

Ezra Taft Benson Wasn't an Official John Birch Member - but He Might as Well have been One

ETB Wasn't an Official John Birch Member but He Might as Well Have Been One

Posted by: ^

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Ezra Taft Benson fervently believed that, next to the Mormon Church, the John Birch Society was the best thing for fighting Communism since sliced Reds.

A quick run-down on the Benson-Bircher Battalion, in its official and unofficial forms:

--Ezra Taft Benson was not a card-carrying member of the John Birch Society, but his wife, Flora Amussen Benson, was.

--ETB's youngest son, Mark Amussen Benson (Steve's dad), was not an official member of the Birch Society, either, but his wife, Lela Wing Benson, was.

--ETB's oldest child, Reed, was a high-ranking, paid employee in the John Birch Society who established its Washington, D.C. office and who, later, ran its Utah chapter behind the Zion Curtain--but who ultimately quit the Bircher band on his father's orders (we'll save that one for the ending of this tale from the crazy-cat crypt).

Now, on to the truth-is-better-than-Mormon-fiction details.

A. Mark Amussen Benson: Not a Member-of-Record Bircher but a Valiant Bircher Backer

--From a post by Steve Benson, RfM, 28 July 2014:

"My father, Mark A. Benson, was not a member of the John Birch Society. When I asked my dad why he wasn't, he curiously told that he was not a Bircher because he wasn't 'a joiner,' adding that he felt he could do more good working outside its membership ranks. That comment of Dad's always struck me as odd. If he wasn't a joiner, then why did he join the the Mormon Church remain steadfastly joined at the hip to it until his death?"

"Anyway, then—Mormon historian D. Michael Quinn erroneously claimed that my father was a JBS member in a 1980s—era 'Dialogue' article, about which I personally and politely corrected him in a phone call I made to him. At the same time, however, I complimenting Mike for what I regarded as an remarkably well researched— and —written historical piece. Mike was surprised by my phone call, admitting that he expected me to have been critical of his overall essay, which I definitely was not. It was a tour de force.

"Despite not being a Bircher member of record, my dad nonetheless strongly supported its teachings, goals and agenda. Growing up, our home was full of Bircher books, magazines, newsletters and other JBS materials (One of my household, allowance—supplemented chores was to organize, among other things, my dad's copious home—office political files, which included categorizing by topic his sizeable trove of Bircher material).

B. Ezra Taft Benson: Not a Member—of—Record Bircher Member Either, but a Barnstorming Bircher Believer

"My grandfather was also not an official member of the John Birch Society but he might as well have been. He spoke at its rallies, openly endorsed its agenda and was greatly influenced in his radical personal political views by his oldest child Reed, who was, at one point, a prominent, employed and paid official of the JBS who was assigned the duty of opening up the JBS's offices in Washington, D.C.

"My grandfather was himself highly praised and promoted by the JBS leadership. He tried to officially tie the Mormon Church to the Birch Society by falsely suggesting in public that the LDS Church endorsed the JBS (that latter effort resulted in ETB being forced by the Church to publicly reverse that claim).

"ETB also attempted to get LDS Church president David O. McKay's picture on the cover of Bircher publications (a move blocked by McKay, at the encouragement of First Presidency counselor Hugh B. Brown, who regarded ETB as an out—of—control political extremist and who fiercely opposed ETB's outspoken support of the Birchers. When I told my mother, Lela, that I had read Ed Firmage's wonderful biography of Brown, she angrily criticized Brown to my face, telling me that he was 'a thorn in the side' of my grandfather).

