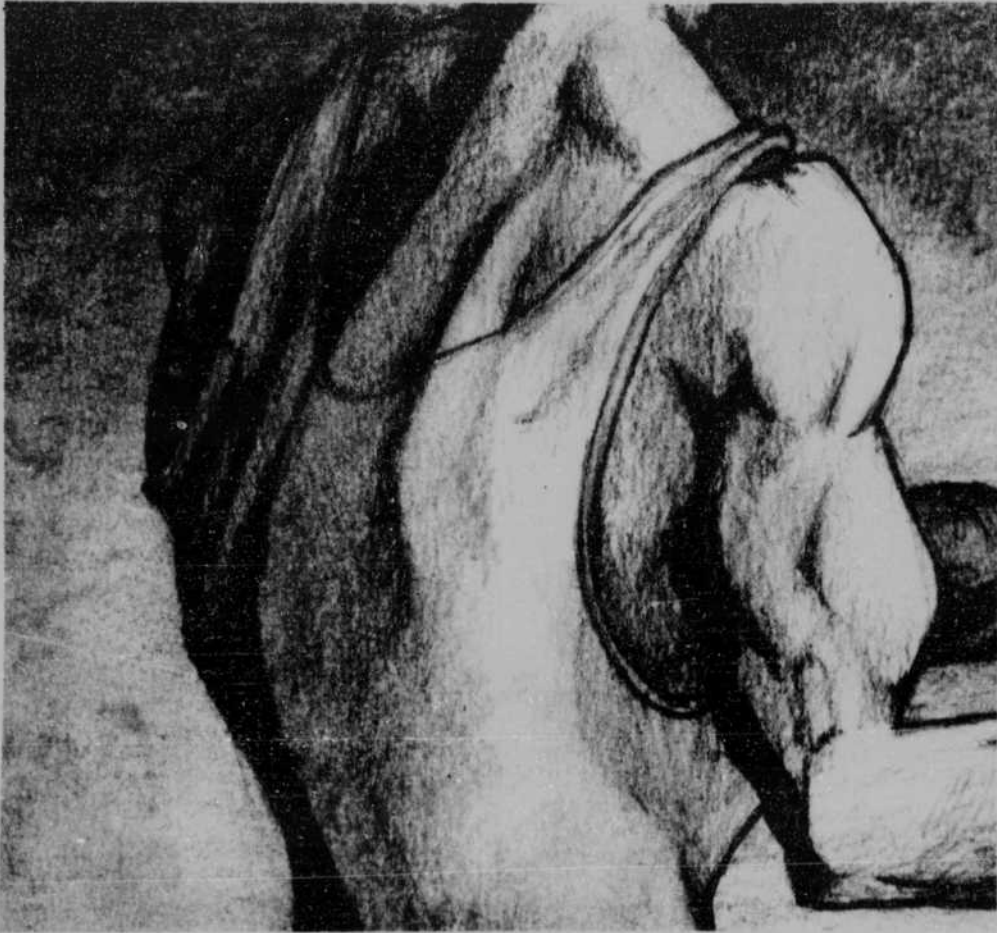


Earth Day doesn't impress Birch Society

Group believes problems caused by politics rather than pollution



Earth Day

Amidst the belated cries of "save our environment" now spewing forth from the mouths of politicians and government officials, the question must arise as to why the sudden interest in ecology. Did these individuals suddenly realize the perilous position of the world's natural resources? Were they convinced by the active protest of students and scientists? For that matter, why did the masses of America's amateur activists suddenly turn to ecology as their issue?

A part of the answer is obvious. The problem is great; it must be resolved now if life is to be liveable by the end of this century. But the birth of the ecology movement came out of the death of the civil rights movement and the dying anti-war movement. Oddly, it is an issue on which people of all ages agree and most are willing to work for. Probably because it is a "safe" movement.

Ecology, like civil rights, will not always be a "safe" movement. Soon it will run up against industry and institutions who will no longer deplore the awful conditions along with everyone else, but instead will talk of the cost of pollution. Just as the American power structure allowed the civil rights movement to go, only so far, American industry may allow the anti-pollution movement to go only to the point where its pocketbooks are jeopardized.

When you go to the Earth Day events today, learn about pollution and conservation, but think about cost also. Because that is where it's at. The American people seem convinced of the seriousness the pollution problem, but are they willing to pay to solve it?

Jim Pedersen



Earth."

The "tens of thousands of members" -- "we're not five, and we're not 5 million" -- of the Birch Society say environmental protesters actually represent the establishment.

