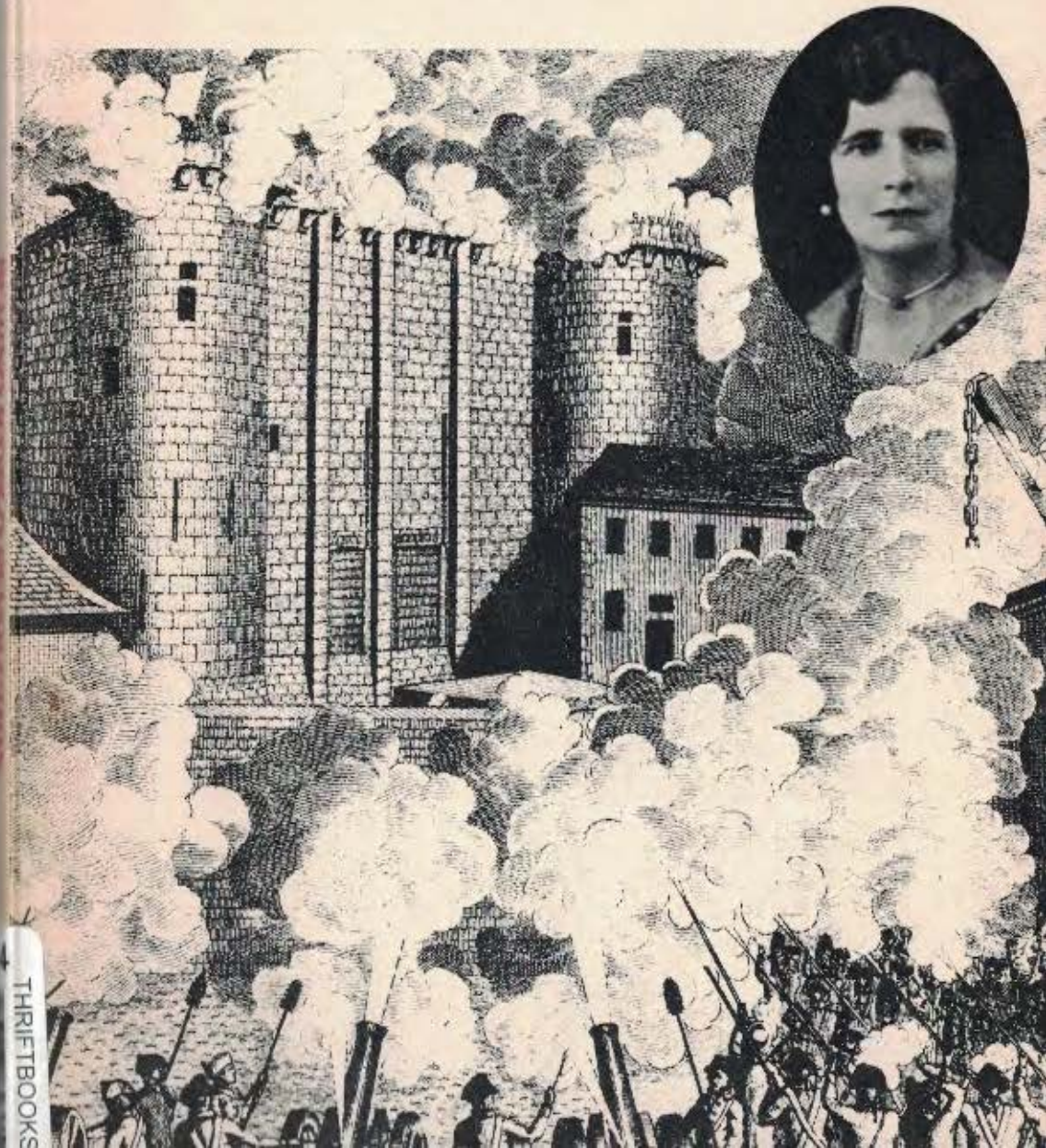


BEHIND by Richard Gilman
WORLD REVOLUTION

The Strange Career of Nesta H. Webster



THRIFTBOOKS

BEHIND *WORLD REVOLUTION*
THE STRANGE CAREER OF NESTA H. WEBSTER
VOL. 1

By

Richard M. Gilman

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For Michelle, David, Jonathan and Daniel

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PREFACE

As a student of conspiracy theory and a free-lance writer involved in researching articles on the theme of conspiracy, I had been aware of Mrs. Webster's work for several years prior to writing this book. Since first encountering a number of her better-known conspiracy theory books in the spring of 1974, I have felt they are seriously flawed, exert a baleful influence on most of those who read them and are in need of being refuted in terms that would be meaningful to those of far-right political persuasions.

The specific stimulus for the creation of this book was the appearance of a provocative article entitled "The State of Research Concerning Power Elites" in the Summer of 1977 issue of *Conspiracy Digest*; a journal devoted to revisionist history and conspiracy theory. The author, Dr. Anthony C. Sutton, a distinguished economic historian, chastised proponents of the conspiracy theory of history for their reliance on the largely undocumented, speculative efforts of amateur historians who have little regard for scientific research techniques. Among the authors cited for failing to utilize scientific research methods was Mrs. Nesta Webster.

Concerning her work, Dr. Sutton said: "Nesta Webster has assumed an answer; consequently there is no impetus to look for evidence. Energy is spent on propagandising the 'answer' rather than investigation of facts. . . Nesta Webster has to be rejected because it is difficult to separate fact from fiction (in her work)."

As I shared many of Dr. Sutton's views about conspiracy theory literature I was pleased to see serious objections raised about Nesta Webster's work and hoped that the opinion of someone as highly esteemed in Conservative political circles would cause right-wing conspiracy theorists to re-examine Mrs. Webster's work.

To my surprise, Dr. Sutton's article drew a forceful rejoinder from William H. McIlhany II, the John Birch Society's most sophisticated and talented writer and researcher.

In addition to criticizing Sutton's "arbitrary distinction" between "amateur" and "professional" conspiracy theory research, McIlhany gave a spirited defense of what he deems to be Mrs. Webster's "high standards of research and scholarship," claiming to, "feel capable of defending Nesta Webster's reputation as a meticulous and exhaustive scholar. . ."

As I was aware of some of the inconsistencies and glaring omissions which characterize much of Mrs. Webster's work at the time I read McIlhany's "Letter to the Editor" in *Conspiracy Digest*, it seemed incongruous to me that so capable a scholar could fail to realize these books contain serious flaws, are unreliable and should not be used as the foundation for the elaborate conspiracy theory which he and others are attempting to build. After perceiving a similar attitude on the part of other conservative researchers whom I thought should know better, I began to seriously investigate Mrs. Webster's background.

The Research Problem

A consultation of the chronological table in Appendix A will show that Mrs. Webster published her first conspiracy theory work in 1916 when she was 40 years of age. Unfortunately, the published portion of her autobiography, *Spacious Days*, ends only three years later with an account of the critics' reception of her second work of revisionist history, *The French Revolution -- A Study in Democracy* and therefore reveals nothing about the twenty-nine year period (1920-1949) which encompassed over ninety per cent of her literary career. During these years she published seven works of revisionist history, a pseudonymous novel, contributed numerous articles to the *Morning Post* and *The Patriot*, a crucial, far-right wing, political journal of the inter-war period, and was a member of the British Fascists (1924-1927).

Background information about these events was contained in the manuscript of the second half of Mrs. Webster's autobiography, *Crowded Hours*. Unfortunately, this manuscript was stolen from the offices of the Britons Publishing Company in Devon, England by a mysterious American and therefore this crucial volume was never published.

This theft has transformed Mrs. Webster into a woman of mystery to students of conspiracy theory. The vast majority of British conspiracy theorists possess only rudimentary knowledge about her career and with the exception of a handful of individuals, American researchers are completely in the dark.

Such personal papers as are known to exist are in the custody of Mr. Neil Forsand of London, England a joint trustee -- along with Mr. Timothy Tindal Robertson -- of the Britons Library. According to Mr. Forsand these papers consist only of the notes which Mrs. Webster took while researching *The French Revolution*.

A major difficulty facing the researcher seeking to document Mrs. Webster's literary career is the sheer volume of her writings (her books alone total over three thousand pages). In the case of an investigator living outside the British Isles there is the additional problem of gaining access to these writings. While pirate editions of her major books abound, even major American university libraries usually stock only a few of the legitimate Constable, Boswell and Dutton editions of these books.

While the very considerable volume and simultaneous scarcity of Mrs. Webster's own works poses a significant problem of itself, the paucity of secondary sources, such as contemporaneous newspapers and journals is an additional obstacle. *The Patriot*, a key right-wing political journal, containing not only Mrs. Webster's articles but also a wealth of vital information about the political circles in which she moved is to be found, according to the National Union List of Serials, in only one public library in the United States; only one of these, the main branch of the New York City Library, has a complete set. Although the *Morning Post* was one of Britain's major newspapers during the first three decades of this century, microfilms of this important daily are not available from the 1920s, and the newspaper itself is to

be found only in The Library of Congress. After acquiring these materials the researcher still faces the prohibitively expensive and inordinately time-consuming task of acquiring access to the hundreds of source materials cited by Mrs. Webster in her books. Many of these publications, which date from the 18th and 19th centuries, are now exceedingly rare.

It is because of these obstacles that I have chosen to divide this study into two parts and defer till a later date a systematic analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of Mrs. Webster's theories.

This volume, then, is essentially a partial biography. Indeed, one of the functions of this first volume is to provide a framework around which a full-length biography of the second half of Mrs. Webster's life may be written. Another function of this book is to provide American researchers with a feel for the cultural milieu in which Mrs. Webster's books were written and the kinds of social, economic, political and religious perspectives she brought to her work. With this knowledge to help guide them, thoughtful readers are likely to gain a much fuller understanding of Mrs. Webster's life work and an insight into the world of right-wing conspiracy theory.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I'm indebted to Steve Eng of Nashville, Tennessee for his encouragement, vital suggestions and the loan of his private collection of documents relating to Mrs. Webster. It is unlikely that this book would have been completed without his assistance.

Special thanks are also due to Barbara Steadman for photo-copying materials in the Library of Congress, Roger York for his research on my behalf in numerous British libraries, Susan Fine for editing the manuscript and Janet Cooper for typing it.

Thanks are also due to the staffs of the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library of the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, the Klau Library of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and the British Library.

CHAPTER ONE

"She taught every one of us" -- The Influence of Nesta Weber's Ideas

For nearly fifty years, the ideas expressed in the political writings of Mrs. Nesta H. Webster have played a crucial -- if not dominant -- role in the shaping of the right-wing conspiracy theories in the English speaking world.

In her native Britain, her theories found their way into the writings of such influential political figures as Winston Churchill,¹ who used Mrs. Webster's data to bolster his belief in the existence of an international Jewish conspiracy; Lord Sydenham of Combe; Henry Hamilton Beamish, founder of The Britons Publishing Society; the Duke of Northumberland; A.K. Chesterton, a former lieutenant of Sir Oswald Mosley, head of the League of Empire Loyalists (1953-1966) and the neo-fascist National Front (1966-1970) and Arnold Leese, founder of the Imperial Fascist League.

Currently, interest in Nesta Webster's writings is being revived in Britain as a result of the political activities of the ultra-right-wing National Front. Her *World Revolution* and *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* are continually recommended in this organization's publications:

The former is described in National Front book lists as 'perhaps the best ever documented

history of the political left and its conspiratorial origins,' and the latter as 'the standard authority on the most important secret societies undermining civilizations and Christianity in the last 2000 years.'²

In America Mrs. Webster's early conspiracy theory books received favorable reviews in such influential newspapers as the *Chicago Tribune*, *New York Herald Tribune* and the *Boston Evening Transcript* (including one by Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr).³ Presumably, this along with the endorsement of her ideas by Winston Churchill aided materially in building a favorable reputation for her theories amongst some American anti-communists.

During the teens and '20s Mrs. Webster's most important American publisher was the E.P. Dutton & Co. of New York City. In addition to publishing her first novel, a non-political work about London society called *The Sheep Track* (1914), this company produced several editions each of *The Chevalier de Boufflers* and *The French Revolution* and one edition of *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*.⁴

During the '30s she achieved considerable recognition in America and Britain through the publication of the two-volume set about the lives of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. The American editions of these works, published by G.P. Putnam's Sons, were very popular and the first volume of the set, *Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette Before the Revolution*, was recommended by the Book-of-the-Month Club. However, this success was tainted through the distribution of her anti-Semitic books and pamphlets by American neo-Nazi groups during the late '30s and the war years. In fact, one of her titles

The Socialist Network, was recommended by the English language newsletter of the *Welt Dienst* (The World Service), Nazi Germany's semi-official news agency for the dissemination of overseas propaganda.⁵

The esteem in which Mrs. Webster and her ideas were held by World War II era American anti-Semitic conspiracy theorists is underscored by the frequent references to her in American anti-Semitism as a "famous historian," her inclusion in the list of "Super-Patriots" to whom Elizabeth Dilling dedicated her highly influential anti-Semitic work, *The Red Network*, and the account of an interview with one Carl Mote, an American ultra-rightist, appearing in John Roy Carlson's classic study of American neo-Nazi sympathizers: *Under Cover*.

Carl Mote was an attorney and President of the Northern Indiana Telephone Company. Despite his intelligence, considerable education and an affable personality he was beguiled by the siren song of the neo-Nazis apologists. Early in 1941 he contributed three articles to *Roll Call*, the publication of the Knights of the Silver Shirts, Carlson interviewed Mote in Indianapolis during the summer of 1942:

Mote had the highest regard for the dean of British Fascists (sic), Nesta Webster, whose books were distributed in America by Snow, William Kullgren, Deatherage, Stahrenberg.

'She taught every one of us,' Mote said with fine candor.⁶

Interestingly, William Dudley Pelley, Mote's mentor and Commander of the Knights of the Silver Shirts cited

Mrs. Webster as an authority in his testimony before the House Un-American Activities Committee.⁷

America's entry into the Second World War and a crack down on the activities of pro-Axis sympathizers late in 1942 by the Justice Department and the FBI greatly curtailed the dissemination of radical-right literature in the U.S. for several years. And post war disclosures of the extent of Nazi atrocities made Mrs. Webster's brand of anti-Semitic conspiracy theory unthinkable for all but a tiny minority in America and Britain.

By the early 1950's nearly all of her books were out of print and probably would by this date have only a marginal impact on American, right-wing, conspiracy theorists if they had not received the endorsement of Robert Welch and the John Birch Society.⁸ Interestingly, it was the controversial Dr. Revilo P. Oliver who introduced Mrs. Webster's major conspiracy theory books to the Birch rank and file through a book review appearing in the January issue of *American Opinion*, A John Birch Society affiliated publication.

Though Dr. Oliver's book review refers to a "photographic reprint"⁹ of *World Revolution* produced by the Owen Publishing Company of Waco, Texas the February 1965 issue of *American Opinion* contains an advertisement for an edition of *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* produced by Omni Publications of Hawthorne, California. Subsequently, this firm, operating in conjunction with the Christian Book Club of America, became

the major supplier of Webster's books for the John Birch Society-affiliated chain of American Opinion Book Stores. Since 1969 several of Mrs. Webster's best known titles have been carried by many of these book stores.¹⁰

Since the mid-1970s Gordon Press of New York City has published hardbound editions of several of Mrs. Webster's titles including *World Revolution*, *Surrender of an Empire*, *Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette before the Revolution* and *Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette during the Revolution*. Since all of these titles now sell for in excess of fifty dollars, it is assumed they have not had wide circulation.

As of this writing such titles as *The French Revolution*, *World Revolution* and *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* are being sold by dozens of far-right-wing dealers in the U.S. including Angriff Press of Hollywood, California; Patriotic Action Services of Columbia, South Carolina; Emissary Publications of South Pasadena, California; Liberty Library of Washington, D.C.; a number of American Opinion Book Stores and Sons of Liberty of Metairie, Louisiana. This last named group sells a pamphlet entitled "Germany and England" which is a reprint of a 1939 Boswell publication based on seven articles Mrs. Webster wrote in *The Patriot* late in 1938.

Despite the profound impact that Mrs. Webster's theories have had and continue to have on the writings of conspiracy theorists and the minds of millions of

individuals who subscribe to these theories no book length study of either Mrs. Webster's life or literary career has been published.

Such literature as does exist is in the form of book reviews and short articles, found primarily in British publications not easily accessible to most American readers and very often intensely partisan: being written either by those who subscribe to most of the basic concepts embodied in right-wing, Anglo-American conspiracy theory or by individuals linked to the academic community who perceive the belief in conspiracy theories to be evidence of a pathological state of mind and summarily dismiss exponents of "the conspiracy theory of history" as "fear mongering psychotics" suffering from "obsession" or "paranoid delusions."¹¹

Since the academic community refuses to acknowledge the core of truth found in Mrs. Webster's books (which has, of course, greatly contributed to their viability over the years) and generally views such writings as solely the product of deranged minds it is readily understandable why no one from that community has apparently felt it worthwhile to analyze Mrs. Webster's writings in terms that would be meaningful to those of far-right-wing political persuasions.

Ironically, by using the humanistic jargon of modern psychology and sociology to dismiss such theories out of hand, they have actually enhanced the credibility of Mrs. Webster's views in the eyes of the traditionalist

Christian believers who comprise much of the far-right-wing. Substantive criticisms are often avoided by sociologists and historians in their attacks on the Illuminati conspiracy theory of history.¹² Consequently, these scholars often create the impression in the minds of right-wingers that the academic world cannot and will not face up to the "real issues" set forth in books like *World Revolution* and *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*. Thus, many in the right-wing assume that the academics are either paid dupes of the Power Elite or even worse, conscious conspirators seeking to suppress the truth.

