

Birchers And the Enemy Inside

By Lars-Erik Nelson
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IMAGINE A world in which Edward M. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon are political allies, in which David Rockefeller dismisses Nikita S. Khrushchev as Soviet Prime Minister, in which Leonid Brezhnev lives in fear of secret agents sent out by the British bankers who employ him, in which Henry Kissinger is dispatched on secret missions to Peking by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands.

This is the real world to members of the John Birch Society, the right-wing semi-secret national organization started 15 years ago by Robert Welch, a retired candy manufacturer.

The Birch Society today no longer evokes the alarm it once did among liberals. "They have been contained. They're not going to be the great big mass movement as we feared in the early 1960s," Jerome Bakst, research director of the Bnai Brith Anti-Defamation League, says.

Instead of a mass membership organization, the Society — still controlled by the crusty, 73-year-old Welch from his headquarters in Belmont, Mass. — has become an educational and publishing institution, issuing mass editions of inexpensive paperbacks, pamphlets, bumper stickers and lapel buttons urging that the United States withdraw from the United Nations and an end to the "collectivization" of American life.

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BUT OVER THE years, the Society's enemy has changed. Where once it was communism — "the international Red atheist conspiracy to capture the minds of you and your loved ones" — it is now more refined. The enemy is now known, to Birchers, to be "Insiders," powerful conspirators who include international bankers, diplomats, newspaper editors, the Rockefeller and the Kennedy clans, and the late Dwight D. Eisenhower, whom Welch once called "a dedicated conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy."

"President Nixon is carrying the ball for the conspiracy in this country,"

says John McManus, the Society's public relations director.

Elsewhere in the world Leonid Brezhnev and Mao Tse-tung are also tools of the Insiders, who control world events by insidious machinations, international money manipulations and secret meetings under the cover of monetary and political conferences.

The society's new theories of a total conspiracy, of which communism is only a part, are enunciated in "None Dare Call It Conspiracy," by Gary Allen and Larry Abraham, both Society members. The book was extensively promoted by the Birch Society and McManus says it is a fair presentation of the views now held by Society members.

"Communism is not run from Moscow or Peking, but is an arm of a bigger conspiracy run from London, New York and Paris," the book says.

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ALLEN AND Abraham are not certain whether the Rockefeller family are Communist agents or whether Communists are Rockefeller agents.

The chief international "Insiders" are the Bilderbergers, members of a group of leading political and financial figures that began meeting in 1954 at the Hotel Bilderberg in Oostbeek, the Netherlands. Chief among them, according to "None Dare Call It Conspiracy," is Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands.

He arrived in the United States in April 1971 to attend a Bilderberger meeting in Woodstock, Vermont, also attended by President Nixon's national security adviser, Henry Kissinger. "Shortly after the Woodstock meeting, two ominous and 'role-changing' events occurred: Henry Kissinger went to Peking and arranged for the acceptance of Red China as a member of the family of trading nations and an international monetary crisis developed, after which the dollar was devalued."

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BIRCHERS SEE the main domestic collection of Insiders as the Council of Foreign Relations, with headquarters in New York, a group of 1500 leading businessmen, lawyers, public officials and scholars. "The goal of the CFR is simply to abolish the United States with its constitutional guarantees of liberty," Allen and Abraham wrote.

Kissinger is a former CFR employee who is now the leading "Insider" in the government. Senator Edward Kennedy is a member and President Nixon is a former CFR member who still does the Council's bidding.

Despite the seeming bizarre nature of these views, McManus says "the situation has begun to develop where people are beginning to rely on us for solid opinion. People see that John Birch Society members are reasonable, conscientious, upstanding members of the community."