

Kennedy Death

Birchers Blame 'Red Pressure'

Lee Harvey Oswald, accused of killing President John F. Kennedy, was a "leftist" with Communist leanings, and the President's death could well have been a Communist plot, Western leaders of the John Birch Society said yesterday.

Former Congressman John Rousselot said he subscribed to the belief of the society's founder, Robert Welch, that such a plot could lie behind the slaying of the President.

Hugh Fine, San Jose coordinator for the society, said Oswald's "leftist" leanings were known — and "we are awaiting more information" to determine if a Communist plot existed.

For some reason, Fine said, derogatory phone calls were made to his office in San Jose after the President's death. An din Phoenix, Ariz., he said, shots were fired at an American Opinion library—

which distributes ultra-conservative literature.

Rousselot, the society's western states governor, had this statement:

"This terrible tragedy represents everything the John Birch Society has feared for our country and to which we have been so bitterly opposed.

"During the past several years, Communist pressures have increasingly made the assassination of heads of state a weapon of political action. Abdel Karim Kassem (Premier of Iraq), Rafael Trujillo (Dominican dictator), and Ngo Ding Diem (President of South Vietnam) are among recent examples.

"But we are both horrified and saddened to see that weapon now used in our own country.

"Ever since the John Birch Society was founded, and as made clear in all of its literature, our own increasing fight has been to create

among our fellow citizens enough understanding of the gathering crisis so that ballots not bullets would remain the means of deciding America's course and its future.

"Let's hope that more and more good patriots will join us in this great educational campaign before it is too late," Rousselot said.

Rousselot said all public meetings of the society had been canceled during the period of mourning. However, private chapter meetings in the Bay Area and elsewhere are being held as scheduled.