This ongoing blind hostility and derision from the academic world enhances the right-winger's belief in the power of "the Conspiracy" to silence criticism. It also helps induce a sort of "seige mentality" among many conspiracy theory devotees, causing them to cling desperately and uncritically to "the truths" that are revealed in their conspiracy theory literature. Given the dynamics of this situation it is understandable that no critical analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of Mrs. Webster's views have been forthcoming from right-wing conspiracy theorists in either America or the countries of the British Commonwealth.

There are other reasons for the uncritical acceptance of Webster's work by far-right wingers. One of these is certainly her insidious anti-Semitism. Indeed, Mrs. Webster should probably be rated as one of the most

NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE

sophisticated and eloquent anti-Semitic propagandists of the 20th Century. The special attraction that anti-Semitism has for conspiracy theorists -- of both the Right and the Left -- will be discussed in the second volume of this work.

My own approach to Mrs. Webster's work is an outgrowth of several years' study in the field of conspiracy theory. It is my observation that most of the conspiracy theories that are widely accepted by the far-right-wing in the English speaking world are a carefully woven fabric of truth and falsehood and surprisingly the creators of these theories draw much of their inspiration from socialist and/or anti-Christian sources. The analysis of Mrs. Webster's work (which will form the bulk of Volume II of this study) emphasizes Mrs. Webster's reliance on spurious socialist and occultist source materials.

¹Winston Churchill, "Zionism Versus Bolshevism -- A Struggle for the Soul of the Jewish People," *Illustrated Sunday Herald* (London), February 8, 1920, p. 5.

²Michael Billig, *The National Front -- A Social Psychological View* (London: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich, 1978), p. 157.

³Excerpts of two favorable reviews of *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* which appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* and *New York Herald Tribune* respectively are reproduced on the inside front cover of the Christian Book Club of America edition of *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*. For excerpts from three favorable reviews appearing in *The Boston Evening Transcript* see "Nesta H. Webster -- *The Chevalier de Boufflers*," Margaret Jackson, ed., *The Book Review Digest -- Reviews of 1916 Books*, (White Plains, N.Y.: H.W. Wilson Co., 1917), p. 577; "Nesta H. Webster -- *The French Revolution*," Mary K. Reely, ed., *The Book Review Digest -- Reviews of 1919 Books*, (White Plains, N.Y.: H.W. Wilson Co., 1920), p. 549; "Nesta H. Webster -- *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*," Marion A. Knight and Mertice M. James, eds., *The Book Review Digest -- Reviews of 1925 Books*, New York: H.W. Wilson Co., 1926), p. 738.

⁴American Library Association and the Library of Congress, *The National Union Catalog -- Pre-1956 Imprints*, Vol. 652, pp. 543-545.

⁵Louis Bondy, *Racketeers of Hatred -- Julius Streicher and the Jew Baiters' International* (London: Newman Wolsey Ltd., 1946), p. 225.

⁶John Roy Carlson [Arevis Derounian] *Under Cover* (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1943), p. 405.

⁷U.S. Congress. House, Special Committee on Un-American Activities, *Hearings*, 76th Congress, 3rd sess. (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1940) XII, p. 7244.

⁸In November 1966, an article by Mr. Welch entitled "The Truth in Time" was published in *American Opinion*. This article (subsequently reproduced as a pamphlet and still sold in American Opinion Book Stores) recommends Mrs. Webster's *World Revolution* to those who wish to understand the activities of the 19th century secret society precursors of Communism.

Mr. Welch's most recent endorsement of Webster's work appears in a 1976 commentary on Antony Sutton's *Wall Street and the Rise of Hitler* entitled *And Some Obiter Dicta*. Therein he characterizes Mrs. Webster's works as "splendid sources."

⁹Revalo P. Oliver, "World Revolution," *American Opinion*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (January 1965), p. 46.

¹⁰The February 1966 issue of *Facts*, a publication of the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League mentions the appearance of Nesta Webster's books in five different American Opinion Book Stores. Subsequently, in early 1967, *World Revolution* and *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* were dropped from the list of books approved by the John Birch Society. *Facts* Vol. 18, No. 6 (November 1969) notes that early in 1969 *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* was listed among titles "available at American Opinion Book Stores throughout the United States."

Illustration 4 is a reproduction of an advertisement for Nesta Webster's books prepared by the American Opinion Wholesale Book Division of the General Birch Services Corporation in 1977 for distribution to its American Opinion Book Store outlets.

¹¹For examples of the psychopathology approach to the study of believers in conspiracy theories see Ira S. Rohter, "Social and Psychological Determinants of Radical Rightism," in *The American Right Wing*, ed. by Robert A. Schoenberger (New York: Holt, Rinehard & Winston,

Inc., 1969); T.W. Adorno et al, *The Authoritarian Personality* (New York: Harper & Row, 1950), and Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1965).

¹²The radical right belief that the Bavarian Illuminati and its descendants played a significant role in most European revolutionary movements of the late 18th and 19th centuries has been treated with at least as much scorn and abuse as the conspiracy theorists who espoused this theory. A significant departure from this long-standing academic attitude and a partial vindication of the spirit of these ultra-right views is found in James Billington's *Fire in the Minds of Men -- Origins of the Revolutionary Faith* (Basic Books, 1980). In this widely acclaimed, monumental study Professor Billington avers that "The revolutionary faith (of the late 18th and early 19th century European revolutionaries, parentheses added) was shaped not so much by the critical rationalism of the French Enlightenment (as is generally believed) as by the occultism and proto-romanticism of Germany."

Billington also portrays the Bavarian Illuminati as a role model for many of the revolutionaries of this period including Buonarroti.

This characterization of the influence of the Bavarian Illuminati and other occult-oriented organizations on revolutionary movements in Europe by a distinguished scholar with impeccable academic credentials has been seized upon by the John Birch Society as confirmation of its own Illuminati conspiracy theories. *Fire in the Minds of Men* has not only received lavish praise in the pages of the Birch Society's *American Opinion* magazine but also the book itself is now being sold by the Birch Society linked, nation-wide chain of American Opinion Book Stores.

Clearly, the publication of *Fire in the Minds of Men* and its popularity with both leading academic historians and the leadership of the John Birch Society are extraordinary developments.

One can only guess how much this book will transform the thinking of the Birchers and the rest of the radical-

right in the English-speaking world. But it is a safe assumption that this book will be a formidable weapon in the hands of radical rightists and that establishment academics will have to change their view of the far-right-wing and its conspiracy theory doctrines.

CHAPTER TWO

Spacious Days -- Half an Autobiography -- The Making of a Conspiracy Theorist

Nesta Bevan was the youngest daughter of Robert Cooper Lee Bevan, Director of Barclays Bank, and his second wife, Emma Frances, the daughter of Bishop Shuttleworth of Chichester. Nesta was born on the Bevan family estate, Trent Park, on August 14, 1876.

During the first five years of her life the Bevan family divided its time between three different residences: Fosbury Manor, in the Whilshire Downs during the late summer and early autumn; a house in London at 22 Princes Gate overlooking Hyde Park during the winter; and the remainder of the year at Trent Park, a beautiful country estate, which Nesta loved with "the strongest passion" of her childhood.

Indeed, from the description given in *Spacious Days*, it seems like it had nearly all the ingredients to qualify as a veritable paradise for a young child: "innumerable playmates" (her many nieces and nephews), virtually every kind of farm animal, a huge pond complete with ducks and swans, vast open spaces to gallop across on horseback (her father, a superb horseman, taught all the Bevan children to ride at age 4), a beautiful double avenue of lime trees, arranged in four rows, whose interlacing foliage "ran like green tunnels across the half mile of its course," a dense woods of towering beech trees with owls, rooks and cooing wood pigeons,

a kennel full of "friendly spaniels and retrievers" that were used as hunting dogs and 25 faithful and devoted servants who maintained the estate.

This idyllic picture was completed (or nearly so) by the warm, loving relationship which existed between Nesta and her aging father:

My father. . . loved to play with me. Coming at the end of so long a family it might have been expected that I should be 'born tired' like many children of old parents, but on the contrary I was endowed with bounding spirits which delighted Papa, who, I think looked upon me as a sort of happy afterthought.

Sometimes, though over seventy, he would come up to the nursery at Princes Gate on a winter evening after returning from the City, perhaps with a long cardboard box found to contain a ravishing doll, or he would have a glorious romp, letting us ride on his tall shoulders and rumple his beautiful thick white hair.¹

. . . all the tender memories of my family during my childhood were bound up with my father. . . So long as he lived I was happy.²

Robert Bevan and his second wife were both deeply religious and bequeathed to their children a strong interest in theological matters.

Nesta's eldest brother, Anthony Ashley, 17 years her senior, became Professor of Semitic Languages at Trinity College. He was regarded by his peers as one of the most learned Arabists in the world and contributed various scholarly articles to the *Journal of Theological Studies*.³

Edwyn, among the three youngest of the Bevan children, is fondly remembered in Nesta's reminiscences about Trent Park as having contributed so much to the happy childhoods of herself and her two younger sisters. He became a famous archaeologist and an authority on the interaction of the Jewish and Greek cultures during the Hellenistic period. He is best remembered for his books *Jerusalem under the High Priests* (1904), *Stoics and Skeptics* (1913) and *Christians in a World at War* (1940). He was also active in the London Society for the Study of Religion and the Society of Jews and Christians.⁴

As we shall see subsequently Nesta too was subject to strong religious feelings and in her adult life she became enamored of many of the ideas characteristic of the Eastern religions.

Robert Bevan was affiliated with the Church of England and while something of an ascetic -- he had given up hunting, dancing and the theater in order to more fully devote his life to the service of God -- "he retained his *joie de vivre*."

Unfortunately for Nesta and the rest of the Bevan family, her mother had renounced "the world" to a far greater degree. Shortly after her marriage to Robert Bevan in 1851 she joined an austere religious sect known as the Plymouth Brethren or Darbyites. This faith isolated her, "not only from society but even, to a certain extent, from family life."⁵ In fact, her compliance with the austere life style dictated by the tenets of Darbyism

(which Nesta learned to call "the gloomy creed") cast a dark shadow across Nesta's childhood and adolescence.

Describing her mother she writes:

A pure intellectual, all her energies were concentrated on her books, written in beautiful English, and on the exquisite drawings with which she illustrated her poems. In theory she loved children and especially to draw them. . . but she did not know how to hold a baby, and when one of us was put into her arms a nurse would stand by, ready to 'field' in case she let it drop. I can never remember her coming to kiss me good night in bed, or indeed, ever entering our night nursery at all, and only once do I remember seeing her in the day nursery, then merely to give an order to a nurse. . .⁶

. . . to her all forms of 'worldly' amusements were wrong, not only dances, theatres, race-meetings, card playing, and so on, but every form of social gaiety.⁷

The Early Years in France

For the first four years of Nesta's life, the Bevan family spent their winters in London in a large, grey, Victorian house at 22 Princes Gate overlooking Hyde Park. In describing these earliest years in London Mrs. Webster relates:

There as a small child during the winter I was allowed to indulge in quite a round of gaities, afternoon and evening parties at the houses of our friends and relations -- Bevans, Trittons, Campbells and so on -- at which I

remember seeing some of the bigger children actually dancing. This season at the age of four was to be my last. I was to have no further dissipations of the kind throughout my childhood.⁸

At age five an abrupt change took place in young Nesta's life. Her father, increasingly crippled by gout, was ordered by his physicians to spend winters out of England. Thereafter Cannes, on the French Riviera became the Bevan family's second home.

During the years which the Bevan family wintered in France young Nesta became increasingly subject to her mother's puritanical ideas about child rearing. In addition to the ban on dancing, the theater and any form of social gaiety, Nesta was forbidden to eat candy or even to read popular English novels. Fortunately, the presence at Cannes of her father and a beloved nurse nicknamed Tiny served to mitigate the austere regime dictated by her mother.

It was during the first years in France that Nesta's education began in earnest (though she notes she had begun to learn French at the age of 3). Clearly, she was a brilliant student. At the age of six she was given a prize for, "repeating all the provinces and departments of France by heart."

At age 8 she began to learn German from Fräulein Mass, one of many tutors hired by her mother to instruct Nesta and her young sisters. She soon became enamored of German poetry and literature (her mother's ban on

reading "frivolous stories" that were not "morally up-lifting" apparently was not enforced in Nesta's foreign language instruction) and was even permitted to learn German folk songs.

Restricted from so many of the recreations available to other children, Nesta found solace in intellectual pursuits. In addition to her formal lessons from her tutors she began to experiment at writing stories. Her first effort was at age seven.

At age 11 she wrote a lengthy story which was sent from Cannes to her nieces in London. This story so delighted them that at age 13 she embarked on editing her own monthly periodical, *Auntie's Monthly Magazine*, for which she and her sisters wrote humorous stories.

Though the family was amused by the stories in the magazine, a criticism from her half brother Frank that the stories should have "a more instructive and higher moral tone of teaching" brought the periodical to an end after six issues.

The monotony of Nesta's life in France was made bearable by the knowledge that in the spring the family would return to England and her beloved Trent Park:

How heavenly it was, after the heat and dust of the Riviera in April, to pass through green banks studded with primroses on our way from Dover to London and to see the lambs skipping about in English meadows! Then the arrival at Trent, the visits to our favourite animals, the flowers, the birds, the sound of the cuckoo

in the beechwoods -- no one can really understand what it is to love England who has not been obliged to spend weary months and years away from her.⁹

This love affair with Trent Park continued until Hesta was 14 years of age. In the summer of 1890 her father died and as her mother preferred to live year around on the Continent, the ownership of Trent Park passed to Nesta's half brother Frank.

"The Years of Exile"

As all of Nesta's brothers and sisters were now fully grown, she now found herself alone with her mother and a few remaining servants in an alien environment. Winters were still spent at Cannes and summers in Switzerland.

In a chapter aptly entitled "Years of Exile" she describes the years from age 14 to 18 as, "the saddest and loneliest of my whole life." Not content to be isolated from her relatives and the Bevan family's business associates by living in Cannes, Nesta's mother sought greater seclusion during the summer months at the Hotel Monfleury near Lake Geneva. As no entertainments ever took place there, Mrs. Bevan and Nesta spent portions of several summers at the Hotel Monfleury.

However, one year, in search of even greater isolation, Mrs. Bevan decided to try the Grand Hotel at Leysin Switzerland as its prospectus promised even greater solitude than the Hotel Monfleury. It turned out to be a sanatorium for consumptives and Nesta and her

mother were required to follow the rules prescribed for the patients. Fortunately for Nesta, her mother found this irksome and they left after 10 days.

For Nesta the winters in Cannes were even more frustrating than the summers in Switzerland. Living right in the midst of one of Europe's most popular resort areas and not being able to take part in any of the festivities was especially tormenting to her. Describing the feeling in *Spacious Days* Mrs. Webster compares it to "being taken to a ball and ordered to sit in a corner and knit."

Nesta especially longed to dance, and though never allowed to have dancing lessons she had been surreptitiously instructed by her tutor Fräulein Mass in polkas, waltzes and mazurkas. Of these experiences Nesta writes:

But I was never to be allowed to go to dance! Still unable to see beyond the present moment, still shut in by its iron pressure, that word 'never' rang like a knell in my ears. The sound of violins and guitars tuning up for dance music would drive me indoors, stopping my ears to shut out the seductive strains; lying in bed at night I could hear the carriages rolling along the road to the dances to which I had been invited and might not go, and I would hide my head under the bedclothes to shut out the seductive sounds.¹⁰

As in previous years, however, Nesta was able to find refuge from her oppressive home environment through intellectual pursuits. It was during this period that she completed her mastery of German and also learned Italian. She describes reading Dante with her tutor Signorina

Gabiano as "an unspeakable delight." Reading between the lines of *Spacious Days*, one wonders if young Nesta would have been able to retain her mental equilibrium if she had not been endowed with a superior intellect and this special love of learning.

Luckily, the tedium of life on the Continent was also broken by occasional visits from Nesta's brothers and sisters. During the summer months she was even allowed to make a few short visits to relatives in England.

Westfield College

The year 1894 was an important turning point in Nesta's life. Having importuned her mother for quite some time to allow her to attend college, her mother at last relented and Nesta was permitted to attend Westfield College (located in the environs of London about 4 miles north of the Bloomsbury district).

As the main part of the curriculum was devoted to Latin and mathematics in which she had almost no background, she was admitted on probation and in six months of intensive study she absorbed such a prodigious amount of knowledge that she passed the examination admitting her as a regular student working towards a B.A. degree.

Though the work load continued to be enormous throughout her two and one-half year stay at the college, she found a great deal of happiness at Westfield:

. . . the new-found independence of having one's own rooms, making one's own friends and going with them on walks and bicycle rides, of boiling

one's own kettle and even polishing one's own shoes seems to me quite delightful. Then there were tennis and hockey matches, cocoa parties, debates and dances which added a zest to life.¹¹

Some of the high points of her college career included contributing an article to the college newspaper and experiencing the elation of seeing her work in print for the first time; studying the work of Robert Browning; attending the lectures of a Miss Ann Richardson on ancient Greek history; having her belief in religion restored through attending gatherings at a Quaker meeting-house in London, and playing the leading role in a Greek play during her last term.