"My grandfather informed me in personal correspondence that the Birch Society was, next to the Mormon Church, the greatest organization in the world fighting the global spread of Communism and subscribed me to its periodicals, 'American Opinion' and 'Review of the News'"

C. Ezra Taft Benson: Pusher of the "Prophetic" Notion that Next to Mormonism, Bircherism was the Best Thing that God Ever Gave the Planet for Fighting Devilized Communism

--From a post by Steve Benson, "Inside the Mind of Ezra Taft Benson: Personal Letters to a Grandson," RfM, 3 August 2005:

". . . Below are excerpts from the personal correspondence of Ezra Taft Benson to me, written when he was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve and later as President of the Mormon Church. They are grouped by topic and provide an inside track for viewing the world through the eyes of Ezra Taft Benson. The letters were written by him (or on a few occasions, in his behalf) from the years 1977 to 1986, back in the bygone days when I was an active and generally politically conservative member of the Mormon faith. [Thank Carl Sagan it was just a phase I went through].

--Letter from Ezra Taft Benson to Steve Benson:

"I loaned you several books when you favored us with a visit in Salt Lake enroute to Texas. I hope you were able to get some time to study them. If there are any others which I could help you with, I would be happy to do so. I believe your father gets American Opinion and Review of the News [the John Birch Society's weekly news magazine]. These I consider of great importance as the best single source of reliable information next to the writings of the prophets and the Holy Scriptures on the question o of socialism, communism, and other dangerous evils, which are rapidly invading this great land."

"(Ezra Taft Benson, 'Grandpa Benson,' to Stephen Benson, 11 May 1977)

--Letter from Ezra Taft Benson to Steve Benson:

"It was good to talk to you yesterday from the home of your parents . . .

"I suggested to you at that time American Opinion magazine. I['] send you [a] copy of the magazine together with the Birch log by McManus and a copy of the Alan Stang Report [another Birch publication]. All of these, I believe, would be helpful to you in the important work you are doing."

"(Grandpa Benson, 'ETB,' signed by autopen, to Steve Benson, 10 May 1982)

D. Ezra Taft Benson: Believer in the Bircher Bull that the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. was a Clandestine Communist Who Was Actually Assassinated by Fellow Commies in Order to Spark a Civil War in the United States

--From a post by Steve Benson, RfM, October 2009:

"My grandfather also was convinced that Dr. King's assassination was carried out by Communists themselves, in an effort to trigger civil war in America.

"In his book, 'An Enemy Hath Done This,' he quoted from an article by Susan L. M. Huck, originally published in the John Birch magazine, 'American Opinion':

"Okay, let's take the gloves off. This insurrection didn't just happen. It was a set-up—just as the assassination of Martin Luther King was a set-up. The Communists and their Black Power fanatics have been working to create just such a situation for years. They even TOLD us what they were planning to do, again and again, as they did it. . . .

"And remember, the Reds and their Black Power troops have promised us that this is only the beginning! Stokely has said that his forces plan to burn down America.

"They're sure going to try.

"How do you stop it? It's very simple. You stop Communist racial agitation; you arrest the leaders for conspiracy to commit murder, arson and burglary, prove their guilt in a court of law and lock them up. And you free the hands of our police so that they can PREVENT rioting and looting and arson by those citizens now convinced by the actions of our 'Liberals' that theft, incendiarism and assault will be tolerated.

"Don't kid yourself. The people who are behind all of this mean to have a civil war. We either stop them now or they will escalate this thing."

E. Ezra Taft Benson: Convinced that the Laying on of Hands of Bircher Bunk Could Bring a Jr. High School Kid to Jesus H. Christ about Commie Martin L. King

--Post by Steve Benson, "Ezra Taft Benson: Mormonism's Prophet, Seer and Racebaiter E (Part Two)," 20 July 2005:

"In the mid-1960s, I was in junior high school. It was a time when the nation was being rocked by the tumultuous struggle for civil rights.

"During those uncertain days, I remember my grandfather telling me that Dr. King was a tool of the Communist conspiracy and urging me to read John Birch Society literature on King's supposed true nature and Communist-inspired agenda. I remember my grandfather telling me that Dr. King was a tool of the Communist conspiracy and urging me to read John Birch Society literature on King's supposed true nature and Communist-inspired agenda.

"That propaganda was readily provided me in my home, where I came across Bircher articles purporting to show Dr. King's Communist connections. I remember, in particular, a photograph of a young Martin Luther King, Jr. sitting in a classroom at the allegedly Communist Highlander 'Folkschool' training center in Tennessee, where, Birchers claimed, he and others underwent Communist indoctrination at the hands of their Kremlin-directed programmers.

