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The Establishment at Play

When the editors of the appropriately named Spy magazine sent reporter Philip Weiss to attend that super-secret Establishment male jamboree--the Bohemian Grove--they knew his chances of getting in were slim.

Not only did Weiss manage to sneak into these sinister follies in the Northern California redwoods, he stayed for a full two-and-a-half days, despite Secret Service and other security.

With him were such worthies as David Rockefeller, Henry Kissinger, Ronald Reagan, Nicholas Brady, Dwayne Andreas, George Schultz, Walter Cronkite, Alexander Haig, Bill Buckley, Malcolm Forbes, Frank Borman, A.W. Clausen, and many other Insider bigwigs from business, banking, government, and the media. Members Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and James Baker were apparently not there this year, but foreign Trilateralist leaders were, as usual. This year French Prime Minister Michel Rocard visited, and an elaborate ruse was undertaken in Paris to keep his presence a secret. It is no wonder that the Christian Science Monitor calls the Bohemian Grove "the West's hidden summit."

The annual Grove encampment began with the pagan "Cremation of Care" ceremony, with Druid priests dressed in tight, multi-colored robes. Even stranger, says Weiss, "vaguely homosexual undertones suffused this spectacle, as they do much of the ritualized life in the Grove."

Indeed, there's sex at the Grove: female prostitutes outside the camp (and inside, in past years, we're told) and--says Weiss--a young man on his own gets "frequent invitations from gay Bohemians."

The Bohemian Club was founded in the 19th century in San Francisco, where its city headquarters still stands. At first it was a rollicking, genuinely Bohemian place, but by the 1920s--when Herbert Hoover joined--it was a West Coast power-elite symposium. Today, it represents the entire power-elite, with a

bias towards the Eastern Establishment despite its California roots. The initiation fee is \$10,000, and if someone is not part of the corporate, banking, or governmental elite, the waiting list is more than 30 years long!

Although the city club is ritzy, it is the annual encampment in a private redwood forest that is the focus of Insider interest. A former president of the club complained that Americans saw the secret enclave as "a gathering and decision-making place for national and international power-brokers." That is, of course, an excellent one-sentence description.

On the middle weekend, Kissinger offended many of his fellow Bohemians. Marching into the clearing where the payphones are, he announced to the air, "I have two phone calls to make," where upon he cut into the long line of men waiting. "I'll be goddamned!" said the man who would have been next in line as Kissinger called his wife and someone else he called "Sunshine."

Two aspects of the Grove surprised Weiss: the immense amount of drinking--members are soused from morning to night, a favorite drink being "Nembutol": hot chocolate and 151 proof rum--and the cherished Bohemian tradition of urinating whenever and wherever a member felt like it. Signs saying "No pee pee here" were routinely disobeyed, and much Bohemian humor centers on this custom.

When Weiss met Reagan, he asked him if an old story was true. At the 1967 encampment, had it been arranged that he, the new governor, would not directly challenge Nixon for the Republican nomination in 1968? "Yes, yes, that's true," [Reagan] replied in the famous furry voice. "Nothing better illustrates the Grove's power.

In his speech to fellow Bohemians, Reagan advocated the old Trilateralist agenda item of four-year terms for Congressmen (my preference is one-year terms, as some of the Founding Fathers advocated) and more government regulation of the media, to keep articles like Weiss's out of print. And, in fact, when a Time reporter and photographer tried to do the same sort of story in 1982, it was spiked by Time's Trilateral publisher. It just was not news fit to print by any Establishment publication.

A Hero Honors Heroes

Marine hero Pete McCloskey, my former colleague in the House, has always been a man of courage. The most recent example was his dedication of a new public library in Grafton, Wisconsin.

Courage to dedicate a library? Yes, because of a massive and vituperative campaign against the private donors who raised more than a million dollars for the town's new library and then named it in honor of the U.S.S. Liberty. This is the first memorial to the 34 dead and 171 wounded American sailors from the

Liberty, which was deliberately assaulted by Israeli torpedo, rocket, and machine gun fire in 1967 to disguise Israel's sneak attack on Syria. The U.S. flag was flying, and previous Israeli reconnaissance flights had identified the ship as American. Not one of the survivors, not one U.S. official (at least when talking off the record), doubts the attack was deliberate. It went on for hours, and included strafing of wounded sailors in a lifeboat. But the sailors and their ship might have fallen off the edge of the earth, for all the attention they got. It was down the memory hole.

As Pete noted in his speech, there was no official Naval presence at the unveiling of the memorial plaque, not even a message of condolence. Yet it was a beautiful and patriotic ceremony, ending with a soft rendition of "My Country 'Tis of Thee" as the names of the "34 dead young Americans were slowly read. There were few dry eyes among the surviving Liberty crew members and several hundred Grafton citizens," says Pete.

"The Milwaukee Journal, once a great crusading newspaper, had written scathing editorials and news articles for more than a year" attacking the library name, notes Pete. It was, said the paper, "controversial and might evoke anti-Semitic feeling." If so, and I think it highly unlikely, those who have made the mildest criticism of the Israeli government equivalent to anti-Semitism have only themselves to blame. Not everyone went so far. "Some Jewish groups, said the paper, called Grafton "insensitive"--dread crime of the 1980s--for using their library to honor a U.S. Naval ship and her dead and wounded.

As two buses bearing Liberty survivors and their families left the library parking lot, said Pete, one man leaned out, saluted the American flag flying over the new building, and said: "Thank you, Grafton."

"What a nation had declined to do, a small town had done, with patriotism, warmth, and class," added Pete McCloskey. I would say the same of him.

Sex on George Bush's Locker

Congressman Barney Frank (D-MA) said that if he were drummed out of the House, he would take many others with him, including five Republicans he says are closet homosexuals.

This threat apparently led the House ethics committee to try to call off further inquiries into the sex lives of Congressmen, and in early October, the Washington Post said there would be no more talk of sex in Congress. By the end of the month, however, the Washington Times was reporting that "senior Democratic officials" say the Congressional gym has become a hotbed of homosexual activity, presumably by Republicans.

Any talk about the gym hurts. My former colleagues don't