Ill-health brought on by overwork and poorly heated dormitory rooms ended Nesta's stay at Westfield College before she could acquire her degree. But the two years at Westfield taught her "how to work" and in summarizing the legacy of her college years she stated: "Euclid and logic in particular gave me the habit of concentration without which I could never have carried out the researches I was to make in later life."

Coming of Age

Nesta turned twenty-one in the same year she left Westfield College. Through an inheritance from her father she was now of independent means and in theory at least free to live her life as she pleased. But as is explained in some detail in *Spacious Days* the severe social restrictions placed upon women during the period greatly limited

both her employment options (she despised "an idle life") and her social life. Moreover, she still suffered from the baleful effects of her mother's anti-social attitudes. These attitudes appeared to affect Nesta and her female siblings greatly. Nesta writes:

. . . apart from theatre going, few amusements were to be had except as a debutante and like my sister I had never 'come out.'

I made indeed no kind of debut, since there was no-one to 'take me out.' My sisters had all continued on the lines laid down for them and abjured 'Society;' my sisters-in-law had daughters of their own to chaperone; and in those days the most rigid system of chaperonage prevailed; no girl could go about alone, still less with a young man, unless a married woman was in attendance. I remember the awful warning held up to me by my mother in the affair of Lady V., daughter of Lord R., who had actually gone for a drive alone with a young man in a dog-cart and meeting with an accident the cart having been upset in a ditch, the whole dreadful story came out and the young man had to marry Lady V. to save her reputation: and of course they lived unhappily ever after.¹²

Yet despite these social restrictions Nesta was able to experience quite a bit of happiness. She derived particular satisfaction from paying visits to her numerous relatives including her half-brother Frank, who had inherited the Bevan's Trent Park estate, and her sister Enid who lived at Norfolk in Hertfordshire.

A "Round the World Tour" and Marriage

In the summer of 1899, while visiting her friends the Cutlers in County Carlow, Ireland, Nesta made the acquaintance of two Irish women who wanted to visit Japan. As Nesta had long desired to see the Far East, the three soon quickly agreed on a round-the-world voyage.

Nesta's world tour began with an emotion-filled departure from Marseille in the winter of 1899. She felt "intoxicated with delight" now that her childhood dreams of world travel were about to be fulfilled. Her remarkable journey included visits to Egypt, India, Ceylon, Singapore, Hong Kong, China, Japan, Canada and the United States.

Naturally her acquisitive and brilliant mind acquired a vast amount of knowledge about the countries and peoples she came in contact with. It is likely that the experiences she had on this first encounter with Africa and Asia helped determine some of the political views later expressed in *The Patriot* and *Surrender of An Empire*.

She came away from this experience with largely negative views of the Egyptians and Chinese and a special fondness for the Ceylonese, Burmese, and Japanese.

In India she witnessed many aspects of the Hindu religion which she found repulsive. She mentions in particular the ghats at Benares along the Ganges where Hindus first bathed and then cremated their dead, and the sacrifice of goats in a temple devoted to the Hindu

god Ganesh in Calcutta. She contrasts these "sadder aspects of Hinduism" with the great serenity she experienced in a Jain temple at Ahmedabad and the "real grandeur" of seeing 5000 Moslems prostrating themselves in morning prayers at the Jumna Musjid Mosque in Delhi.

Within a few months of returning to England from her world tour, Nesta went to Wiesbaden to consult a doctor there about an ongoing problem with internal catarrh. At this time, just after the end of the Boer War, anti-English feeling was running quite high: "Cries of 'verflüchte Engländerin' pursued one down the street and if one attempted to board a train the women would spread themselves out saying, 'Da ist kein Platz, Fräulein.'"¹³ Through these experiences Nesta came to the conclusion that Britain would one day have to fight Germany.

The following year (1901) Nesta spent the winter in Egypt.

Restless and under her doctor's orders to seek a pleasanter clime in which to recover from an appendectomy, Nesta set out on another Asian cruise in December 1902; this time accompanied by her cousin Ulrica. Clearly, the most important place she visited on this trip was India, for it was there that she met her husband-to-be.

Arthur Templer Webster, the District Superintendent of Police of the United Provinces region, was 37 years of age when he met Nesta Bevan. The son of a well established Anglo-Indian family, he had spent nearly 20 years as

Superintendent of Police and had earned a reputation as a crack shot and superb horseman. More importantly, he had also earned a reputation for enforcing the laws fairly and compassionately, and he was highly esteemed by both the Indian policemen who served under his command and the natives of the United Provinces.

After a whirlwind courtship lasting three weeks he and Nesta were engaged to be married. Arthur Webster retired from the police force, left India and he and Nesta were married in London on May 14, 1904.

Their marriage was a very happy one and the new Mrs. Webster soon settled into a pleasant domestic routine. It is unlikely that the world would have heard much about her had it not been for a bizarre episode which occurred when she was 34 years of age.

While on a visit to Switzerland during the winter of 1910, Mrs. Webster underwent a profound mystical experience which led her to believe that she was the reincarnation of a late 18th century French countess (the Comtesse de Sabran), whose daughter had been imprisoned and son-in-law guillotined during the French Revolution. Of this "experience" she writes:

I began to read extracts of their letters (the Comtesse de Sabran and her lover, the Chevalier de Boufflers) and as I went on an extraordinary sensation came over me, the feeling that I had read them all before, that I knew the writers and had somehow been closely connected with them in the past.

I shall never forget that moment in the drab

library of the Swiss hotel, when looking out of the windows at the snow falling slowly over the grey mountains, I saw another world opening out before me, the brilliant world of eighteenth-century France.¹⁴

Upon returning to London Mrs. Webster went to Langlois, a bookseller specializing in French books, seeking further information about the Comtesse de Sabran. The book store owner had nothing in stock but promised to make inquiries.

Because her Swiss experience and ensuing mystical experiences changed the entire future course of Mrs. Webster's life and led directly to her 40-year-long career as a conspiracy theorist, it is worth recording her account of subsequent events in some detail. She writes in *Spacious Days*:

. . . A few weeks later a large parcel arrived from Langlois. it was the voluminous *Correspondence de la Comtesse de Sabran et du Chevalier de Boufflers* published in 1875, long since out of print and forgotten. Now that I could read these wonderful love letters in their entirety the sense of familiarity grew stronger still, yes, indeed I had known these people, theirs was the world I had once lived in, I could see them, hear their voices with an almost painful pang of recollection.¹⁵

Now, transported back to her childhood she remembers her old "sense of apartness from the family circle" and how, during her initial and many subsequent visits to "gay" Paris,

the sense of oppression never left me. Walking through the streets, especially in the Rue Saint-Honore, I would say to myself, 'I have seen these streets running with blood.'¹⁶

and while disclaiming any prior knowledge of or significant interest in the French Revolution, or history in general, it was, she writes above all,

in the French Revolution that I found myself! Every moment of that terrific drama was real to me. The Reign of Terror! Now I understood the 'haunted' feeling that ever since I was five years old had come over me in the Rue Saint-Honore, that Via Dolorosa of the Terror along which the tumbrils moved in slow procession from the Palais de Justice to the Place de la Revolution, now the Place de la Concorde.¹⁷

Seeking to explain to herself and to her reader the possible sources and causes of this life-transforming experience, she considers the first and most obvious possibility, that of reincarnation:

. . . I had always been drawn to the doctrine of reincarnation . . . Once can but speculate, and to me it seems the most probable clue to the mystery of those vague memories with which some of us are born or again of what are known as infant prodigies, children like Mozart who knew more of music than he could possibly have learnt in this present life.¹⁸

Linking her own mother's "monastic seclusion" as indicative, perhaps, of a past life of religious devotion, she goes on to recount the "remarkable" experience of her friend, Rosamund, on visiting Palestine for the first time:

Rosamund had never been in the East before, or studied it, although she had always 'had a feeling for it.' Immediately after her arrival in Jerusalem she was standing on the verandah with her sister and her friends when she noticed

a woman coming up the garden path carrying a bundle. She was vaguely wondering what it contained when the people standing round her exclaimed, 'We did not know you spoke Arabic!' 'I don't,' Rosamund answered, 'I don't know a word of it.'

'But you asked that woman in perfect Arabic what she was carrying!'

Moreover, the woman had answered her in Arabic and she had understood. But she never spoke it again.¹⁹

Belief in reincarnation, furthermore, is in keeping with the Christian faith, according to Mrs. Webster:

Reincarnation appeals to the reason and to our sense of the divine ordering of human life because it is the one theory that accounts for its apparent injustices and the inequalities of fortune with which many people are born. . . . When his disciples said to Christ, 'Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' our Lord did not reply, 'How could he have sinned before he was born?' but only answered, 'Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.'²⁰

But while disposed, by nature, to accept the doctrine of reincarnation, Mrs. Webster concedes that there may be "alternative theories to account for pre-natal impressions," such as ancestral memory,

memories handed down from some possibly distant forbear, or again these impressions may be conveyed from the minds of those who have passed over, *spirit presences* around us, or even of those still living on this earth.²¹

Though telepathy, or "thought transference," was as yet a relatively unexplored subject, it seemed to her to have

logical base in both present technology and personal experience:

. . . just as the air is filled with waves of sound which, until the invention of the wireless telegraphy, we were unable to hear, I believe that it is full of thought waves-- 'thought vortices,' to use the term of the Atomic School of Greek philosophers -- which one day we may learn to capture. Most people are aware of the 'atmosphere' in certain houses, how in one there is a feeling of peace and happiness whilst another breathes unrest, legacies left behind by those who lived in them before.²²

Having defined her terms, Mrs. Webster now retrains focus on the personal matter at hand:

The feeling of familiarity which came over me when studying the Chevalier de Boufflers and Madame de Sabran might be explained by the theory of reincarnation or of ancestral memory. I have no French ancestors, but my mother may have read about these people just before my birth or my grandfather, Philip Nicholas Shuttleworth, may have been impressed by memories of the French Revolution, still fresh in 1815, although his letters written from there at the time convey no such impression. Or again, I may have received thought-waves from those who had passed over or others still on earth.²³

to the skeptics and "materialists" who would allege "all this is nonsense, that the simple explanation is I was interested in the French Revolution and gave to my imagination," she argues that:

I am deeply interested in the Elizabethan era, the mystery of Shakespeare fascinates me, I

know of no subject in which I could become more engrossed, yet never for a moment have I felt that I lived at that period, to me it is merely history, wonderful, absorbing history but with which I have no personal connection and of which I know no more than I have read in books. But in eighteenth-century France, and particularly in the Revolution, I am at home. I know what it *felt* like to live in those days.²⁴

She was now resolved to reconstruct this story which reverberated so strangely in her own self and which "had never been related in its entirety even in France." It was, she writes, "an enthralling task":

I was very happy writing it. In our lovely Surrey home, looking out over the Weald of Sussex, all the world seemed at peace and I could work without distractions. How strange amidst the settled calm of twentieth-century England to look back upon the stormy period of the French Revolution! The contest provided just the stimulus needed to prevent country life degenerating into mental stagnation.²⁵

As she was to discover, in the final result, the wholeheartedness of her identification and her unique dedication to this task were not lost on the interested reader:

I remember being told after my book came out and was being discussed in a London drawing room, that a Frenchman present whose grandfather had been guillotined, remarked, 'no one could have written that book who had not lived in the Court of Marie Antoinette.'²⁶

Inevitably, Mrs. Webster took on the political views of her staunchly monarchist *alter ego* and the *Chevalier*

Boufflers, which upholds the cause of the *Ancien Regime* against the conspiring revolutionaries, can be considered Mrs. Webster's first conspiracy theory work.

The Chevalier de Boufflers was published in April 1866 by John Murray Ltd. of London and shortly thereafter by E.P. Dutton & Co. of New York. The book was popular with readers and critics alike. Favorable reviews were forthcoming from *The New York Times*, *The Boston Evening Transcript* and "extremely appreciative" ones from London's *Daily Chronicle* and *Evening Standard*. Ultimately the book ran through 15 editions.

This success encouraged Mrs. Webster to follow up in 1899 with *The French Revolution -- A Study in Democracy*. In this work Mrs. Webster propounds the thesis that the French people played an essentially passive role in the French Revolution and that the revolution was planned, fomented and carried out by an Orleanist-Prussian cabal linked with "illuminated Freemasonry."

Chief among the known villains in this conspiracy was the nefarious Duke of Orleans.

While admitting that the *Ancien Regime* had serious faults she claimed authorities like Carlyle had greatly exaggerated these faults. Moreover, she points out that at the beginning of his reign, Louis XVI had taken an active role in trying to redress the grievances of the French peasants.

While coolly received by the review editor of the *Times Literary Supplement*, *The French Revolution*



Nesta Bevan, at age 22

Reproduced from Nesta H. Webster, *Spacious Days; an autobiography* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1950).



Nesta Webster's alter ego, the Comtesse de Sabran

reproduced from Nesta H. Webster, *The Chevalier de Boufflers, and the Influence of the French Revolution* (London: John Murray,

got lengthy and favorable reviews in the *The New York Times* and *The Spectator* and was published in Britain and America by major publishers (Constable & Co., and E.P. Dutton respectively).

Yet, despite this, in *Spacious Days* Mrs. Webster claims that there was an organized boycott of her books: "Somewhere. . . it has been decreed that my books, both the *Chevalier de Boufflers* and *The French Revolution* were to be killed by silence."²⁷ Though Mrs. Webster claims she received a letter from a literary critic informing her of this boycott (and apparently cannot reveal the identity of the informant despite the passage of 30 years) it seems likely that given the tenor of the times her failure to receive recognition from the professional historians had far more to do with intrinsic shortcomings of her books than any threat her views posed to Marxist intellectuals or other groups in Britain who may have looked with favor on the Bolshevik revolution in Russia.

It is at this juncture -- with Mrs. Webster's explanation for the alleged boycott of her books -- that *Spacious Days* ends:

. . . Bolshevism was only Jacobinism under another name, the same aims, the same methods had been pursued, and the gigantic conspiracy of the same dark directorate against the whole structure of Christian civilization was in active operation.

Hence the attempt to boycott my books in those quarters where the plan of world revolution was secretly entertained and where it was realized that any disclosures on its *modus*

operandi and its ultimate purpose might lead to its defeat. The myth of the French Revolution as the dawn of liberty for France must at all costs be maintained. In revealing the truth about that tragic epoch. . . I had entered the lists against terrific living forces of which I had not guessed the existence. My own life was now to become a prolonged contest with these unseen powers. But that is another story which would require a whole volume to itself.²⁸

NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

¹Nesta H. Webster, *Spacious Days -- An Autobiography* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1950), p. 38.

²*Ibid.*, p. 39.

³For biographical information concerning Anthony Ashley Bevan see S.A. Cook, "Bevan, Anthony Ashley," *Dictionary of National Biography 1931-1940*, L.G. Legg editor, (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 74-75.

⁴For biographical information concerning Edwyn Bevan see Gilbert Murray and Clement Webb, "Bevan, Edwyn Robert," *Dictionary of National Biography 1941-1950*, L.G. Wickham Legg and E.T. Williams, editors (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 74-76.

⁵Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 40.

⁸*Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁹*Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 85.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 136.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 171.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 174.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 190. For an account of the conspiracy fever that swept England in the wake of the Bolshevik Revolution see Chapter 14 of Zosa Szajkowski's *Jews, Wars and Communism Vol. 2 The Impact of the 1919-1920 Red Scare on American Jewish Life*, and chapter 1 of Gisela Engel's *Political Anti-Semitism in England 1918-1939*.

Contrary to what Mrs. Webster would have her readers believe, she was by no means the first to try to convince an English audience that the French Revolution was primarily the outgrowth of an Illuminati conspiracy. Consequently, her argument that her work was being boycotted precisely because she was the first to reveal these things in England simply does not hold water. A consultation of the portion of the bibliography in this volume devoted to

"Additional Sources," reveals three articles written between 1839 and 1907 in major British establishment media on the theme of Illuminist involvement in the French Revolution. Of exceptional interest is a book authored by one Una Pope-Hennessy (née Una Birch) entitled *Secret Societies and the French Revolution*. Despite the fact that this work was published in London in 1911 -- a scant 5 years before the publication of Mrs. Webster's *The French Revolution* -- and pursues a theme very similar to her own book, Mrs. Webster makes no mention whatsoever of *Secret Societies and the French Revolution* in either *The French Revolution* or *World Revolution*. Indeed, in the "Author's Note" in *World Revolution* she even has the effrontery to tell her readers that *The French Revolution -- a Study in Democracy* was ". . . the first attempt, in English, to tell the truth (about the nature of that revolution)."

Mrs. Webster's failure to give credit to or even acknowledge her English literary predecessors raises serious doubts about the overall credibility of her claims. Some of these claims are analyzed in another work by Una Pope-Hennessy which should be noted here; namely, a very telling critique of Nesta Webster's *World Revolution* which appears in the January 1922 issue of *The Quarterly Review* (see the list of book reviews in Appendix A for the citation).

²⁸ Webster, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

CHAPTER THREE

Crowded Hours -- A Stolen Autobiography -- The Missing Years

Sometime during the month of January 1972 a mysterious American -- whose identity has never been made public -- stole the manuscript of the second half of Nesta Webster's autobiography from the offices of the intended publisher, The Britons Publishing Company, in North London, England. Presumably, this manuscript, covering the second half of Mrs. Webster's life dealt with the writing of her most important revisionist history books, her career with *The Patriot*, an ultra-right-wing journal of conspiracy theory, and her membership in the British Fascisti, Great Britain's first fascist movement.