"That accusation was, in fact, without foundation. The school was not Communist but, rather, a progressive institution devoted to fighting racism. It was attended by none other than Rosa Parks the summer before she refused to give up her seat on the Montgomery Alabama, bus.

"(Herbert R. Kohl, reply to Marshall Brady, 'New York Review of Books,' 19 January 1984) . . .

"Unfortunately, as a youngster in junior high school, I didn't know these facts and, thus in dutiful ignorance, was encouraged by my father to enlighten my fellow classmates as to the 'truth' about Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Under my father's direction, I gathered up stacks of John Birch propaganda, (complete with the photograph of Dr. King supposedly taking orders from Communists in that Tennessee classroom), and brought them to school to show a skeptical classmate. He took one look at my 'proof' and laughed.

"I was crestfallen.

"I had lost that battle to warn my friends against the coming Communist 'Negro' invasion. My mother later warned me to limit my association with Black people because, she said, they were 'different.'

"In the Benson household, racial equality was not a topic of priority."

F. Ezra Taft Benson: Prayerfully Plays with the Idea of Running for President of the United States of America under the John Birch Society's Official Banner of Blessing

"In 1966, an organization spearheaded primarily by John Birchers and known as the '1976 Committee,' nominated my grandfather as its choice for President of the United States, with avowed racist and South Carolina senator, Strom Thurmond, as his running mate.

"At the time of the announcement, I remember the excitement among the Benson clan at the prospect that the grand patriarch of our family might become the president of the country. I recall buttons and bumper stickers being passed around and my grandfather smiling proudly amid all the buzz.

"Thurmond was the prominent White supremacist who had himself run for president in 1948 on the platform of the States' Rights Party, commonly known as the 'Dixiecrats.' The primary goal of Thurmond's earlier presidential bid was to preserve racial segregation. As he declared at the time, 'All the laws of Washington and all the bayonets of the Army cannot force the Negroes into our homes, our schools, our churches.'

"(cited in Jeff Jacoby, 'The Death of American Racism')

"Thurmond later became a strident opponent of civil rights, famously filibustering a 1957 civil rights bill for a record 24 hours and 18 minutes.

(Robert Tanner, 'Dixiecrats fueled by racial politics, Civil rights spurred Thurmond's 1948 bid for presidency,' in 'Arizona Republic,' 14 December 2002, sec. A., p. 9)

"In an effort to understand the nature of the group that had hand-picked its Benson-Thurmond ticket, I retrieved from my father's personal office files a news article announcing the formation of this '1976 Committee.' Across the top of the article was handwritten the note, 'for your memory book.'

"According to the article, the '1976 Committee' had derived its name from the belief of its members that it was 'necessary to head off some sort of conspiratorial one-world, socialist take-over of the United States by 1976.'

"This fear was rooted in its claim that 'the U.S. Communist Party's recently professed plan [is] to promote the establishment of state socialism in this country in its next ten-year plan-by 1976.'

"(Neil Munro, 'Benson-Thurmond Team Pushed by Holland Group, "1976 Committee" Limited,' undated)

"The Committee's motto was 'Stand Up for Freedom--No Matter What the Cost.' Its stated goal was to launch 'a ten-year course to restore the American Republic.'

"In its campaign literature (copies of which littered my home during that time) my grandfather and Thurmond were billed as 'the best team of "68" and 'the team you can trust to guide America.'

"Invoking the powers of heaven, the '1976 Committee' described Ezra Taft Benson not only as 'unquestionably . . . a scholar and patriot [but] . . . primarily a man of God.' He was heralded as 'one of the Twelve Apostles of the worldwide Mormon Church,' 'a kind and compassionate man,' one who 'does not impose his standards on others' and 'an outspoken and thoughtful critic of liberalism, socialism and Communism.'

