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Exhibition

The Bilderbergers

In many a dark corner, there floats a whisper that the world is ruled by persons unseen. At some appointed time, silent limousines deliver a group of faceless men to a heavily guarded mansion where whole continents are carved up and put together around a table. These men, a kind of Mafia of international politics, are called the Bilderbergers.

We have always taken our Bilderbergers with mustard. Back in April of 1957, Westbrook Pegler reported that the Bilderbergers met in a heavily guarded session at St. Simon's Island, off the coast of Georgia; but Peg was about the only newsmen who saw them. In the summer of 1962, an early edition of the *New York Times* noted that a group of American diplomats were going to Stockholm to attend "a secret meeting of men of great wealth." But the news mysteriously was crowded out of the final edition which is preserved on microfilm.

Now, quite accidentally, we are in a position to say that, Yes; Virginia, there is a Bilderberg. We were browsing through the authorized biography of *Bernhard, Prince of the Netherlands*, published last year. It is a silly and pretentious book about a silly and pretentious man. Nevertheless, Prince Bernhard is widely reported to be the leader of the Bilderberger meetings. And sure enough, Bernhard's faithful Boswell devotes a whole chapter to "The Hotel de Bilderberg."

The first meeting of the Bilderbergers took place May 29-31, 1954 at the hotel, located near Arnhem in the deeply wooded uplands of eastern Holland. As Bernhard's biographer says proudly, "There was absolutely no publicity. The hotel was ringed by security guards so not a single journalist got within a mile of the place. The participants were pledged not to repeat publicly what was said in the discussions." Since then, the meetings have been held once or twice a year, always in a different country.

The driving force behind the Bilderbergers was a strange cloak-and-dagger type by the name of Joseph E. Retinger. Dr. Retinger was a passionate Pole whose antics during the first world war brought a price upon his head from both the Central Powers

and the Allies. He is described as a "Tallyrand without portfolio," with a "Borgian aptitude for intrigue."

Americans who have participated in the group include most of the familiar names in the international set: C. D. Jackson, H. J. Heintz II, John S. Coleman, David Rockefeller, Charles P. Taft, and Joseph E. Johnson. President Eisenhower's personal delegates have been General Bedell Smith and Dr. Gabriel Hauge. When the group met at St. Simon's Island, Senators Fulbright and Wiley and several congressmen attended.

Similarly, President Kennedy has virtually staffed the State Department with Bilderberger alumni. Dean Rusk, George W. Ball, George McGhee, Walt Whitman Rostow, McGeorge Bundy, Arthur Dean have been regulars, along with Paul Nitze, now Secretary of the Navy.

About 60 to 80 attend each meeting, although the list of the invited is not always the same. Here at these off-the-record meetings, the men who make world decisions in politics and finance can hash out their opinions and differences and reach conclusions without interference. The beauty of it, according to the participants, is that they are accountable neither to the prying press nor the prying public.

And decisions are made here too. At the Bilderberg meetings were laid the foundations of the Treaty of Rome (GATT), the Common Market, and the Atlantic Community—according to Bernhard. We doubt it not.

Apparently other strategies are planned here too. Bernhard's biographer, writing at least two years ago, lays his finger prophetically on the current *détente* with Russia.

Prince Bernhard . . . believes that as the old Bolsheviks die off and the young Russians, who have lost the hot, crusading fervor of the Marxist Revelation, take over, there will be a return to a more democratic type of socialism and a loosening of discipline that will make it possible to bring those lost lands back into the European sphere.

"That's a lovely thought," says Bernhard, "but when it will come, or if it comes in time, who shall say?" The Bilderbergers say.