As noted earlier, this theft has transformed Mrs. Webster into a woman of mystery, and those with a penchant for conspiracy theories might well conjecture that the theft of *Crowded Hours* was engineered so that these fascist connections and other sordid details of Mrs. Webster's political life would be forgotten, thus allowing the continued promotion of her books -- particularly among American right-wingers, many of whom would balk if they knew the full story.

However, since the years presumed to have been omitted in the manuscript of *Crowded Hours* coincide with ninety per cent of Mrs. Webster's literary career,

there are public records from which at least a skeleton outline of the key events of the second half of her life can be pieced together. This chapter is a compilation of such data which was gleaned from *The Patriot*, book reviews, obituaries, books and dissertations on British anti-Semitism, and a variety of other sources. I have arranged the resultant facts in chronological form so that additional information may be added when and if it becomes available.

1920

Nineteen-twenty was a banner year for anti-Semitic conspiracy theories in Britain. In January the first English language edition of "The Protocols" was published in London by the otherwise reputable firm of Eyre and Spottiswoode. The following month the ideas put forth by Mrs. Webster in *The French Revolution* received an endorsement from Winston Churchill in a little known but highly influential article entitled "Zionism Versus Bolshevism -- A Struggle for the Soul of the Jewish People." This article appeared in the February 8, 1920 issue of the *Illustrated Sunday Herald*. Churchill used Mrs. Webster's data to bolster his belief in the existence of an international Jewish conspiracy.

In July, *The Morning Post*, (Britain's oldest newspaper, then under the editorship of H.A. Gwynne), published a series of articles entitled "The Cause of World Unrest" which ". . . proclaimed the existence of a worldwide anti-Christian movement. . . said to be chiefly

ish, which hoped to establish absolute hegemony through revolution, communism and anarchism." ¹ Mrs. Webster submitted two letters to the editor which were included when the articles were printed in book form by Grant Richard's Ltd. The first letter dealt with a group called the *Alta Vendita* or *Haute Vente Romaine*, a off-shoot of the Carbonari, which Mrs. Webster and other conspiracy theorists have alleged to be a continuation of the Bavarian Illuminati. In the second letter she draws attention to Bakunin's feud with Karl Marx and cites *The Morning Post* for "warning the world of the conspiracy at work." ²

Also in July, *The Nineteenth Century and After* (published by Constable & Co., of London) printed her article "Illuminism and World Revolution." This, along with an earlier article, "Babouvisme and Bolshevism," were later incorporated into *World Revolution* which was published the following year.

1910-1921

In November 1920, Mrs. Webster delivered a lecture entitled "The Origin and Progress of World Revolution" before the officers of the Royal Artillery Institution at Woolwich. The lecture was repeated to the Brigade of Guards at Whitehall in March of 1921 and then repeated in front of the officers of the British Secret Service.

According to a John Birch Society book advertisement (produced in this book), the British Secret Service

asked Mrs. Webster to write a book based on her lectures. This is alleged to have resulted in the creation of *World Revolution*.

However, the veracity of this account is somewhat in doubt as Constable & Co. of London published *World Revolution* in June 1921, a scant 3 months after Mrs. Webster's lecture to the Brigade Guards. Though two of the chapters appearing in *World Revolution* had been previously completed and published, it seems rather unlikely that the remainder of the book was compiled, edited and published in 3 months or less. Apparently *World Revolution* was in the works before the formal request of the British Secret Service.

An equally intriguing clue to the origins of *World Revolution* appears in the first issue of a new British racialist publication: *Heritage and Destiny*. In an unsigned article entitled "Nationalism, Racialism and early British Socialism" it is alleged that Adolphe Smith, a socialist journalist who shared Mrs. Webster's Germanophobia ". . . collaborated with the authoress Nesta Webster in her once famous exposes of the peculiar alliance between Capitalism, Bolshevism and German Imperialism." ³ This article was subsequently reprinted in the National Front's *Spearhead* and the journal of the so-called Institute for Historical Review in Torrance, California.

Following the publication of *World Revolution* in the reviews appeared in several dozen publications throughout the English-speaking world. Among the most enthusiastic reviewers was Lord Sydenham of Combe who praised the book in a speech delivered in the House of Lords and in the pages of the *Morning Post* and *Blackwood's Magazine*.⁴ In addition to a very favorable review *The Spectator*⁵ carried a lengthy commentary on the book and expressed some mild criticism (This commentary is reproduced in Appendix D of this volume).

Britain's *London Times*⁶ and *Saturday Review*⁷ gave the book poor reviews as did the American publication *The Nation*.⁸

Post-World War I economic conditions and the fear inspired by the Bolshevik Revolution created an atmosphere in Britain during the 1920s that was conducive to the propagation of right-wing conspiracy theories.

Late in 1921, however, the Duke of Northumberland created a publishing group, the Boswell Printing and Publishing Co., to propagate such theories. In February 1922 the Boswell Company published the first issues of *The Patriot*. The principal function of this journal was to "publish details of the conspiracy against the British Empire."⁹

The creation of this publishing group was a milestone in the career of Nesta Webster. Over the course of the next quarter century the Boswell company published four of Mrs. Webster's books and nearly 30 articles which appeared in the pages of *The Patriot*.

In addition to her "Conservatism: A Living Creed," appearing in the first issue, her articles published in *The Patriot* for 1922-23 included, "Revolutionary Portraits," a six-part series of biographical sketches.

This period is also noteworthy for a debate which took place between Mrs. Webster and Kurt Kerlen (a close confidant of General Ludendorff), in the pages of *The Morning Post* during the months of April and June of 1922. The focus of the debate concerns the relationship between Lenin and the German political and military leaders who aided his entry into Russia for the purpose of fomenting revolution.

Mrs. Webster maintains that Lenin was in the employ of the German government since the beginning of the First World War and that: "The Revolutionary movement all over the world is directed not by Moscow, but by Germany. . ." ¹⁰

Herr Kerlen insists that the world revolutionary movement is directed by Jews not Germans and that the cooperation between Lenin and the German government began late in the war and that the German General Staff agreed with the decision to send Lenin to Russia for an overriding military consideration alone: Russia had to be knocked out of the war.

1924-1926

This period includes one of the most controversial episodes in Mrs. Webster's life; her involvement with the British Fascisti, Great Britain's first fascist movement. The initial membership of the British Fascisti was recruited through a series of advertisements in *The Patriot* by Miss Rotha Lintorn Ormon during 1923.

I have been unable to determine the exact date in 1924 that Nesta Webster joined this organization but it is known that she served on the Headquarters Committee (after October 1927 this group adopted the name "British Fascists Ltd.") and later, on the Grand Council of this organization. ¹¹ In 1926 she authored a pamphlet for the British Fascisti entitled *The Need for Fascism in Great Britain*. ¹² *The Patriot* records her lecturing to the British Fascists as late as January 1927.

Hopefully, the great interest now being shown in Britain in the history and evolution of British Fascism (largely as the result of the re-emergence of neo-Naziism in Britain in the '60s) is likely to result in new information coming to light about Mrs. Webster's sojourn among the British Fascists.

The Boswell Printing and Publishing Company's first edition of *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* was published in July 1924. Like its predecessor, *World Revolution*, it was reviewed in publications throughout the English speaking world. Excerpts from over a dozen favorable reviews are to be found in the inside cover of the Christian Book Club of America's edition of *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements*. A lengthy and favorable review appeared in the August 30, 1924 issue of Britain's *Saturday Review*. *The Times* ¹³ of London and *The Spectator* ¹⁴ were politely critical. Hostile reviews appeared in such publications as *Nation and Athenaeum* ¹⁵ *The New York Times Book Review* ¹⁶ and the *New York Tribune*. ¹⁷

The Boswell Printing and Publishing Co. also published a second book by Mrs. Webster during this period. *The Socialist Network* appeared in July 1926. It is her shortest work and is in essence a directory of American and European socialist and communist organizations. A fold-out chart is included with the book showing the alleged interrelationships of these organizations.

Articles appearing in *The Patriot* for the period 1924-1926 are: "The Prelude of Revolution" (January 3,

24, "What is Socialism" (July 17, 1924), "The Issues at Stake," dealing with the issues involved in the British General Election of 1924 (October 23, 1924); "What We Face Up Against," an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of factions promoting socialism in Britain, (November 6, 1924); "The Red Star," a discussion of six major goals of the world revolutionary movement (June 4, 1925); "The Antidote to Revolution" (July 16, 1925); "What is Socialism" (October 22, 1925); "Anti-Revolutionary Organization," a seven part article analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of the forces opposed to socialism in Britain, beginning in the December 31, 1925 issue and running through February 11, 1926.

1927-1930

Nineteen-twenty-seven saw the creation of an information bureau at the offices of *The Patriot* under the direction of Mrs. Webster. The purpose of this bureau, called "The Patriot's Inquiry Center," was to provide speakers, writers, and all other workers in the anti-socialist cause" with resource materials which included a large store of information on Socialism and subversive movements of all kinds, both at home and abroad."¹⁸ The nucleus of this library was formed by Mrs. Webster's personal collection of anti-socialist literature and correspondence "with anti-Socialists in all parts of the world."¹⁹

According to *The Patriot* of July 19, 1928, a meeting took place in that month at the Inquiry Center in which "patriots from several countries" took part. At

the meeting Mrs. Webster, ". . . had the satisfaction of hearing a general expression of admiration for the extent and classification of the great collection of home and foreign information at the Patriots' Information Centre, open to the use of patriots and now beginning to be drawn on by politicals and pressmen too long in ignorance of the underground forces allowed to grow to the present dangerous strength." Hilary Blume, authoress of a study on British anti-Semitism of the inter-war period, notes that: "Little else is heard of the Centre, and one can only speculate that in the early 30's, with the Mosley movement providing an excess of outlets for jingoistic literature the need for the Centre declined and it may have fallen victim to the need for economy."²⁰

In October 1927 John Murray published a novel by Mrs. Webster's daughter Rosalind. This novel, a satire on London Society entitled *They Who Paddle*, is strikingly similar to Mrs. Webster's first novel, *The Sheep Track -- An Aspect of London Society*.

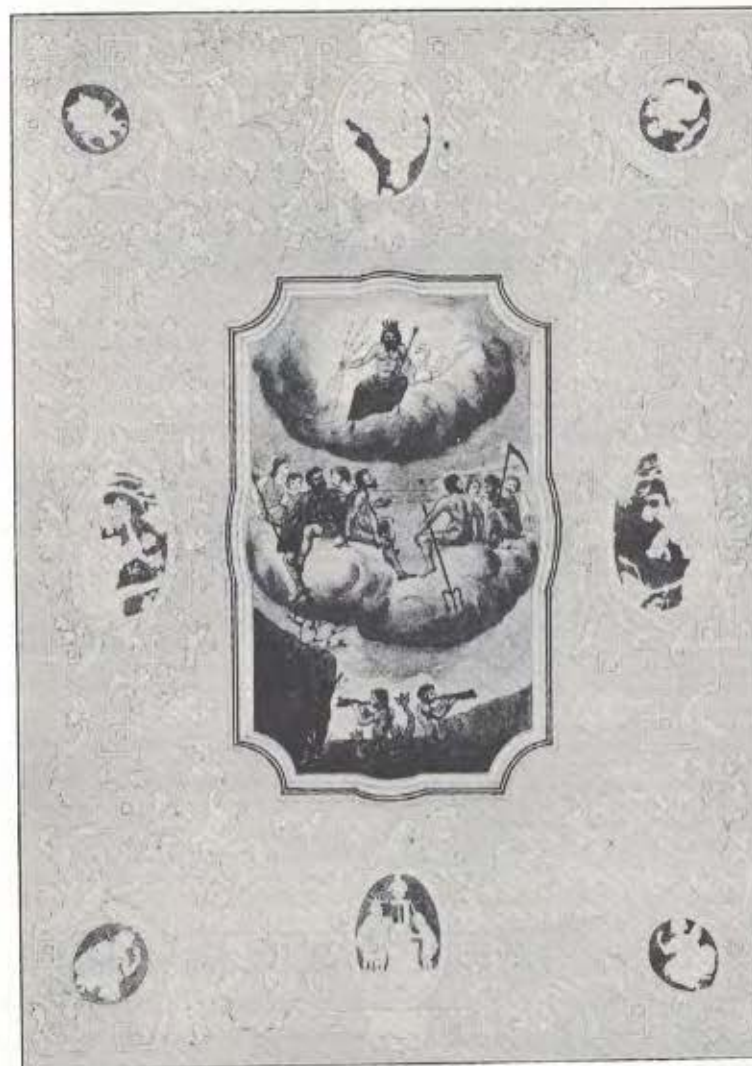
The articles published by Mrs. Webster in *The Patriot* for this period include "Christianity and Socialism," (January 13, 1927), "George Brandes on Christianity," (February 3, 1927), and "Illuminism and the Clergy" (April 14, 1927).

Also of interest are two articles published in an illustrated British weekly called *The Sphere*. The first of these, "The Rulers of Darkness -- A Chapter from the secret history of Europe in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth

centuries" (April 9, 1927), is the source of the photo of Mrs. Webster which appears on the cover of this book. Of considerable interest in the same article is the photo of a mural which decorated the ceiling of the Meeting Hall of all of the Illuminati in Ingolstadt Bavaria complete with . . . mystic signs, only understood by the members of the Order."²¹ The second article, (April 23, 1927) "Cagliostro and the Queen's Necklace," characterizes the famous "Affair of the Necklace" as a Grand Orient Freemason -- Illuminati linked plot to discredit the French monarchy.

1931-1935

Two of Mrs. Webster's books were published during this period; both by the Boswell company. *Surrender to An Empire* came off the presses in April 1931. As in the case of *The Socialist Network*, this book was almost totally ignored by all but far-right-wing media. Of course, a favorable review occurs in the pages of *The Patriot*. A second and third edition were brought out by Boswell in 1932 and 1933 respectively. The second book, a novel entitled *The Secret of the Zodiac* was published in July 1933. It has the unique distinction of being the only book written by Mrs. Webster under a pseudonym. Why she selected the pseudonym "Julian Sterne" has never been revealed. According to a laudatory review of this novel appearing in *The Patriot*:



Ceiling Mural From the Meeting Hall of the Bavarian Illuminati in Ingolstadt, Bavaria. Courtesy of Steve Eng.

An identical photo appears in Nesta H. Webster, "The Rulers of Darkness -- A Chapter from the Secret History of Europe in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *The Sphere* (London), April 9, 1927.

REVOLUTION — SECRET SOCIETIES — AND SOCIALISM



by Nesta Webster

About The Author

Nesta Bevan was educated at Westfield College. Upon coming of age she travelled all over the world, visiting India, Burma, Ceylon and Japan. After her marriage in 1901 to Arthur Webster, she sank deeper and deeper into the literature of the French Revolution, spending over three years at the Ashmolean Museum and the Bibliotheque Nationale. She was asked to give a lecture on the Origin and Progress of World Revolution to officers of the Royal Artillery at Woolwich in 1914. By special request she repeated the lecture to the officers and commissioned officers of the Brigade of Guards in Whitehall, and then she was asked to repeat it a third time to the officers of the British Secret Service. It was at their request that she wrote *World Revolution*, based on these lectures. Her charm and brilliance enabled her to attract some of the leading literary, political and military minds of her day, and Lord Chamberlain in India described her as the foremost opponent of subversion."

Since their publication in the twenties and thirties, the scholarly works of historian Nesta Webster have been nearly buried by those who fear the truth about the origin and nature of the International Conspiracy.

We are pleased to offer the following five paperbound titles, in their order of publication:

The French Revolution — Years of patient research and careful study went into the production of *The French Revolution*, which sets forth in one volume the real facts and true story of the great holocaust. Published in 1919, 536 pages \$4.00

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Secret Societies and Subversive Movements — A continuation of the theme explored in *World Revolution*, exhibiting the course of revolutionary ideas through secret societies from the earliest times. Published in 1924, 432 pages \$5.00

The Socialist Network — The facts presented here are based on data published in the Socialists' own literature and are rendered as an account of the Socialist organizations of modern times. Published in 1926, 164 pages \$3.00

Surrender of an Empire — ". . . I shall endeavor to show how, from the beginning of the Great War up to the present moment, our worst foes have been those of our own household . . ." Published in 1931, 398 pages \$4.00

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- The Fearful Master** by G. Edward Griffin. Is the United Nations really mankind's last and best hope for peace? The author takes a hard look at the record.
- Teddy Bare** by Zad Rust. The most candid and revealing account yet published of Edward M. Kennedy at Chappaquiddick . . . and after.
- Richard Nixon — The Man Behind The Mask** by Gary Allen. A devastating political biography of a man twice elected to the Presidency on a platform of conservatism.
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- None Dare Call It Conspiracy** by Gary Allen. "After reading this book, you will never look at national and world events in the same way again." — John Schmitz
- The Rockefeller File** by Gary Allen. The incredible true story of the most powerful, the most ambitious, the most dangerous family in America.

John Birch Society affiliated American Opinion Bookstore advertisement for Nesta Webster's books.