"The '1976 Committee' touted Thurmond was as a popular and renowned public servant, a decorated WWII combat veteran who was dedicated to 'military preparedness' and a person determined to formulate 'an effective policy to eradicate Communism from the Western Hemisphere.'

"Among the priorities of the '1976 Committee' were:

-"Opposition to 'international Communist activities,'

-"Support for pulling the U.S. out of the United Nations,

-"Warnings about Communist control of the civil rights movement,

-"Accusations that the U.S. Supreme Court of 'waging war' against America,

- "Advocacy for U.S. retention of the Panama Canal,
- "Complaints of liberal bias in the media,
- "Inveighings against Communist 'infiltration' of the nation's churches,
- "Calls for a return to economic the gold standard; and
- "Resistance to nuclear disarmament treaties with the Russians.

"Not coincidentally, much of the '1976 Committee's' recommended literature was published by the John Birch Society.

"('The Team You Can Trust to Guide America,' campaign brochure published by 'The 1976 Committee,' 222 River Avenue, Holland Michigan 49423, undated; and 'The 1976 Committee,' campaign brochure, undated)"

G. The Mormon Church: Finally Reins in ET Benson and His Batty Birchism

"Not everyone in the leadership of the Mormon Church was thrilled as either the Benson family or Birchers at the prospects of Ezra Taft Benson running for President of the United States--especially amid claims that my grandfather had won the support of then-LDS president, David O. McKay.

"According to First Presidency counselor Hugh B. Brown, Ezra Taft Benson had 'a letter from President McKay endorsing his candidacy' and feared 'it would rip the Church apart' if my grandfather released it publicly as part of a presidential bid.

"(Hugh B. Brown, interview with BYU professors Ray Hillam and Richard Wirthlin, 9 August 1966, transcribed 'from Rough Draft Notes,' fd 6, Hillam papers, and box 34, Buerger papers, and quoted in Quinn, 'Extensions of Power,' pp. 96-97, 461)

"[For an extensive review of the havoc, conflict and controversy generated by ETB's radical and disruptive presence in the ranks of the General Authorities (where he managed to rankle not only Hugh B. Brown, but J. Reuben Clark, N. Eldon Tanner, Marion G. Romney, Delbert L. Stapley, Mark E. Petersen, Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, Spencer W. Kimball and the Quorum of the Twelve at large, together with at least three First Presidencies), see D. Michael Quinn, 'The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power,'

Chapter 3, 'Ezra Taft Benson: A Study of Inter-Quorum Conflict' (Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, in association with Smith Research Associates, 1997), pp. 66-115," as suggested by Steve Benson, RfM post, 3 August 2010].

"My grandfather's official biographer, Sheri Dew, offered a benign and misleading account of the controversy, claiming that McKay merely advised Ezra Taft Benson to neither encourage or discourage efforts by the '1976 Committee' to draft him.

"Grassroots momentum for the Benson-Thurmond ticket began building in early 1967, but eventually died out when it became apparent that Richard Nixon was the Republican front-runner.

"(Sheri L. Dew, 'Ezra Taft Benson: A Biography,' pp. 383, 392, 394; see also, Francis M. Gibbons, 'Ezra Taft Benson: Statesman, Patriot, Prophet of God' [Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret Book Company, 1996], pp. 244, 247-48)"

H. Ezra Taft Benson: His Bircherism-Gone-Mad Finally Got Him Sent Out of the Country by Order of the Mormon Church President

--Post by Steve Benson, RfM, 18 July 2014:

"'ETB Banished by LDS Church to Europe to Keep Him Out of Politics'

"Fellow Mormon apostle Joseph Fielding Smith, as historian D. Michael Quinn documentably reports, 'identified [the sending of Benson on a] mission [to Europe]' as 'intentional exile.' Keep in mind that Smith at the time was president of the Quorum of the Twelve when he wrote Congressman Ralph Harding of Idaho the following:

"'I think it is time that Brother Benson forgot all about politics and settled down to his duties as a member of the Council of the Twelve. . . . He is going to take a mission to Europe in the near future and by the time he returns I hope he will get all of the political notions out of his system.'

