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A Birch Society Founder Quits; Pressure By Welch Is Reported

*Prof. Oliver's Views Believed
Too Extremely Rightist to
Suit Society's Leader*

By THOMAS BUCKLEY

One founder of the John Birch Society announced his resignation yesterday in a dispute that is understood to involve both his asserted anti-Semitism and growing efforts to reduce the authority of Robert H. W. Welch Jr., the society's president.

The founder who resigned is Prof. Revilo P. Oliver of the University of Illinois. He was one of the 11 men summoned by Mr. Welch to the society's organizational meeting in an Indianapolis motel in 1958. He was also a member of the society's 25-member council and an associate editor and frequent contributor to its monthly magazine, American Opinion.

"The Mr. Welch who founded the society was a man in whom I had great confidence," Professor Oliver said in a statement. "Since then, however, changes which have taken place internally, in the organization and in its policies leave me no alternative but to disassociate myself from it."

Professor Oliver declined to discuss his differences with the society and denied that anti-Semitism had been an issue in his resignation. Mr. Welch had no comment at his headquarters in Belmont, Mass.

Welch Called Liberator

However, it was learned on excellent authority that a speech delivered by Professor Oliver at the New England Rally for God, Family and Country in Boston on July 2 precipitated the break and that the impetus had come from Mr. Welch.

In his address, Professor Oliver, a teacher of Greek and Latin, raised the specter of a Jewish conspiracy as being responsible for the moral decay of western man, whom he regards as the flower of civilization.

However, he said that conspiracies, either of Jews, Bolsheviks or the Illuminati (an anticlerical sect founded in 1776), did not provide the whole answer.

Doubts Nazis' Guilt

"If only by some miracle all the Bolsheviks, or all the Illuminati, or all Jews were vaporized at dawn tomorrow, we should have nothing more to worry about," he said, hypothetically. "The trouble with that beatific vision, of course, is that every educated man knows it just can't be so."



Associated Press

Prof. Revilo P. Oliver

Professor Oliver, whose views are regarded as extreme even among the ultra-conservative members of the Birch Society, has on other occasions questioned the authenticity of reports that large numbers of Jews had perished in Nazi concentration camps.

In testifying at length before the Warren Commission investigating the assassination of President Kennedy, he suggested that the President had been slain on orders from Moscow because he had been planning "to turn American."

In a similar vein, Professor Oliver, who is 55 years old, wrote in American Opinion that President Kennedy had "collaborated" with Premier Khrushchev in a sham embargo of Cuba and that the President's memory "will be cherished with distaste."

The article, titled "Marxism in Dallas," was described by Mr. Welch as "superb commentary." It led, however, to demands for Professor Oliver's ouster from the university, but his right to be "offensive" was upheld both by a faculty committee and the trustees.

It was also learned that in a final conference last Thursday that preceded the break, Mr. Welch rejected Professor Oliver's proposal that he broaden the society's executive echelon.

This idea is known to be shared by other members of the council, who feel that the society's program is out of touch with reality. The Birch Society is ruled without appeal by Mr. Welch and no machinery exists for his replacement without his consent.