The heroes, Captain Brandon and Major Kavanaugh and the heroine Rosamund Dare, after a series of thrilling adventures at home and abroad, secure conclusive evidence that a small group of men, known among themselves as 'the Zodiac' are (under command of a super-subversive) directing the whole of the open secret revolutionary movements of our time.²²

Only one of Mrs. Webster's articles was published in *The Patriot* during this period. In "Germany and the Jews," appearing in the April 13, 1933 issue she scoffs at reports in the British press concerning the persecution of German Jews following the accession of the Nazis to power. She even goes so far as to say: "That Hitler is doing the best thing for Germany seems at present undeniable."²³

1936-1937

The most noteworthy feature of these years was the temporary return of Mrs. Webster to the literary mainstream through the publication of a two volume work on the lives of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. *Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette before the Revolution* was published by Constable & Co. in October 1936. The following year it was published in the U.S. by G.P. Putnam's Sons. The sequel, *Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette during the Revolution* was also published by the same publishing houses. The Constable edition appeared in March 1937. March 1937 also saw the appearance of "Marie Antoinette -- A Slandered Queen," in *The Nineteenth Century*. In

s article Mrs. Webster summarized the theses of her two
volume study. The temporary return of Mrs. Webster to
literary mainstream is underscored by the favorable
reviews received by both volumes. Especially significant
indications of a growing interest in her works are the
review of volume I in the *London Times*²⁴ and the reviews
of volume II appearing in *Books*, the *Boston Transcript*²⁵
and the *Manchester Guardian*.²⁶

1938-1940

On October 13, 1938 *The Patriot* published the first
in a series of seven articles by Mrs. Webster entitled
"Germany and England." These articles are such a
blatant attempt to whitewash the record of the regimes
of Hitler and Mussolini that the thoughtful reader cannot
help but entertain the possibility that the authoress was
in some way linked with either the Nazis of Germany
or with powerful circles within Britain's ruling elite who
were sympathetic to Hitler's ideas. Early in 1939 the
seven articles were published in pamphlet form by the
Well company.

A second series of articles -- eight in this series --
"Germany and England" began to appear in *The Patriot*
in November 1939. These articles are a fascinating
attempt on the part of Mrs. Webster to justify her
previous support of Prime Minister Chamberlain's Munich
agreement with Hitler and her belief in Hitler's desire for
peace in the light of his invasion of Poland.

The final *Patriot* article of special interest to us
for this period is entitled "The Record of *The Patriot*;"
it appears in the September 14, 1939 issue. Here she
reviews the "rightness" of the line taken by *The Patriot*;
". . . on every issue of importance to the welfare of our
country and the maintenance of the British Empire."²⁷

1941-1950

Clearly, the most significant event in Mrs. Webster's
life during this period was the death of her husband,
Arthur Templer Webster, at the age of 77. He died at
the Webster's summer home at Bembridge on the Isle of
Wight. An obituary appearing in the Isle of Wight County
Press for April 25, 1942 mentions his great enthusiasm
for horticulture, and the beautiful gardens he maintained
both in Bembridge and at the Webster's London home,
84 Cadogan Place. He is described as: ". . . a man of
retiring tastes. He enjoyed the life of a country gentle-
man rather than the social life of Town; although his
wife's literary eminence brought him into touch with
many distinguished people."²⁸

The most important literary event in this decade was
the publication of the first volume of Mrs. Webster's
autobiography, *Spacious Days* by Hutchinson & Co. of
London in 1949. Dr. Oliver refers to it briefly in the
January 1965 issue of *American Opinion* characterizing
it as,

a graceful -- and, for the discerning reader, pathetically instructive -- evocation of the Edwardian Age of her youth, an age that is almost incomprehensible for our contemporaries; for men then felt for the last time the security and confidence of a high and seemingly invincible civilization.²⁹

Due to waning reader interest and financial backing, the printing of *The Patriot* came to a halt in January 1950 and the publisher went out of business. Apparently most of the copyrights to Nesta Webster's books were sold to the infamous Britons Publishing Company which itself survived until the mid-1970s.

A final series of articles by Mrs. Webster entitled "Where are we going?" appeared in the January 9, 1947 through February 13, 1947 issues of *The Patriot*. In these articles Mrs. Webster warns of the dangers she believed inherent in the socialist economic policies which were pursued by Britain's first post World War II government.

1951-1960

Until the publication of the Britons' sixth and revised edition of *World Revolution* in 1971, virtually nothing concerning the final decade of Mrs. Webster's life had been made public. From the author's introduction to the work (completed only a month before her death) and the foreword of Anthony Gittens, the editor, we know that during the late '50s there were extensive consultations between Mrs. Webster and Gittens in which Mrs.

Webster charged Gittens with the responsibility of adding additional material utilizing her thoughts and ideas concerning the post-World War II spread of communism. As noted previously the revised edition of *World Revolution* also contains three additional chapters written by Mrs. Webster herself. Presumably part of this decade was spent in writing these new chapters.

In his review of *World Revolution* in the January 1965 issue of *American Opinion* Dr. Oliver wrote:

In the past years of her life, before her death in 1960, Mrs. Webster understandably came to feel that the enemies of mankind had become irresistible, and she devoted her declining energies to a series of autobiographical reminiscences that she did not live to complete.³⁰

Of course, we now know that she did complete the final portion of her autobiography but that it was stolen from the offices of the intended publisher in 1972, twelve years after her death.

Recently, Dr. Oliver has revealed that Mrs. Webster journeyed to the U.S. in 1955 in an effort to interest publishers here in the second half of her autobiography. Though one publisher initially agreed to publish this work he later backed out. Dr. Oliver also notes that sometime after the early 1950s Mrs. Webster suffered a very serious injury which resulted in a broken hip and several lengthy stays in hospitals.³¹ This hospitalization is apparently alluded to in the *Times* obituary which states that: "Though her last years were cramped by illness, her mind still flashed information to her friends and defiance to her critics."³²

NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

- ¹Gisela C. Lebzelter, *Political Anti-Semitism in England 1918-1939* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1978), p. 24.
- ²H.A. Gwynne (ed.), *The Cause of World Unrest* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1920), p. 264.
- ³"Nationalism, Racism and Early British Socialism," *Heritage and Destiny*, (London) Vol. 1, No. 1 (1980), pp. 1-7.
- ⁴Lord Sydenham of Combe, "World Revolution," review of *World Revolution -- The Plot Against Civilization*, by Nesta H. Webster, in *Blackwood's Magazine*, December 1921, pp. 764-777.
- ⁵"Secret Societies and Revolution," *The Spectator*, July 2, 1921, pp. 5-7.
- ⁶"Secret Societies and Revolution," review of *World Revolution -- The Plot Against Civilization* by Nesta H. Webster, in *The Times Literary Supplement*, August 25, 1921, p. 539.
- ⁷"Revolution and the Jews," review of *World Revolution -- The Plot Against Civilization* by Nesta H. Webster, in *The Saturday Review* (London), July 9, 1921, p. 53.
- ⁸Carlton J.H. Hays, "The Ways of Revolution," review of *World Revolution* by Nesta H. Webster, in *The Nation*, December 7, 1921, pp. 669-70.
- ⁹Hilary Blume, "A Study of Anti-Semitic Groups in Britain 1918-1940," Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Sussex, 1971, p. 88.

¹⁰Nesta H. Webster, "A Deep Laid Scheme -- The Deutsche Bank and Communism," *The Morning Post* (London), April 17, 1922.

¹¹For a list of the membership of the Headquarters Committee of the British Fascisti see Robert Benewick, *A Study of British Fascism -- Political Violence and Public Order* (London: The Penguin Press, (1970), pp. 22-32. Mrs. Webster's membership on the Grand Council of the British Fascisti-Fascists Ltd. is revealed in Richard Griffith's, *Fellow Travellers of the Right -- British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany* (London: Constable, 1980), p. 89.

¹²Benewick, *op. cit.*, pp. 29 and 48.

¹³"Secret Societies," review of *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* by Nesta H. Webster, in *The Times Literary Supplement*, August 7, 1924, p. 485.

¹⁴Alan Porter, "Diabolism and Politics," review of *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* by Nesta H. Webster, in the *Spectator*, September 13, 1924, pp. 360-61.

¹⁵Leonard Wolf, "The Conspiracy Mania," review of *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* by Nesta H. Webster, in *The Nation and Athenaeum* August 16, 1924, p. 620.

¹⁶Silas Bent, "Secret Societies Passing on the Tradition of Revolution," review of *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* by Nesta H. Webster, in *The New York Times Book Review*, March 8, 1925, p. 7.

¹⁷Woodbridge Riley, review of *Secret Societies and Subversive Movements* by Nesta H. Webster, in the *New York Tribune*, September 6, 1925, p. 8.

¹⁸*The Patriot* (London) of October 27, 1927 as cited in Hilary Blume, "A Study of Anti-Semitic Campaigns in Britain 1918-1940," Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Sussex, 1971, p. 94.

¹⁹Letter to the Editor concerning "The Patriot's Inquiry Centre" from Mrs. Nesta Webster, *The Patriot*, October 1927, p. 382.

²⁰Blume, op. cit., p. 95.

²¹Nesta H. Webster, "The Rulers of Darkness," *Sphere* (London), April 9, 1927, p. 54.

²²Review of *The Secret of the Zodiac* by Julian Sterne in *The Patriot*, July 13, 1933, p. 36.

²³Nesta H. Webster, "Germany and the Jews," *Patriot*, April 13, 1933, p. 290.

²⁴Review of *Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette Before the Revolution* by Nesta H. Webster, in *The Times Literary Supplement*, October 31, 1936, p. 876.

²⁵F.S. Ambrose, Review of *Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette* by Nesta H. Webster in *The Boston Transcript*, April 16, 1938, p. 2.

²⁶A.J.P. Taylor, Review of *Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette and the Revolution* by Nesta H. Webster in *The Manchester Guardian*, April 3, 1937, p. 7.

²⁷Nesta H. Webster, "The Record of *The Patriot*," *The Patriot*, September 14, 1939, p. 198.

²⁸Obituary of Arthur T. Webster in *Isle of Wight County Press*, April 25, 1942.

²⁹Revalo P. Oliver, "World Revolution," review of *World Revolution* by Nesta H. Webster in *American Opinion*, January 1965, p. 47.

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹Letter received from Dr. Revalo P. Oliver, 1 November 1980.

³²Obituary of Nesta H. Webster in the *London Times*, May 18, 1960, p. 17.

Aftermath

Several key developments following Mrs. Webster's death have already been mentioned in the text of this book. These include the promotion of Nesta Webster's books by the John Birch Society in America and the National Front in Britain, the publication of the revised edition of her *World Revolution* and debates over the merits of Mrs. Webster's work in *Conspiracy Digest*.

One development of special interest (briefly alluded to in the text) is the reprinting of five of Mrs. Webster's titles by a California firm, apparently in violation of international copyright agreements.¹ Beginning in 1965 the Omni/Christian Book Club of America began printing expensive, paperback editions of Mrs. Webster's most popular books. I do not know how many thousand copies of Nesta Webster's books this firm has printed to date, but the production of very large quantities of these cheap editions was instrumental in putting the actual copyright holders, the Britons Publishing Society, out of business.

At the time of this writing books bearing the imprimatur of the Christian Book Club of America are being marketed widely in the U.S. and they are sold in many of the John Birch Society affiliated American Opinion Book Stores.

In recent years there has been an upsurge of interest in Mrs. Webster's work among British academics and American conspiracy theorists. As has been previously

noted, the renewed interest in Britain is in large part due to the revival of neo-Nazism in that country. There the dominant neo-Nazi group, the National Front, has incorporated the work of Mrs. Webster into its conspiracy theories.

Taking note of the increased interest in right-wing conspiracy theories in both Britain and the U.S., *Patterns of Prejudice*, a publication of the Institute of Jewish Affairs in London, published an article by Richard Thurlow, a professor of Economic History at the University of Sheffield, in its November-December 1978 issue entitled "Powers of Darkness -- conspiracy belief and political strategy." Nearly a third of this article is devoted to a consideration of the impact of Mrs. Webster's work on Anglo-American conspiracy theory.

Unfortunately, Dr. Thurlow's portrayal of Mrs. Webster as a woman suffering from "obsession" whose work, ". . . can fairly be described as representing the intersection of personal and group fantasies,"² harkens back to the time-worn academic technique of dismissing such conspiracy theorists as deranged. However, in emphasizing the importance of Mrs. Webster's reincarnation theory to her conspiracy theories, stressing Mrs. Webster's "insertion of the French counter-revolutionary tradition into English conspiracy theory" and pointing out, that she supplied much of the knowledge of occultism and secret societies used in modern English and American conspiracy theories, he is right on target.³ As *Patterns of Prejudice* is subscribed to by hundreds of institutions of higher

arning throughout the world Dr. Thurlow has undoubtedly
ven considerable impetus to the study of Mrs. Webster's
oact on the Anglo-American conspiracy theory tradition.

A more recent British publication dealing with Mrs.
Webster is Richard Griffiths' *Fellow Travellers of the
Right -- British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany 1933-39*.
Griffiths, head of the Department of French at
University College in Cardiff England and author of a
widely acclaimed biography of Marshal Petain, traces the
evolution of Mrs. Webster's views about the Jews and
Germany from the early 1920's through to her disillusionment
with Hitler following the signing of the Hitler-Stalin Pact.

Until 1933 Mrs. Webster emphasized the "German-Jewish"
influence which she felt was behind communism and "World
Revolution." However, with the accession to power of
Hitler she came out strongly in favor of the Nazi regime's
anti-Semitic legislation and expressed the view that Hitler,
does not concur with the section of Pan-Germans who
believed in cooperating with the Bolsheviks in order to
bring about a war of revenge."⁴

Her strong endorsement of the Nazi regime in her 1938
series of articles has already been mentioned. It is interest-
ing to note that Mrs. Webster's apologetics for the Nazi
regime contrasted strongly with the dominant tone of
The Patriot for the years of 1933 to 1936 which saw Hitler
as the spokesman for Pan-Germanism, "an excessive form
of patriotism and racialism, not appealing to British

sympathy, or conducive to British interests," and "A
Germany quite unrepentant for her actions in bringing
about the world war."⁵

However, from 1935 onward, *The Patriot* began to
strongly support Sir Oswald Mosley's British Union of
Fascists and by 1936: ". . . in common with many other
right-wing areas of thought, gave signs of approval of the
Nazi regime."⁶ Thus, from 1936 until the signing of the
Hitler-Stalin pact the views of *The Patriot* and Mrs. Webster
coincided.

While *Fellow Travellers of the Right* provides a wealth
of new information about many "British Enthusiasts for
Nazi Germany" the only really new information on Mrs.
Webster concerns her membership on the Grand Council of
the British Fascists Ltd. According to Dr. Griffiths, who
examined the publications of the British Fascists -- British
Fascists Ltd. in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, Mrs.
Webster served on the Grand Council of this fascist group
"for a couple of years around 1926-1927."⁷

In the U.S. it is revisionist historians and conspiracy
theorists themselves who have taken the leading role in
reviving a critical evaluation of Mrs. Webster's theories.
Nearly all of the discussion in recent years has centered
around the small but highly influential publication called
Conspiracy Digest. This discussion has involved the well-
known revisionist historian Anthony C. Sutton and William
McIlhany, author and member of the Speakers' Bureau of
the John Birch Society. More recently the editor of
Conspiracy Digest and I have taken part. The discussions

relating to Mrs. Webster's work are listed in the "Chronology of Posthumous Events" in Appendix A.

As of this writing interest in the conspiracy theory of history is growing by leaps and bounds in the Western world and the recent assassination attempts against President Reagan and the Pope will undoubtedly accentuate this trend even further. Some of this interest appears to be fueled by a natural and healthy curiosity about the influence of such elitist groups as the Trilateral Commission and the Council on Foreign Relations. However, as always there are malevolent and dangerous aspects to the increased belief in conspiracy theories.

This is underscored by the activities of the so-called Institute for Historical Review, of Torrance, California. This organization holds symposia and publishes articles which attempt to prove that the Nazis did not systematically murder millions of European Jews. The success that this "myth of the Holocaust" group has had in promoting their doctrines is indeed alarming.

Those who cry "conspiracy" in America today must always keep in mind that two of the most murderous political systems in human history -- communism and Nazism -- both use conspiracy theories to propagate their subversive doctrines and undermine public faith in democratic governments. Both of these diabolical totalitarian systems can be viewed as conspiracy theory gone berserk. The neo-Nazi communist affiliations of many of the writers who are promoting the "myth of the Holocaust" idea should leave no doubt in the minds of their readers as to what their ultimate goals are.

The efforts of today's Nazi apologists bring to mind Nesta Webster's own efforts in their behalf during the late 1930s:

As to the concentration camps of Germany, about which we hear so much, what are we to believe? Returning travellers bring back totally conflicting accounts; the rest of us only know what our papers tell us, and about a short time ago they were telling us that the inmates of our own prisons were treated with inconceivable brutality. We did not believe that; why, then, should we believe all that they tell us about Germany?⁸

Thus, in its evaluation of Naziism the leading edge of right-wing anti-Semitic conspiracy theory has come full circle in roughly 40 years. All those who understand that this poses a danger for Western civilization must take action to combat the conspiracy theory cults which are attempting this radical transformation of reality.

Those in the academic community must put away their sociological and psychoanalytical jargon and deal with and demolish the theses of the neo-Nazi mythologists on an issue by issue basis.

Moreover, as the pivotal figure of right-wing, totalitarian conspiracy theory in the English speaking world, the fraudulent and non-scholarly character of much of Mrs. Webster's work must be exposed in a manner that will be meaningful to many of the more rational converts and potential converts to her theories. It is my intention to do just that in volume two of this work.

NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

¹See "Letters to the Editor," *Conspiracy Digest*, Vol.V, p. 3 (Summer 1980), p. 7.

²Richard Thurlow, "The Powers of Darkness -- Conspiracy Belief and Political Strategy," *Patterns of Prejudice*, 1. 12, No. 6 (November-December 1978), p. 10.