"Smith later added for the Congressman's benefit, 'I am glad to report to you that it will be some time before we hear anything from Brother Benson, who is now on his way to Great Britain where I suppose he will be at least for the next two years. When he returns I hope his blood will be purified.'

"Quinn further and correctly describes my grandfather's assignment to the European mission theater as a 'banishment,' reporting

that at '[Mormon] Xchurch headquarters . . . the intent of this mission was, in fact, to remove Benson from the American political scene.'

"The son of then-LDS Church president David O. McKay--Robert McKay--also wrote Congressman Harding about efforts at the top of the Mormon Church to muzzle and relocate ETB:

"'We shall ALL be relieved when Elder Benson ceases TO RESIST COUNSEL and returns to a concentration on those affairs befitting his office.' [emphasis added]

"Quinn writes:

"'A week after Robert McKay's letter, U.S. Under-Secretary of State W. Averill Harriman asked Hugh B. Brown how long Benson would be on this European mission. Brown reportedly replied, "If I had my way, he'd never come back.'"

"(To be sure, Brown succeeded in getting my grandfather to make a public retraction of an earlier and false claim that he--ETB--had made about the Mormon Church supposedly being in support of the John Birch Society).

"At any rate, everyone knew the lay of the land--including Church leaders, ETB's family and ETB himself.

"When ETB was eventually exiled to Europe, his top-gun John Bircher son Reed complained 'at a Church farewell [where the Twelve's president was present] that his father had been 'stabbed in the back.'

"Moreover, ETB himself was aware of the uproar he was causing among the Mormon Church hierarchy and fired back at his critics from within via an October 1963 General Conference talk, comparing them to 'Judas.'

"(See D. Michael Quinn, 'Ezra Taft Benson: A Study in Inter-Quorum Conflict,' Chapter 3, in 'The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power,' pp. 74, 76-80)"

I. Ezra Taft Benson: A Bircher-Bonkered White-and-Delightful Mormon White Supremacist

"My grandfather (like scripturally-faithful Mormons are today) was a White supremacist, in the sense that he believed in the inherent pre-eminence and transcendence of the White race over the Black race.

"A particularly ugly piece of evidence I came across from his personal library supports that grim reality.

"In 1995, I discovered a book that had belonged to my grandfather. Over the years, he had given me many books from his own collection. At the time I stumbled across this particular one, I did not recall having seen or read it before.

"My grandfather's handwritten signature adorned its front cover, which was somewhat unusual. I had many of his personally-owned books and normally he would sign and/or stamp them on the inside.

"From the nature of the signature, I could tell that he was proud to have owned this particular book. He not only signed his name to it, he lavished his signature-'E.T. Benson'-upon its cover, above the title, in the upper right-hand corner, in a large, bold, looping writing style--where it could not be missed.

"The book was entitled 'Race and Reason: A Yankee View,' authored by Carleton Putnam and published in 1961 by Public Affairs Press in Washington, D.C. The book's title was in bold, black, capital letters against an orange and white background depicting shattering glass.

"On its back cover were the following endorsements:

"'A blockbuster . . . [A] book that ought to be read by every thinking American, North and South. It may be the opening gun in a literacy counterattack against ideas of race that have influenced the thinking of Supreme Court justices, Presidents, preachers and writers.'

"'[This book is what] the South most needs now for its case . . . [It] is a 'categorical imperative' for Southerners . . . who know [the light's] fullness will depend henceforth on their own intelligence, literacy, authority and self-control.'

"'We predict that this book will be on the tongues of all informed Mississippians in the days ahead.'

"'Incisive, authoritative, effective . . . Mr. Putnam has put all serious and objective students of the race problem in his debt.' . . .

"I went to the Internet and looked up the book's author and title. Not surprisingly, it came up on a White supremacist website, along with several other like-minded works, accompanied by short explanatory texts:

--'"Who Brought The Slaves to America?'