John McManus, public relations director, said the "Eastern Establishment" has misled American society into believing in environmental problems that don't exist. The establishment, he said, is led by groups such as the New York-based Council on Foreign Relations, which publishes Foreign Affairs magazine.

"The politics of the movement are more important than the science," he said.

The establishment wants the government to spend money on the environment, McManus said, as part of a "left-wing agenda" to increase government control.

That conspiracy, he said, extends from grass-roots protesters to the highest levels of government.

"Some are well-meaning and misguided; some of them know exactly what they are doing," he said. "A lot of them are just enjoying the limelight."

As a result, he said, the environmental movement has become an agent of the conspirators, who want to create bigger government.

McManus said the radical agenda is nothing new.

"It's the same conspiracy that brought in communism in the Soviet Union," he said.

Whenever the Eastern Bloc attempts to change, communism there is financed by the American Eastern Establishment, he said.

And now, he said, those conspirators are using Earth Day and environmentalism to impose similar governmental controls in the United States and worldwide. Cleaning up the environment will cost taxpayers money -- eventually 2.59 percent of the U.S. gross national product, according to the Birch Society.

McManus said U.S. politicians and the media have been convinced that that cost, and the "totalitarian control" it would usher in, is necessary.

Phony information, he said, is distributed about depletion of the ozone layer, overpopulation, the greenhouse effect, acid rain and smog by "pseudo-scientists" and politicians.

"Most people don't even know there is another side," he said.

McManus said the Birch Society, based in Appleton, Wis., relies on "the testimony of competent scientists" to "wake the town and tell the people" about the other side.

Those scientists say fears of global warming are unfounded, based on statistics of the last century. And a Birch Society press release quotes Soviet climatologist Mikhail Budyko, saying global warming might create an "Eden" by producing "much higher rates of moisture everywhere."

The press release said depletion of the ozone layer could be caused by chlorine gas from volcanoes and from salt in ocean spray

The John Birch Society wanted to bury Earth Day.

Theories of global warming, the society said, "may be nothing more than hot air," and that Earth Day is "the greatest sham on

-- not by chlorofluorocarbons, as environmentalists claim. The amount of ozone in the atmosphere changes by only two-tenths of 1 percent every year, the press release said, and the current reduction is only making up for increases in ozone during the 1960s.

Deforestation is the result of agricultural expansion caused by the struggle to survive of "individuals impoverished by the collectivist economic policies of their governments," the Birch Society said.

"Less government and more free enterprise, resulting in job diversification and rising standards of living, would greatly reduce the need to ravish the rain forests."

Fears of overpopulation, the society said, are overblown. Socialist economies, not overcrowding, cause shortages of food, the press release said.

But McManus does admit that environmental problems do exist.

"I've been in Los Angeles, and I've certainly had my eyes smarting from the smog," he said.

But McManus said he's convinced the air was bad in Los Angeles before there were any people there. That's because moist air from the Pacific Ocean gets trapped along the California coast, he said, causing fog.

It would be easy to reduce pollution in areas like Los Angeles, he said, by reducing the amount of people who live there.

That's easier said than done, he said. City-dwellers can get so many "goodies" and "welfare handouts" from the government that most people think it's worth it to stay.

Acidity in lakes is another problem McManus said he's convinced is for real. But no one has proposed a realistic explanation for the increase in acidity, he said.

"The biggest bugaboo," he said, is that the acidity is caused by cars burning fossil fuels.

In fact, the society said, the automobile is an improvement over what it replaces -- the horse.

The press release includes statements attributed to author Rousas Rushdoony, who said horse manure was worse to the environment than car emissions:

"In the winter or spring, the manure turned to slush, and it meant walking (and slipping and falling) into liquefied manure in bad weather."

In summer, the problem was just as bad.

The "sun dried the manure, and the carriage and wagon wheels soon turned it into a floating dust to be breathed by all, and to coat clothing and furniture with a foul covering," according to Rushdoony.

McManus proposes his own way of controlling pollution.

"This country should go nuclear," he said. "It's the best invention since the beginning of time."

Americans have been scared into believing that nuclear power is dangerous, McManus said, by the same conspirators who support communism and Earth Day.

All the waste from enough nuclear energy to power the United States for a decade, McManus said, could be buried in an area the size of a football field.

And disposal, at least of low-level radioactive waste, is no problem either, he said.

"Where did it come from in the first place? The Earth."

--Eric Pfanner