³*Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴Nesta H. Webster, "Germany and the Jews," *The Patriot*, No. 583, Vol. 24 (April 13, 1933).

⁵Richard Griffiths, *Fellow Travellers of the Right -- British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany*. (London: Constable, 1960), p. 66-67.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁸Nesta H. Webster, *Germany and England* (London: Constable, 1939), p. 7.

APPENDIX A

PART I. A CHRONOLOGY OF IMPORTANT EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF NESTA H. WEBSTER (1876-1960)

Birth on family estate, Trent Park.	August 14, 1876
Death of her father at age 81 (Robert Cooper Lee Bevan).	1890
Attends Westfield College.	1894-1897
Makes round-the-world trip (Includes visit to India).	1899-1900
Second visit to India.	1903-1904
Marriage to retired colonial police official, Arthur Webster.	1904, May
Life-transforming occult religious experience (she comes to believe that she is the reincarnation of an 18th century French countess whose family suffered severely as a result of the French Revolution).	1910
Publication of her first novel, <u>The Sheep Track</u> .	1914
Publication of a patriotic pamphlet, <u>Britain's Call to Arms</u> .	1914
Her first conspiracy theory work, <u>The Chevalier de Boufflers</u> .	1916
Publication of <u>The French Revolution</u> .	1919

Lecture to army officers at the Royal Artillery Institution on "World Revolution" favorably received; this facilitates publication of World Revolution. 1920

Publication of three articles in The Nineteenth Century and After. 1920

Winston Churchill endorses Mrs. Webster's ideas in the Illustrated Sunday Herald. 1920

Publication of The Cause of World Unrest under the auspices of H. A. Gwynne, editor of The Morning Post. Webster submits two letters to the editor which are published at the end of the book. 1920

British Secret Service asks Webster to write World Revolution. 1920

Publication of World Revolution. 1921, Jul

Joins staff of the Duke of Northumberland's new publication, The Patriot, Debate in the Morning Post between Kurt Kerlen of the Thule Society and Nesta Webster. Webster's articles called "Boche and Bolshevik," are published in booklet form in New York City by the Beckwith Company (owned by Dr. Harris Houghton, head of the New York office of Army Intelligence during WWI). 1922

Speaks at meeting of National Citizens' Union on "Socialism and Secret Societies." 1923

Publication of Secret Societies and Subversive Movements. 1924

Death of Adolphe Smith, a leading figure in Great Britain's short-lived National Socialist Party and putative collaborator with Nesta Webster in the researching of World Revolution and Secret Societies and Subversive Movements. 1925

Publication of "The Need for Fascism in Great Britain," a pamphlet of the British Fascists. 1926

Publication of The Socialist Network. 1926

Her lectures to British Fascist meetings are mentioned in The Patriot. 1927

Opening of an "Inquiry Center," headed by Mrs. Webster, under the auspices of The Patriot. 1927

First Novel of Mrs. Webster's daughter Rosalind, They Who Paddle, published by John Murray Ltd. of London. 1927

A two-part, profusely illustrated article is published in The Sphere. 1927

Publication of Surrender of An Empire. 1931

Publication of The Secret of the Zodiac by Webster under the pseudonym of "Julian Sterne." 1933

Publication of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette before the Revolution. 1936

Publication of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette during the Revolution. 1937

Patriot article Germany and England-- reprinted as a pamphlet. 1938

World Service, Nazi propaganda agency, recommends Webster's The Socialist Network. 1939

Death of Arthur T. Webster. 1942

Publication of Spacious Days, first half of intended autobiography. 1950

Patriot closes down. 1949-1950

Mrs. Webster journeys to the U.S. in an unsuccessful attempt to interest an American publisher in the second half of her autobiography. 1955

Nesta Webster completes her preface to the revised edition of World Revolution (6th edition, published by the Britons). 1960, April

Nesta Webster dies. 1960, May

A CHRONOLOGY OF POSTHUMOUS DEVELOPMENTS

Nesta Webster's obituary appears in The London Times. May 18, 1960

Webster's books used by anti-Vatican II prelates to argue their cause. 1962

Right-wing conspiracy theorist Helen Lasell's Power Behind the Government Today attacks Webster's books for, ". . . aiding the cause of British Israelism." 1963

Publication of 8th and revised edition of Secret Societies and Subversive Movements by the Britons Publishing Society of London. 1964

Webster's books introduced to the Birch Society rank and file through a book review by Dr. Revilo P. Oliver in American Opinion. 1965, January issue

Anti-Defamation League report censures Birch Society for selling Webster's books in American Opinion Book Stores. Birch Society subsequently removes two of Webster's titles from their list of approved books. 1966

Robert Welch endorses Webster's ideas in an American Opinion article entitled "The Truth in Time." 1966, November issue

Webster's Secret Societies and Subversive Movements restored to list of books available at American Opinion Book Stores. 1969

Professor Robert Benewick mentions Mrs. Webster's fascist involvements in A Study of British Fascism (London). 1969

A.K. Chesterton, founder and leader of the National Front is interviewed in Spearhead. He credits Webster's books as playing a key role in forming his political ideas. 1969, September issue

The Britons publishes a revised edition of World Revolution containing several additional chapters written by Mrs. Webster in the late 1950s plus material written by her friend at the Britons, Anthony Gittens. 1971

manuscript of the second half of Webster's autobiography appears (allegedly stolen) from North Devon offices of the Britons Publishing Company.	1972, January	Professor Richard Griffiths' <u>Fellow Travelers of the Right -- British Enthusiasts for Nazi Germany 1933-1939</u> published by Constable (London). Griffiths mentions Webster's apologetics for the Nazis in her articles in <u>The Patriot</u> .	1980, September
Editorial review of revised Britons edition of <u>World Revolution</u> appears in <u>Conspiracy Digest</u> . Review written by Chesterton himself.	1972, May issue	Richard Gilman's "A Commentary on Nesta Webster's Autobiography: <u>Spacious Days</u> " appears in <u>Conspiracy Digest</u> .	1980, Fall
Editorial article in <u>American Opinion</u> on Communism -- "The Great Conspiracy" by Gary Allen draws heavily on the work of Nesta Webster.	1976, June issue	Feud within the National Front results in the resignation of John Tyndall. Subsequently Tyndall writes an article in <u>Spearhead</u> , "So It's All A Masonic Plot," in which he draws on Webster's writings on Masonry to castigate his rivals.	1980, December
Editorial article in <u>Conspiracy Digest</u> by Tony C. Sutton criticizes the work of careless amateur conspiracy researchers and Nesta Webster.	1977, Summer issue	Further discussion about Nesta Webster in <u>Conspiracy Digest</u> . Letters to the editor from William McIlhany and Richard Gilman and comments by editor, Peter McAlpine.	1981, Combined Spring, Summer & Fall issues
Editorial binder to Sutton article by the Northern Birch Society's William H. McIlhany appears in <u>Conspiracy Digest</u> .	1978, Winter issue	Publication of <u>Behind World Revolution -- The Strange Career of Nesta H. Webster</u> by Richard Gilman.	1982, November
Richard Thurlow assesses the influence of Webster on Anglo-American conspiracy theory in <u>Patterns of Prejudice</u> (London).	1978, Nov.-Dec. issue		
Statistical data on Mrs. Webster compiled by Richard Gilman is published in <u>Conspiracy Digest</u> .	1979, Fall issue		
Editorial binder to Gilman article by William McIlhany appears in <u>Conspiracy Digest</u> along with comments by the editor.	1980, Summer issue		

III. A GUIDE TO KEY BOOK REVIEWS OF
NESTA WEBSTER'S WORKS

The Sheep Track, an aspect of London Society
(published in 1914)

- The Bookman, Vol. 40 (September 1914), p. 94.
The Boston Evening Transcript, September 5, 1914,
p. 6.
The Dial, Vol. 57 (August 16, 1914), p. 107.
The New York Times Book Review, Vol. 19
(August 16, 1914), p. 346.
The Spectator, Vol. 112 (April 11, 1914), p. 617.

The Chevalier de Boufflers, A Romance of The French
Revolution (published in 1916)

- Boston Evening Transcript, Sept. 30, 1916, p. 8.
Catholic World, Vol. 104 (January 1917), p. 552.
The Dial, Vol. 61 (December 23, 1916), p. 582.
The Spectator, Vol. 117 (August 26, 1916), p. 237.
The Times (London) Literary Supplement. May 18,
1916, p. 234.

The French Revolution: A Study in Democracy
(published in 1919)

- American Historical Review, Vol. 25, no. 4 (July 1920),
pp. 714-15.
American Political Science Review, Vol. 14 (November
1920), p. 732.
Athenaeum (London) September 26, 1919, p. 943-44.
The Bookman, Vol. 51 (July 1920), p. 570.
The Freeman, Vol. 8 (December 26, 1923) p. 380.
The New York Times Book Review. June 27, 1920,
p. 10.
The New York Times Book Review. December 30, 1923,
p. 3.
The Spectator. Vol. 123 (August 23, 1919), p. 245.
The Times (London) Literary Supplement. August 21,
1919, p. 443.

World Revolution: the Plot Against Civilization
(published in 1921, 1st edition)

- American Opinion. Vol. 8, no. 1 (January 1965),
pp. 46-48.
Blackwood's Magazine. Vol. 210 (December 1921),
pp. 764-777.
The Freeman, Vol. 4 (February 8, 1922), p. 526.
Jewish Guardian (London). July 1, 1921, pp. 11-12.
The Morning Post (London), June 9, 1921, p. 5.
The Nation. Vol. 113 (December 7, 1921), p. 670.
The Quarterly Review (London) Vol. 237, no. 470
(January 1922), pp. 85-100.
The Saturday Review (London) Vol. 132 (July 9, 1921),
p. 53.
The Spectator, Vol. 127 (July 2, 1921), pp. 15-17.
The Times (London) Literary Supplement. August 25,
1921, p. 539.

World Revolution: the Plot Against Civilization
(6th and revised edition, Britons Publishing Society, 1971)

- Candour. May 1972, p. 138.
Candour. October 1972, pp. 199-200.

Secret Societies and Subversive Movements (published
in 1924)

- American Political Science Review. Vol. 19 (May
1925), p. 423.
Ars Quatuor Coronatorum. Vol. 36 (1923), pp. 110-
113.
The Boston Evening Transcript. April 11, 1925, p. 2.
The English Review. Vol. 39 (Oct. 1924), pp. 515-521
and 697-705.
The Master Mason (Washington, D.C.) Vol. 2, no. 5
(May 1925), pp. 429-31.
The Nation (New York), Vol. 121 (September 16, 1925),
p. 309.
Nation and Athenaeum. Vol. 35, (August 16, 1924),
p. 620.
New York Times Book Review. March 8, 1925, p. 7.
New York Tribune, September 6, 1925, p. 8.

Revue Internationale des Societes Secretes. Vol. 13, no. 52 (December 1924), pp. 943-949.
Saturday Review (London), Vol. 138 (August 30, 1924), p. 218.
Saturday Review of Literature. Vol. 2 (October 17, 1925), p. 214.
The Spectator, Vol. 133 (September 13, 1924), p. 360.
The Times (London) Literary Supplement. August 7, 1924, p. 485.

Socialist Network (published in 1926)

The Patriot. July 29, 1926, pp. 109-110.
Revue Internationale des Societes Secretes. Vol. 15, no. 51 (December 19, 1926), pp. 853-856.

render of An Empire (published in 1931)

The Patriot. December 24, 1931, p. 572.

Secret of the Zodiac (published in 1933)

The Patriot. July 13, 1933, pp. 36-37.
The Times (London) Literary Supplement (August 17, 1933), p. 550.

Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette before the Revolution (published in 1936)

Boston Evening Transcript. November 20, 1937, p. 3.
English Historical Review. Vol. 52 (October 1937), p. 751.
Manchester Guardian. November 13, 1936, p. 7.
New York Times Book Review. January 16, 1938.
Saturday Review (London) Vol. 163 (January 2, 1937), p. 25
Saturday Review of Literature. Vol. 17, (January 15, 1938), p. 20.
Times (London) Literary Supplement. October 31, 1936, p. 876.

Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette during the Revolution (published in 1937)

Boston Evening Transcript. April 16, 1938, p. 2.
Manchester Guardian. April 16, 1937, p. 7.
Saturday Review of Literature, Vol. 17, (April 2, 1938), p. 30.
The Times (London) Literary Supplement. (April 3, 1937,) p. 250.

Germany and England (published in 1938)

The Patriot. December 8, 1938, pp. 481-83.

Spacious Days (published in 1950)

Conspiracy Digest. Vol. 5, no. 4 (Fall 1980), pp. 5-7.
Current Literature. June 1950, p. 112.

APPENDIX B

REVIEW OF NESTA WEBSTER'S CHEVALIER DE
BOUFFLERS BY RICHARD E. DANIELSON.

PRINTED FROM THE DECEMBER 28, 1916 ISSUE OF
DIAL)

Eighteenth Century Gallant

In rewarming the old fires of an eighteenth century
since Mrs. Webster has contrived to avoid that
ness of manner which ladies who re-edit court
airs so generally assume. There is not a snigger
the volume. This, in itself, is an achievement.
ed she describes the celebrated affair of the
valier de Boufflers and the Comtesse de Sabran
sympathy, dignity, and perhaps a certain solemn-
With no gusto whatever for scandalous anecdote,
explains patiently to her not too erudite readers
ditions in the French court which must strike them
trangely different from the home life of the late
en Victoria. Her book makes no claims as to original
arch or historical discovery. Rather it is a
pilation from various sources of much that pertains
the famous Chevalier de Boufflers and his *grande*
ion, arranged in a coherent and readable fashion
that even the most insular Briton derives from its
usal a more sympathetic understanding of the men
women of the times of Louis Sixteenth and the
ch Revolution.

Mrs. Webster is less successful in attempting to
t the highly colored background of the period
in her delineation of the two principal characters.
Chevalier de Boufflers and the Comtesse de
ran are made real to us through the medium of
r own correspondence, an extraordinary correspon-
ce covering many years and all the emotions of
anity, ranging from the lightest gossip and airiest
osophy to tumultuous outpourings and passionate
oaches, -- singularly human, wholly free from the
ntry or artificiality one sometimes expects in
teenth century letters. Their authors write with

perfect simplicity, freshness, and charm, all the ease
of the great world, all the frankness of great souls,
and with a keen delight in their own facility at epigram
and vivid description. Mrs. Webster has been wise to
quote copiously from their letters. On the other hand,
her translations are not always happy and one wishes
that she had appended the originals more consistently.
It is not easy to render in English the grace of de
Boufflers's: "Les vrais plaisirs n'ont pas d'âge: ils
ressemblent aux anges, qui sont des enfants éternels";
or the Comtesse's: "Ce qu'il y a de plus à désirer,
c'est d'être bien trompé jusqu'a son dernier jour." One
wishes, too, that more of the delightful and often im-
proper songs of the Chevalier had been included in
this book, songs which, as Chamfort said to him,

Sont cités par toute la France;
On sait par cour ces rien charmants
Que tu produis avec aisance.

He inherited this gift of easy, graceful versification
from his mother, the delightful Madame de Boufflers,
who ruled the easy court at Luneville. She was a
charming lady, as famous for her wit as her inconstancy,
and her son may have learned from her the art of
conversation, as well as of versifying.

Il faut dire en deux mots
Ce qu'on veut dire;
Les longs propos
Sont sots.

The brilliant and worldly son of a brilliant and
worldly mother, de Boufflers was destined for the
Church. While at the seminary, he delighted the
fashionable world with the publication of "Aline, Reine
de Golconde," a story which had an extraordinary vogue
at the time, and which resulted in his giving up the
career of an abbe, an event which he celebrated in the
following lines:

J'ai quitté ma soutane
Malgré tous mes parents;
Je veux que Dieu me damne
Si jamais je la prends.
Eh! mais oui dà,
Comment peut-on trouver du mal à ca?
Eh! mais oui dà,
Se fera prêtre qui voudra.

Henceforward he wandered through Europe, a poet, artist, adored by Voltaire and many ladies, a dier and a courtier. He was of a curiously frank n, and indeed was little suited to diplomacy or the sequious knee-service of the court. He once wrote: n'y a que Dieu qui ait un assez grand fonds de eté pour ne pas s'ennuyer de tous les hommages on lui rend." He was, however, one of the most ular men of his time; his extraordinary wit and ety, his originality and charm made him in demand rywhere, while his natural good taste never let become merely the buffoon. Famous for his lantries, he was in no sense a cold voluptuary or ynical *séducteur*. The Prince de Ligne said of him t the foundation of his character was "*une bonté s mesure*," and perhaps so many ladies loved him for simple reason that he was very lovable. With all intellectual power, personal charm, and position at rt, de Boufflers never achieved high place or manent accomplishment. He was indeed Governor of egal, where he worked nobly for the amelioration of lot of the wretched natives, slaves and free, and was prominent as a member of the States-General ch ushered in the Revolution where he labored with husiasm and devotion, to no effect whatever. To most people the central fact of his life was his g love affair with the Comtesse de Sabran. When he her first she was the young widow of the old, oic Comte de Sabran, famous for many gallant loits, the best known of which was his glorious fight he "Centaure" against four English men of war, a t of seven hours duration, which was only concluded n "with broken masts and torn sails, and with en bullet-wounds in his own body,-- his ammuni- exhausted, and the last cannon-- charged with his er plate," he struck his flag. At sixty-nine the sailor married Eleonore de Jean, a girl of nineteen, rl so candid, innocent and lovely that the cynical rt of Louis XV. delighted to honor her with the of "Fleur des Champs." After the death of the Comte de Sabran, the young widow, one of the t ladies of France, was courted by many, but her lover was de Boufflers. In spite of his inconstancy

and inconsistency, she never wavered in her devotion, and in his fashion he loved her very truly. Lovers for almost twenty years, they were not married until, in the wreckage of the Revolution, the scruples which prevented the penniless Chevalier from taking such a step were washed away, and in their old age their troubled, passionate careers subsided sweetly and happily into love in a cottage. Their lives colored the reigns of two kings, the French Revolution, the Directory, and the age of Napoleon. Their letters express the reactions of those vivid days on intense, sincere, and brilliant minds. Their lives are well worth study. Mrs. Webster is to be thanked for presenting them for the first time to English readers in such a thorough and sympathetic way.

