67 million a year to fund the CRS, deserve speedy access to these public resources and have a right to see that their money is being spent well.

The goal of our legislation is to allow every citizen the same access to the wealth of CRS information as a Member of Congress enjoys today. CRS performs invaluable research and produces first-rate reports on hundreds of topics. American taxpayers have every right to direct access to these wonderful resources.

Online CRS reports will serve an important role in informing the public. Members of the public will be able to read these CRS products and receive a concise, accurate summary of the issues before the Congress. As elected representatives, we should do what we can to promote an informed, educated

public. The educated voter is best able to make decisions and petition us to do the right things here in Congress.

Our legislation follows the model online CRS program in the House of Representatives and ensures that private CRS products will remain protected by giving the CRS Director the authority to hold back any products that are deemed confidential. Moreover, the Director may protect the identity of CRS researchers and any copyrighted material. We can do both—protect confidential material and empower our citizens through electronic access to invaluable CRS products.

In addition, the bipartisan resolution would provide public online access to lobbyist reports and gift disclosure forms. At present, these public records are available in the Senate Office of Public Records in Room 232 of the Hart Building. As a practical matter, these public records are accessible only to those inside the Beltway.

I applaud the Office of Public Records for recently making technological history in the Senate by providing for lobbying registrations through the Internet. The next step is to provide the completed lobbyist disclosure reports on the Internet for all Americans to see.

The Internet offers us a unique opportunity to allow the American people to have everyday access to this public information. Our bipartisan legislation would harness the power of the Information Age to allow average citizens to see these public records of the Senate in their official form, in context and without editorial comment. All Americans should have timely access to the information that we already have voted to give them.

And all of these reports are indeed "public" for those who can afford to hire a lawyer or lobbyist or who can afford to travel to Washington to come to the Office of Public Records in the Hart Building and read them. That is not very public. That does not do very much for the average voter in Vermont or the rest of this country outside of easy reach of Washington. That does not meet the spirit in which we voted to make these materials public, when we voted "disclosure" laws.

We can do better, and this resolution does better. Any citizen in any corner of this country with access to a computer at home or the office or at the public library will be able to get on the Internet and get these important Congressional documents under our resolution. It allows individual citizens to check the facts, to make comparisons, and to make up their own minds.

I commend the Senior Senator from Arizona for his leadership on opening public access to Congressional documents. I share his desire for the American people to have electronic access to many more Congressional resources. I look forward to working with him in the days to let the information age open up the halls of Congress to all our citizens.