"The Jews did! And did they get upset when the Black Muslims incorporated this into their teachings. Shatters myth of "White guilt."
Paperback. 30 pages. 14 illustrations."

--"White Man, Think Again!"

"A. Jacob. The White man must rule or perish. Paperback. 348 pages'

--"Tracing Our White Ancestors'

"Frederick Haberman. Answers many questions. 185 pages.'

"Links offered to other subjects included:

--"Adolf Hitler'

--'National-Socialism Leaders'

--'The Holohoax'

"Then, at the bottom of the web page, was listed Putnam's book that had come from my grandfather's library: 'Race and Reason: A Yankee View,' with the teaser:

"Explains in-depth racial differences and the dangers of race-mixing. A must for all serious students. Paperback. 120 pages.'

"Researching further, I discovered that Putnam's book is part of an array of White supremacist literature housed at the University of Southern Mississippi under the title of 'Citizen's Council/Civil Rights Collection.' The same collection also contains autographed photographs of one of my grandfather's political mentors: George Wallace.

"Digging deeper, I found that Putnam's 'Race and Reason: A Yankee View' is listed among 'Selected Right-Wing Apocalyptic, Conspiracist, Populist and Racist Texts.'

"That list also includes Adolf Hitler's 'Mein Kamp,' and two John Birch works: Alan Stang's, 'It's Very Simple: The True Story of Civil Rights' and Birch founder Robert Welch's 'The New Americanism.'"

J. Ezra Taft Benson: Writer of Thank-You Notes to Bircher Headquarters

Historian D. Michael Quinn adds a Benson-Bircher connection that ETB "lieographer" Sheri Dew fails to mention in her whitewashed window dress-up of ETB.

--Post by Steve Benson, "LDS Church Forced to Admit "14 Fundamentals" Talk Not Official Doctrine, RfM, 9 April 2013:

"[Quinn notes that] 'Benson wrote to his "Dear Friends" at the Birch national headquarters,' [adding] in footnote 355, p. 469, that this ETB letter to the Birch national headquarters 'was in response to a get-well card with messages from each Birch staff member.'

"(D. Michael Quinn, "The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power," in Chapter 3, "Ezra Taft Benson: A Study in Inter-Quorum Conflict" [Salt Lake City, Utah: Signature Books, in association with Smith Research Associates, 1997], pp. 110-11; and p. 469, fn 349-355)"

K. Ezra Taft Benson: Temporarily Torn Between Two Lovers, He Chooses Church over Birch When a Stake President Pulls Rank on His Son

--Posted by Steve Benson, RfM, 5 January 2015:

"'Ripley's Believe It or Not: The Day ETB Resisted the John Birch Society'

"In another thread, RfM poster 'baura' wrote:

"'January 4, 1963--First Presidency publishes message: "We deplore the presumption of some politicians, especially officers, coordinators and members of the John Birch Society, who undertake to align the Church or its leadership with their political views." Apostle Ezra Taft Benson's son, Reed, is Birch coordinator for Utah."

("On This Day in Mormon History, Jan. 5," by "baura," on "Recovery from Mormonism" discussion board, 5 January 2014)"

"Some interesting back story on my uncle Reed, the John Birch Society--and his decision to eventually leave it. Reed lived in northern

Virginia when he was working as a high-ranking official in the JBS, tasked with the unholy assignment of setting up a Bircher branch in the nation's capitol. (May No-Mo Mother Nature have mercy on his soul).

"Reed was an enthusiastic, committed, rabid-beyond-any-stretch-of-reason Bircher who never met a Commie conspiracy theory he didn't like. For instance, he thought--and spun to me--the nutwad notion that then-rising border tensions between Russia and China were a ploy concocted by Commie evildoers in both countries designed to mislead the West into believing there were significant divisions within the Red block. The idea, wigged-oput Reed insisted to me, was that Russia and China would fake disagreement between themselves in order to lull the gullible West into a state of complacency, as they were secretly moving to ultimately conquer and destroy the U.S. through a Commie-led plot orchestrated by Kremlin/Peking-managed American Black leaders and their puppets (i.e., Cr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and his wicked pals) who would be assigned to lead the charge against God, Family and Country while masquerading as non-violent advocates for the U.S. Civil Rights. movement.