Richard E. Danielson.

APPENDIX C

REVIEW OF NESTA WEBSTER'S WORLD REVOLUTION -- THE PLOT AGAINST CIVILIZATION

REPRINTED FROM THE JULY 9, 1921 ISSUE OF THE
TURDAY REVIEW (LONDON))

EVOLUTION AND THE JEWS.

World Revolution: The Plot Against Civilisation. By
Nesta H. Webster. Constable 18s. net.

In reading any book with such a title as 'World
Evolution' one is driven nowadays to ask oneself, "Is
this history or is it propaganda?" The impression left on
my mind after reading Mrs. Webster's book is that it
falls into the latter category, since it seems to have
been written to prove two theses, (a) that the Jews are
the authors of all political and social unrest, and (b)
that Revolution, or unrest in action, is always an
artificial product-- the creation of the Hidden Hand.
Mrs. Webster surveys the changes of the last 145
years, taking as her starting point the French Revolution.
She is less interested apparently in historical facts than
in the theses she is able to deduce by a selection from
a general body of historical truth of such facts only
as support her theories. Therefore, we make no
objection to her methodology for dealing with the purpose, rather than the
obstacle, of this book.

Most people will agree with Mrs. Webster that the
series of social upheavals known as the French
Revolution were not spontaneous in origin, but the
result of associative agitation. Owing to restrictions
on publishing and on speaking in public, this agitation
was conducted in secrecy and took refuge in Lodges
which later blossomed into Clubs. Mrs. Webster
quotes the evidence of contemporary observers to
show that German Illuminism, as patented by Adam
Weishaupt, penetrated the Lodges of the Grand Orient
in France in the years immediately preceding 1789, and
made of them active units in promoting Revolution.
Incidentally she gibes at "interested historians anxious
to suppress the truth" about Illuminism, and also at
the "official historian," whose business "is not to

inquire into causes, but to present the sequence of
events in a manner unintelligible to the philosopher."
It is always possible that historians "interested" and
"official" alike may be a little timid of building upon
such shaky foundations as are offered by Barruel,
Robison, Deschamps, Le Couteux, De Canteleu (*sic*) and
other authorities on Illuminism.

There was no Jew behind the French Revolution,
so far as we know; even Martinez Pasqually, when
Mrs. Webster calls "a Portuguese Jew," is now stated
by Mr. Waite to be a Christian of Grenoble. By no
known process of historical deduction, based on
historical fact, can Jews be held to account for the
French Revolution; yet this does not deter Mrs. Webster
from advancing by innuendo the thesis to which she is
wedded. For example, we read (p. 19), "The years
1781-2 were remarkable for the emancipation of the
Jews" and that "eight years before the Revolution the
programme in favour of Judaism was sent out by
Prussia," also that there was a "wave of pro-Semitism"
during those years. We are told that at the great
Masonic Congress at Wilhelmsbad (1782) it was decided
not to exclude Jews from Lodges, and again, that
after this Congress the headquarters of Illuminized
Masonry were transferred to Frankfort, "the stronghold
of Jewish finance." A passage from Prudhomme is
quoted (p. 92) dealing with the fact that Jews in
1790 were allowed to rank as citizens in Paris: it
ends like this, "What mysteries of iniquity would be
revealed if the Jews, like the mole, did not make a
point of working in the dark." Later (p. 160), she
allows herself to say of Jews, "We have seen their
mole-like working below ground during the first
French Revolution suspected by Prudhomme." By
piling suggestion and innuendo on a foundation of
hypothesis, Mrs. Webster makes a gallant effort to
see the Jew behind the French Revolution and to
make us see him too-- but she has failed. She is more
successful with the Revolutions of 1830 and 1848 in
which, as is well known, many Jews were involved.
In dealing with recent events Mrs. Webster makes
considerable play with the 'Protocols of the Learned
Elders of Zion,' published in England as 'The Jewish

il.' We thought they were regarded by everyone as
i-Semitic Propaganda of a particularly vulgar
d; but they are trotted out again apparently to
ve that the Jews to-day are the direct, if only the
ritual, descendants of Weishaupt's Illuminati. The
tory of the Protocols is suspicious, but there is
reason why the reputed author Nilus should not
ve been familiar with the teaching of Weishaupt.
d if we go far enough back, may not Plato have been
spiritual father of Weishaupt? for did he not in his
public' propose that "the Guardians" should have
es in common, that children should be taken from
ents at birth, and that they should hold no private
perty?

Is it a coincidence that the words of Nilus bear as
se a family likeness to the reflections of
yedonoszeff, the Procurator of the Holy Synod,
they do to the teaching of Weishaupt? Is it
sible that the 'Protocols' could be anti-Jewish
paganda used in preparation for the pogroms which
figured Russia in the early years of the century?
spite of the note of alarm sounded in 'World
volution,' there are several cheering reflections
be gathered from the book. One is that the
ssaries of the Hidden Hand always seem to fall out.
shaupt quarrels with Knigge, Robespierre destroys
nton, Marx disagrees with Bakunin. It seems to be
so much a case of a Hidden Hand as of Hidden
nds which fight one with another. If this is so,
at is the exact force of the blow they can give to
lisation? Another consolation for English people
ucked away in the middle of a long paragraph on
rtism, "The truth is that in a country where
orms were in progress revolution could make little
dway."

In detesting Bolshevism and all that it connotes
are in complete agreement with Mrs. Webster. Her
ws on religious versus secular Communism are
irely sound; they amount to this-- that Communism
o shattering of well-being in this world that it can
y be practised with success by people who have
ounced this world to gain the next.

APPENDIX D

A COMMENTARY ON NESTA WEBSTER'S WORLD REVOLUTION-- THE PLOT AGAINST CIVILIZATION (REPRINTED FROM THE JULY 2, 1921 ISSUE OF THE SPECTATOR).

SECRET SOCIETIES AND REVOLUTION.

MRS. WEBSTER, whose book on the World Revolution
we review elsewhere, has added to the debt of gratitude
due to her. Her book on the French Revolution was not
only eminently readable, and what Bacon would have
called "luciferous"; it had also the inestimable advantage
that it was fully documented. By this we do not mean
that there were huge appendices filled with unreadable
State papers, speeches, and the like, but that whenever
she was making a point of importance she quoted the
actual words of the actors in the drama and did not
rely upon dead summaries. When she wanted to make
us understand the deeds of Saint-Just or Robespierre,
or whoever was the revolutionary she was handling,
she would not put a dull analysis into the mouth of the
revolutionary. She gave us spring water, not dippings
from a stagnant pond.

In her new book Mrs. Webster has followed this
admirable example. As before, we get the actual words
and the actual facts, and also, as before, there is always
chapter and verse for her statements. If we want to
know more, we can look up the references. And here
we should like to intervene with a petition. It is that
Mrs. Webster should reprint Robison's book on the
conspiracy side of the revolution in full with an introduc-
tion giving us all that is known as to the author and the
circumstances under which he wrote his book. This
and full annotations of the text should provide a book
of deep interest to all students of the revolutionary
period. The original book is by no means easily
accessible, and a reprint should command a good market.

Though on the whole we approve so strongly of Mrs.
Webster's method of exposition, we feel bound to make
certain criticisms on one or two points. We agree with
the immense importance of showing that a plot has existed

and still exists against civilization, and we think she has done great service in insisting that we ought to take this vastly important fact into consideration and deal with it. Unfortunately, however, she runs, we will not say her theory, because we do not think it is a theory, but her facts too hard-- certainly a good deal harder for the consumption of the ordinary Englishman. If you want to convince Englishmen, as she certainly does, you must practise a certain economy of truth if you have got to deal with such matters as plots or conspiracies. There is no greater non-conductor of intellectual sympathy to the Englishman than talk of mysterious and underground and sensational workings. *Credo qui impossibile* is not an Englishman's motto. He can only with the greatest difficulty be got to take a plot seriously; and if he hears other people talking about one, he immediately says that they are suffering from a touch of conspiracy mania. Yet theincible ignorance of this matter is often quite as dangerous as is the gullibility of the Southerner who is apt to believe in a plot *per se*, although the evidence is of the flimsiest or of the most ridiculous kind. We have got to take the world, or rather the English world, as it is, and therefore we cannot but regret that Mrs. Webster, while illuminating us about the Illuminati, had not, to borrow and transpose an admirable phrase from the rich repertory of Quarles, "tuned her divine theorbo" six notes lower instead of six notes higher.

Mrs. Webster's mother thought in the present volume is the Secret Society. She believes that the edges of the Illuminati-- a kind of sublimated form of Continental but not British freemasonry-- probably played a very great part in the making of the French Revolution. Further, she thinks that the Society of the Illuminati, though apparently stamped out by Napoleon, was not destroyed, but merely went to sleep. It revived after 1815, and in 1848 made another attempt to destroy our civilization. It had a third try under Marx's *First Internationale* in the period from 1848 up to the Commune, when it received another

great check. Its fourth attempt, though it appears to be breaking down at Moscow, is alive in Ireland, throughout Europe, and also in the United States of America, among those sections of Society who think that Demolition is the first word of Progress, and that killing is no murder when you dislike the dead man's views.

We are ourselves inclined to believe in the evidence of a world-wide plot set forth by Mrs. Webster. Therefore we feel it is very important that the world in general, and especially the English-speaking world, should be thoroughly well instructed on this matter. At the same time, we cannot help feeling that Mrs. Webster's book will not get the attention it deserves because of its sensational character, and because of the vehement way in which she presses the evidence upon our attention.

We shall not be surprised if Mrs. Webster is disgusted and annoyed with such criticism. Nothing is more exasperating than to try to awaken a man to a danger which he cannot be persuaded to understand or even to recognize as in existence. Still, we should be doing a good cause a great wrong if we did not point out this fact. Therefore, once more, though we fully realize the danger, we cannot help saying that we think Mrs. Webster attaches too much importance to the Illuminati. They existed; they exist. They did evil work; they are doing it now. But, all the same, they did not do as much harm as they claim to have done. They as often as not made the claim of the fly on the wheel. Like the Jesuits, they have employed secret and mysterious methods when open means would have been quite as easy and as efficient. But though this sounds childish, it has enabled them to claim as theirs a great many acts with which they have had nothing whatever to do. It was a conscious part of the scheme of the Illuminati to claim a hand in any dark, difficult, or mysterious movement, any convulsion of the social equilibrium, even if the cause in reality was religion or economics rather than that crazy creed of revolution for revolution's sake to which the Illuminati were sworn.

But though we may regret the touch of over-vehemence, let no one suppose that we do not greatly value Mrs. Webster's work on most substantial grounds. She gives us information about the work of the Illuminati

the past, and about their opinions, which we know where to read elsewhere. Further, she gives us many valuable warnings in regard to the present activities of these fantastic and criminal lunatics and their secret and parasitic organizations. One is naturally reluctant to believe that there are people who naturally love and practise evil for love of evil. It seems reasonable to think that men only do wicked things out of selfishness, or panic, or lust, or greed--explicable desires, but to ingeminate wickedness for 'wickedness' sake sounds like the ravings of a madman's "Evil, be thou my good." We are bound to believe, however, that the history of the Illuminati does seem to prove the existence of a certain small section of the population who are really depraved, who are moral inverts. We may pity them, and analyse them, but we cannot explain them away or talk them out of their existence. They are dangerous though crazy, and we must take due precautions.

People will naturally ask whether Mrs. Webster is able to give any explanation of the rise of the Secret Societies, and what was the cause of their existence. She hazards no theories on this point-- partly, perhaps, because she has not been able to make up her mind, and partly because she does not set out to deal with origins, but to tell us for practical and political purposes the story of the plot against civilization-- the plot which the Secret Societies have undoubtedly professed to carry out. How far they have been successful, or how far they have merely boasted of the successes of their members, is a different matter.

In spite of our lesser knowledge, we feel inclined to step in where Mrs. Webster has refused to tread. The Secret Societies of the modern world, as we know from Goethe's poem (translated, by the way, by Walter de la Motte), arose in Germany, and they arose because of the dreadful oppressions of the petty tyrants of the mediaeval Germany. When the mediaeval anarchy gave place to the semi-order of the seventeenth century, there was a pause in the activity of the Secret Societies. But in the seventeenth century began the terrible growth and usurpation of State power of Louis XIV. affords us the prime example.

The personification of the State into something which must be obeyed implicitly by men, which marked the political philosophy of the age, and a comparatively innocent origin, but it grew into a cancer. That hideous thing which later the French called *Etatisme* produced a social and political atmosphere in which a free man could hardly breathe. Only a man with the nature of a slave could endure that appalling miasma. Rather than die of moral suffocation, men formed secret organizations for the destruction of the system which was asphyxiating them. They disguised their antagonism to the State, however, under the fantastic nonsense of Rosicrucianism and of the bogus mediaevalism and tawdry ritual which was supposed to have existed in the Guilds and in the *Vehmgericht*. One of the worst things about Secret Societies is that they incite a tyrannical state to persecute them, and so intensify the evil. Next, in dangerous times Secret Societies are like derelict blasting power. The stuff is *per se* useful, but evilly disposed persons may get hold of it and use it not for legitimate but for criminal purposes. The Secret Societies of Germany were comparatively harmless up till about 1770 or so. Then Weishaupt, a Prussian with criminal instincts and lunatic perversions, got hold of them and gave them a revolutionary turn. He shunted Continental Freemasonry on to Antinomian and Revolutionary lines.

Before we leave the subject of Secret Societies we must note that, though Mrs. Webster shows what a bad influence certain sections of the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe have played in fomenting revolution, her investigations have led her to the conclusion that the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, the work which, published under the heading of *The Jewish Peril* in 1919, created so much discussion here and in America, was not what it professed to be or what its Russian discoverer, if he was a discoverer, asserted it was-- i.e., a Jewish production-- but was largely based upon the secret instructions drawn up by Weishaupt for the Society of the Illuminati. Mrs. Webster tells us that in reading *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* she constantly found passages which had a strange ring of familiarity. By degrees the conviction grew in her mind, "But this is simply Illuminism!"

pired by this idea, she has drawn up in parallel columns quotations from the Protocols and quotations from the writings of Weishaupt, and of writers like Guizot and Robison, who profess to give, and probably do give, descriptions of the theories and creeds of Illuminism.

The parallel passages set forth deserve to be read in their whole, and we must therefore refer our readers to the original. Our own strong impression is that Mrs. Weston is getting on the right track in connecting the Protocols and Illuminism. Whether the Protocols in their present form were drawn up by those whom we might call Illuminist Revivalists, or whether they are the skillful work of some Russian police agent who had discovered the inner doctrine of the Illuminati, or whether, wanting to link the revolutionary movement with the Jews, improved his "copy," we do not know. For ourselves, we have always felt that the evidence for the authenticity of the Protocols set forth by Professor Weston was wholly inadequate, and indeed pointed directly to fraud-- not necessarily on the part of Weston, but of someone in the alleged chain of communications. On the other hand, the internal evidence, both as regards the style and matter, appeared to us to be quite inconsistent with the theory of wholesale forgery by an "agent provocateur." They bore the marks of a spontaneous frenzy, not of faking. It is difficult to suppose that members of the Russian Secret Police would be capable of such a dramatic representation of revolutionary metaphysics. The *mouchard* is not made like that. The theory that the Protocols were a kind of salad bowl compilation from the writings of the Inner Circle of the Illuminati seems to harmonize these two theories better than any other origin.

The subject is in any case interesting, but we think it is also of practical importance. We fully expect that we shall have to endure the activities of Secret Societies for another generation at least. We must therefore make up our minds how to deal with them. In our opinion, it will be very foolish to rush either to the conclusion of severe suppression or, again, of a "let it alone and chance it" policy. The *via media*

of watchfulness and very prompt and very stern action the moment conspiracy blossoms into crime is the ideal. Better even than that is publicity pushed to the furthest possible point. If members of some of the Secret Revolutionary Societies could be placed upon their trial and the fullest publicity given to their criminal nonsense, so that an atmosphere of disgust, indignation, ridicule, and general disillusionment were created, we believe that the movement would die of universal odium and contempt. Possibly it would grow up again, for men love ritual and secrecy for their own sake, and ritual and secrecy lend themselves to crime. Secret Societies, in fact, are like the "gob fire" in a mine. It is always burning, but as long as the fire is kept within certain strict limits and is well looked after, no great harm is done, and the mine can be quite well and safely worked. But every now and then the "gob fire," for some reason or other, blazes up-- generally because the attention of those whose duty it is to watch it has been relaxed. Then there is trouble, and, unless a great effort is made, death and destruction. So it is with the State and the Secret Societies.

APPENDIX E

DIABOLISM AND POLITICS," A REVIEW OF NESTA

WEBSTER'S SECRET SOCIETIES AND SUBVERSIVE MOVEMENTS

ALAN PORTER (REPRINTED FROM THE SEPTEMBER
1924 ISSUE OF THE SPECTATOR).

DIABOLISM AND POLITICS.

Secret Societies and Subversive Movements. By Nesta H.
Webster. (Boswell Printing and Publishing Co. 20s. net.)

The first record the thesis of Mrs. Webster's book,
set in itself, is difficult; she proceeds so often in
a modern way of "letting the authorities speak for
themselves," and, on the whole, her views are more
elucidated than expounded. But I think that she would
greatly object to the following summary.

The "secret tradition" of occult societies, she believes,
rests in truth, and it has the continuity which these
societies claim for it. Even before the rise of
Christianity, a secret tradition existed in the Hebrew
and the Egyptian religions and in most other world-
religions. And what was the secret tradition? Nothing
but plain diabolism. The symbols, forms and parables
of these religions were cunningly perverted and given
other interpretations; they were used for the destruction
of religion and morality, and for the propagation of the
most deadly types of anarchy. In Christianity itself,
through the Essenes, Gnostics, and Manicheans, through
the Knights Templar, Rosicrucians, and Freemasons, the
spirit of blasphemy, pride, and destruction has been
kept alive to this day. Of course, no secret society
is so foolish as to advertise its evil purposes. On
the surface all these societies have been more than
respectable; they have been idealistic. The greater
number of their adherents have been honest men,
believing that they were on the path to mystical
experience or to genuine social service. That is the
trap which the chief plotters have laid for them. In the
higher degrees of secret societies nothing is taught
of morality and virtue—or, at worst, morality and

virtue are taught with only the slightest taint of
subversion—with an understanding, for example,
that no words and no counsels mean quite what they
seem to mean, that there are further explanations
behind every explanation. In such a condition of
knowledge most of the members remain—pledged
to the society and by nature sufficiently loyal to
believe that it has none but the noblest aims.
Their confidence in their superiors makes them blind
and eager servants.

Behind the lower degrees are the degrees in
which the more ambitious, uneasy, and flexible
members are gradually initiated into the true aims
of the society. Their morality is gradually sapped by
the teaching that all religions are figurative and
that man is a law to himself. They are deluded
into thoroughly committing themselves to their
mentors by the most stringent and irrefragable oaths
of secrecy. They find out that the purposes of
their secret society are, at root, not religious, but
political; and that they are to engage on the most
deadly labour to which a man can bind himself—
the dissemination of false ideas, of anarchy, destruc-
tion, and diabolism. They are absolved from the
rules of conduct imposed upon the ordinary "honest
man." They are encouraged in licentiousness,
atheism, and crime. And by this time they have so
involved themselves, and their moral fibre has been
so cunningly destroyed, that they are easy tools for
the supreme masters, the *illuminés*, of their order.

Mrs. Webster suggests that Illuminism is the
first cause of all our modern trouble, of Bolshevism,
of Pan-Germanism of unrest and industrial strife:—

"In looking back over the centuries
(she concludes) at the dark episodes
that have marked the history of the
human race from its earliest origins—
strange and horrible cults, waves of
witchcraft, blasphemies and desecra-
tions—how is it possible to ignore the
existence of an Occult Power at work
in the world? Individuals, sects, or

aces fired with the desire of world-domination, have provided the fighting forces of destruction, but behind them are the veritable powers of darkness in eternal conflict with the powers of light."

chief instrument of the powers of darkness, Mrs. Webster urges, is the Jewish race, the chief text- for the subversion of the world is the Jewish goal.

It is easy to laugh at Mrs. Webster's exposures; fifty-nine men in a hundred would laugh; we are not so far from the world of common sense. And it isn't, in the end, reprehensible to laugh. But not to laugh at the book! There is authority of some sort for every statement which Mrs. Webster makes. She has certainly not been dashing down some wild phantasmagoria of her brain: there are definite indications from historical records or special monographs on every detail. There is evidence, from the writings of Freemasons, of Illuminates, of Templars, of Crusaders, that seems to prove the whole nightmare. And Mrs. Webster has actually done a service in history in proving the part which was taken by secret societies in fomenting and, to some degree, controlling the French Revolution. Few people were ignorant of the importance of the eighteenth-century secret societies until the fierce and matter-of-fact Carlyle refused to be deceived by such nonsense and banished it from his consideration. Schlegel, for example (a much sounder historian than the writers upon whom Mrs. Webster relies), avers that "the notion of Illuminism exercised on the internal organization of all European nations the same influence as the system of the balance of power exerted on their external relations." Where has Mrs. Webster gone wrong? Why will the result of this historical research appear ludicrous?

In a way, it is because Mrs. Webster's authorities are too good. For her history of secret societies she has gone to their own records and their own apologists. It is inevitable that every member of a secret society, having, by the fact of his membership, shown a tendency towards the mysterious and the

grandiose, should exaggerate the importance of the organization to which he belongs. It is inevitable, too, that he should profess his belief in the fabulous history of his order. And it is only natural that a society, so setting itself apart from the rest of humanity, should give scope for some measure of false individuality, even of opposition to the general government. But writers upon occult societies are the most fantastic and absurd of historians, and here, at least, it is impossible to say: "He must be guilty: he admits it himself."

More seriously a fault in a historian is the lack of insight which Mrs. Webster shows from the beginning. There have been, and there are, societies which practise diabolism and which teach anarchy. They are stupid and feeble societies. Men who challenge the universe by spitting at altars and celebrating Black Masses are never likely to become profound influences on civilization. Any man who has read Dostoevsky's novel, *The Possessed*, has a more accurate knowledge of societies and subversive movements than Mrs. Webster, for all her industry. Here were five men, tortured and driven mad by the membership of a secret society, moving everywhere suspiciously and darkly, not knowing who the other members were and suspecting that every man they met was a fellow-member detailed to spy upon them and keep them to their oaths. They believed that their society was powerful and tyrannical; that it had seized upon every city in Russia; they went about in terror and shame. And who were the members of the secret society? They were these five men alone.

Mrs. Webster is chiefly unconvincing in her exposure of the secrets of modern disturbances, and here she has proceeded with less ingenuousness than we might expect. It is unfortunate that she should have chosen to conceal her villains under pseudonyms, for she may seem in this to be unwilling to expose her case to legitimate criticism. It is surprising that she should have made into a subversive scoundrel the amiable and innocent Dr. Steiner, and if she had called him by his own name it would have given many people an opportunity of testing her statements. There was no need, surely, to hide the quite unamiable Aleister Crowley under the mystifying initial "Z."

I cannot end without commenting to Mrs. Webster's notice a passage which the *Observer* last week quoted from the *Morning Post*, and wishing that it may serve for a warning. Our respected contemporary stated:--

"It may only be a coincidence, but we are sure that many persons will not fail to connect the fact that the rainiest and gloomiest summer we have had for a long time has followed the accession of a Socialist Government to office."

Alan Porter.

APPENDIX F

"GERMANY AND ENGLAND. PART VI.--HITLER AND THE JEWS" BY NESTA H. WEBSTER

(REPRINTED FROM THE NOVEMBER 17, 1938 ISSUE OF THE PATRIOT).

The article reprinted in this appendix is one part of a seven part series that was published in The Patriot between October 13 and November 24, 1938. "Germany and England" is such an unconscionable attempt to whitewash the regimes of Hitler and Mussolini that one must ask just how much of what Nesta Webster wrote did she actually believe and what were her motives in writing such articles. Unfortunately, as with so much else about Mrs. Webster, the dearth of available information allows us only to speculate.

Though her views were more extreme than most, Webster's pro-Nazi apologetics were by no means unusual in Britain during this period. In fact, many members of Britain's ruling elite expressed pro-Nazi sentiments in public. Readers seeking more information on this very important phenomenon are urged to consult two recently published works: Richard Griffiths' Fellow Travellers of the Right and the long awaited The Anglo-American Establishment--From Rhodes to Cliveden by the late Dr. Carroll Quigley.

GERMANY AND ENGLAND.

VI.—HITLER AND THE JEWS.

Nesta H. Webster.

Since, as was shown in the preceding article, the main *cause de guerre* against Hitler is his treatment of the Jews, it is most urgent for people in this country to know the truth about it. But that is just the difficulty. The British public derives its information from the newspapers or the radio, both of which are largely controlled by Jews and in their turn receive their information from Jewish sources. Thus all that reaches it comes to it through a Jewish filter. It is only when we read in the papers something about which we ourselves know the truth that we see how grossly the public is misinformed.

Ever since certain Jewish papers abroad announced whilst I was living peacefully with my family in London, that I was really in Austria—a country I have never been to in my life—forming one of a secret Council of Five for carrying out pogroms and political assassinations all over the world, I have realised that there is no limit to the Jewish faculty for invention, and therefore that what appears in the papers with regard to Nazi Germany may be equally devoid of truth. As long ago as 5 December, 1923, the *Jewish World* of London announced that "Adolf Hitler has been incarcerated in a lunatic asylum, having been found hopelessly insane." Propaganda of the same grotesque kind is carried on by word of mouth and the guileless British public swallows the wildest stories about the man who is represented to it as a sort of ogre eating babies in a cave. I have seriously been asked whether it is true that Herr Hitler takes pleasure in watching Jews being tortured and even a learned man, accustomed all his life to weighing evidence, told me in a frenzy of indignation that the tortures inflicted by the Nazis equalled those of the Russian Cheka. I asked him for his authority for this statement and he referred me to a book of which he did not know the author's name or anything about him. Where however does this *savant* spend his summer holidays? Very happily—in Germany!

The first thing therefore to discover with regard to any story of anti-Semite violence is whether it is true or a pure invention. Having proved the former the next thing is to find out (a) whether it was ordered by the Government or the act of irresponsible individuals, and (b) whether it was a reprisal or injuries received.

This is where the régimes of Germany and Italy on the one hand and Russia on the other differ so entirely. In Soviet Russia cruelties far too horrible to be described merely as persecution were and are committed by the State Department once known as the Cheka, having its own locale in the Lubyanka with Chinese and Jewish torturers all complete. Can the Gestapo, or secret police of Germany, in any way compare with this? There is certainly nothing in the nature of the Cheka but there are concentration camps where prisoners are said to be "beaten up"—and for the matter of that are rioters beaten up by the American

police. But no evidence of instruments of torture on the Russian or Chinese model has ever been produced. Is it not moreover the fact that many of the acts of violence committed against the Jews have been spasmodic outbreaks of popular feeling, not ordered by the Government and even in certain cases condemned by it?

Moreover how far were such outbreaks by individual Nazis reprisals for those outrages committed on their comrades? Here again we see the difference from the cruelties of the Bolsheviks. For the tortures inflicted by the Cheka and the commissars all over Russia have not been acts of counter-violence but barbarities inflicted on innocent men, women and children who had done no harm to anyone. In Germany on the contrary the most horrible cruelties were committed by the Communists, who in that country as in Russia were predominantly Jews, before Hitler came to power; hundreds of Nazis were assassinated, others blinded or maimed for life, and once the Jewish power was broken they hurled themselves on their former oppressors. This was more particularly so in Austria where Nazi violence was greater than in Germany.

The frightful programme of the German Communist party was no figment of the imagination, as the raid on the Karl Liebknecht Haus clearly proved. There were all the secret preparations for world revolution, underground passages running all over Berlin, plans for blowing it up, and also whole departments devoted to planning the destruction of the British Empire.

Making, however, all allowance for provocation and for irresponsible acts that the Nazi Government may not have been able to prevent, we cannot help deploring certain of the methods employed against the Jews in Germany and Austria. Persecution is never justified, and Jew-baiting whether by speech or print is not only cruel but stupid, for it defeats its own ends by enlisting sympathy in other countries with the Jewish cause; Herr Streicher with his *Stürmer* has doubtless had the effect of bringing many people abroad over to it. A German tells me that only this kind of propaganda appeals to the uneducated classes in Germany and acts as a continual reminder to them of the Jewish danger. This may be true and the reason why Low's equally offensive caricatures of Hitler and Mussolini continue to appear in the British press. There may be no other way of keeping up hatred of the "Dictators" in the minds of the less educated British public.

Those of us who recognise most clearly that the Jewish question must be faced cannot but wish that Herr Hitler, on taking over the immense power conferred on him, did not immediately forbid any displays of violence and, further, ordain that no Jew should suffer merely on account of his race but only for conduct proved by fair trial to be reprehensible. Arbitrary imprisonment or punishment is a system which has been abhorrent to every Briton from the time of the Habeas Corpus Act onwards. Again, when limiting the number of Jews occupying posts in the professional classes, we regret that this very necessary measure of justice to the Germans should not have been carried out in a manner which could have raised no reasonable protests in foreign countries.

The Nazis in this respect display the same lack of psychology as the Jews in their attitude to anti-Semitism. For directly the latter detect in anyone the least inclination to oppose Jewish supremacy in any sphere, and fail either by bribery, flattery, or intimidation to win him over, they proceed to attack him, if sufficiently important, in the Press, to injure him in his career even to the point of depriving him of his livelihood, and thus force him into an attitude of anti-Semitism against his will. Both Jews and Germans fail to realise that persecution only strengthens the case of their opponents.

Another accusation frequently brought against the Nazi movement is that it is anti-Christian; if it were so it would be no new thing. For in spite of the piety that prevailed in a large part of old Germany atheism flourished there more freely than in any other country in the world (see my "World Revolution," p. 309). In 1931 the Russian "League of the Godless" found there its strongest support; a "general offensive against the Christian Church" was planned in Berlin, which was to become the headquarters of the Bolshevik anti-religious campaign. The advent of Hitler to power necessitated the movement being transferred to Czechoslovakia.

Nazi Germany is thus less anti-Christian than the Germany of some years ago, and it takes no part in the militant atheism and revolting blasphemies of the previous Godless movement. Only amongst a portion of the present Nazis the theory of "Nordic" superiority descending from Nietzsche, making of Germans the supermen of the world, has led to a race-ist "religion," regarding Germany as their only god and the formation of a powerful German bloc in the East of Europe as their final aim.

But this is where these extremists of Nazi-ism come up against another race-ism, for the Jews are still more convinced that *their* race is superior to all others; indeed in the *Cabala* the *goyim* (Gentiles) are denied human attributes—"the Jews alone are to be styled men"—and they look forward to the day when they shall rule the whole world and all other nations shall be wiped out. I admit I find the idea of a German bloc in the East of Europe less unpleasant.

Those Nazis, however, who oppose Christianity on the grounds that it is the outcome of Judaism have surrendered their strongest weapon, since it was this exclusive Jewish raceism that Christ denounced, preaching instead love for all mankind. Hitler himself gave the lie to the former theory in *Mein Kampf*, where he pointed out that Christianity is the very antithesis of Judaism and recalled how Christ drove out with a whip the money-changers from the temple of the Lord. No one condemned the Jews more severely than did Christ, and one wonders, if He came to earth again to-day, how many professing Christians would be willing to receive Him; too often their sympathies are with the money-changers rather than with Him who drove them out. If this was the attitude of some of the German clergy one can understand Hitler's determination to prevent them propagating from the pulpit.

I write, however, as no blind admirer of Hitler or of the Nazi régime. I regret his outbursts against France in *Mein Kampf*,

written in the bitterness of his country's defeat, but which from his recent interview with Monsieur Daladier do not appear to express his present attitude. But most of all I regret his lack of judgment with regard to the men he admits to his confidence, of which the terrible Röhm purge was the result. Though in no way comparable to the massacre of British officers in their bedrooms in Dublin on 21 November, 1920, of which the instigators were received with honour by Mr. Lloyd George at 10, Downing Street eleven months later, or again with the recent purges of Stalin, it appeared to us shocking. Again I cannot understand how a man of Hitler's brilliant intelligence can ever have trusted Ludecke, whom after one interview in 1924 I judged immediately as a man not to be taken seriously, and never again admitted within my door. He departed hurling insults at this country, and the gullible British public has now filled his pockets with money for the book *I Knew Hitler*, which is in reality a treacherous attack on the leader who at last saw him in his true colours. Yes, Hitler has not been altogether wise in his choice of friends—and there are doubtless others. . . . But what Government is free from treacherous elements? Did Mr. Chamberlain ever dream that whilst the whole world rang with applause at his great and heroic work for peace, he would find men of his own country and his own party base enough to attack him? Let us at any rate trust to his judgment, formed by personal contact, that in the Führer there was ground for confidence.

Hitler is not the enemy of England. Already in *Mein Kampf* he declared it to be the country with which he most ardently desired German friendship. Dr. Ernst Hanfstaengl, one of his earliest supporters and later his Foreign Press Chief, told me recently that in those days of 1923, Hitler, in recalling his experiences as a soldier during the terrible years of the War, said that nothing in his eyes seemed more insane and deplorable than the wholesale slaughter between the Germans and English. It was very painful to him to have to fire on Englishmen and at moments the sight of the dead bodies of the splendid Highlanders made him feel quite sick.

These are the sentiments which the war-mongers in our midst are trying to destroy and to drive this highly-strung and sensitive man beyond his patience by continued insults and abuse. If one day his nerve breaks and he cries out: "Then let it be war!" we shall have them to thank.

Those of us who most admire Herr Hitler for his courage and patriotism earnestly wish that he would disregard all such provocations as unworthy of his notice and refrain from retorts which only give satisfaction to his opponents. For nothing could be farther from his desires than to afford the Jews the triumph of seeing the two great Nordic nations, between which he has hoped for friendship, again engaged in mutual destruction.

(To be concluded.)

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