"With that kind of nonsense guiding his life course, it was therefore considered unfathomable that, barring a miracle, Reed would never leave the Birch Society. But leave he did and, believe it or not, it was all because his dad told him to.

"In an interesting twist of giving private counsel, Reed (so the story also goes, as I have heard it from reliable circles) was asked by his stake president to serve as a high councilman when he was living back on the East coast working God's will through Birchism. It was while he was fulfilling that kooky calling against Communist infiltration of the planet that , Reed was also 'called' by his stake president to join the ranks of the local High Council. In issuing that "calling," however, the stake president told Reed to first resign his professional Bircher job, since the stake president thought that this kind of judicious move would make Reed a more credible High Councilman.

"Reed (oldest child of his father, Ezra Taft) sought his dad's advice on the matter, whereupon ETB told him to do what his local Church leaders requested--i.e, quit the Birchers. Like a blue Mormon believer, Reed resigned from the Bircher hierarchy, served loyally in the Virginia branch of the LDS Cult and eventually moved out to Utah, where he landed a spot teaching Book of Mormon 'ancient scripture' classes at BYU.

"Reed was obviously loyal to his Mormon leaders (most especially to his Mormon 'prophet' father), as demonstrated by bowing his head his head and bending his knee to commands from SLC that he abandon the Birchers. Given his deep devotion to "following the prophet," it is not surprising that Reed was later destined (so I have been also reliably informed) to become royally p-o'ed when Sheri Dew, rather than Reed Benson, was officially tapped out to put together ETB's sanitized life story. Assisting Dew in her righteously-restricted "research" efforts was my first cousin, Flora Parker, oldest child of ETB's daughter, Beverly Benson Parker. In short, the fix was in.

"Reed being cut out of the writing loop largely explains, in my opinion, why Dew's puff-piece bio on Ezra Taft Benson lacks in any meaningful or honest detail about ETB's over-the-edge political views, as well helps explain why the book is noticeably short in specifics as to ETB's open and deep sympathies for the John Birch Society (Which ETB told me was second only to the Mormon Church in stemming the spread of Communism worldwide). If Reed had actually been involved in spinning ETB's biographical tale, you can bet your bottom Bircher buck that it would have been filled with much more right-wing reactionary richness.

"[P.S.]: Uncle Reed and I were born on the same day, hence the middle name, gollygawddammit."

CONCLUSION ON THE DELUSION

Ezra Taft Benson may not have been a card-toting, dues-paying, uniform-wearing storm trooper for the John Birch Society, but you never would have known it.

He was most definitely a lifelong water-carrying believer in its goofy gospel--a faithful follower who, in actuality, willingly wore two hare-brained hats at the same time.

He was a member in total "mind and spirit" of the Cult of the Evil Twins: John Birch and Mormon Church.

Whoever said "Two heads are better than one" needs to have their head examined.

Per the Late Wise Ol' Cabbie...

Posted by: **SL Cab**

Date: August 17, 2016 09:53AM

Who actually had Mark Benson as a seminary teacher here during the 1960's:

>You can't be a Benson and not believe in conspiracy theories...

Steve Benson broke the mold on the Kennedy Assassination subject, but it took a few years.

Re: ETB Wasn't an Official John Birch Member but He Might as Well Have Been One Posted by: **Tevai** . . .
Date: August 17, 2016 01:15PM

Thank you for explaining my own childhood, Steve.

Because of you and your posts on this particular subject, I have (finally!) been able to understand some of the most ultimately important, abusive, and perplexing experiences I endured within my own family [the maternal side: racist, extremely JBSociety-oriented, former KKK] during my growing up.

Without your posts, I don't think I ever would have understood.

Thank you.

Mormon Prophet: Ezra Taft Benson Wasn't an Official John Birch Member - but He Might as Well have been One

Recovery from Mormonism
www.exmormon.org