

April 22, 1968

YORTY AND THE KENNEDY ASSASSINATION

The nation was heaved into the throes of new tragedy since Grass Roots Forum last appeared.

A horrendous crime -- the murder of still another man of public renown, this time an aspirant for the Presidency of the United States -- cast millions of people who voted for him into gloomy uncertainty, for through him they hoped to give their country a new direction; a direction toward sanity; cessation of warring abroad, equality and justice at home.

Before the snuffed-out life could lose all its body heat, political maneuverings that could cancel out the so clearly expressed wishes of the people, were set into motion.

One sits before the typewriter, capable of no more than staring into space with a sort of paralysis, not because thoughts would not come, but because they bear down in such great number; each asserting its own importance, waving its own unique significance, cruciality. But even as they flash before one as independent wholes, one cannot escape the surmounting conclusion that they are not unrelated entities, but rather scattered fragments of a system so aged, so strained from its own partialities, from its conscienceless inequities, that it can no longer contain within itself its waste matter that is now spilling over in gushes, affording insights to those who care to see its decomposing viscerals.

It is our desire, in fact our duty, we feel, to examine this heinous act in the broader frame of the time's phenomena. But where does one begin? Which piece does one pick up first, second ... How does one reduce such complexity to the simplicity comprehensible to the uninvolved? This is not a book; only an article. How laconic can one be and still be sufficiently exploring, analytical?

How much easier to sow confusion than to constitute clarity. Why does falsehood feel so soothing to so many? Because it's so ubiquitous about here? If falsehood feels soothing, is it wonder that the truth should be upsetting?

Those interested in sowing confusion will ask, often with affected cynicism: What is truth? How can one know what truth is? What is truth to one may not be truth to another. One finds much of this among today's young. It is a deliberate implantation by such who would benefit by confusion.

There might have been a time when a per-



son who was truly interested in his country's, and humanity's fate could afford to be less than truthful, less than scrutinizing, less than bold in search of the truth, out of consideration for his contemporaries; or because of a mistaken belief that if he will tell less than the truth he will thereby safeguard the good name of his country. This tortured hour in our history does not permit such kindly considerations, strong as the wish is, that it would. This hour demands the truth; it demands it bluntly; it demands it at whatever risk to one's self.

All through the night following the assassination, listening to the radio, or watching television, one was made to feel that everybody in this country was terribly horror-struck, and oh, so regretful. But through the day that followed, when we began to hear people's views, in direct conversation, and on the radio, we were pained having to realize that regret was anything but general. And its absence was not limited to those opposed to gun legislation; although they were the least reticent. Their reactions were perhaps best revealed when a caller on a two-way radio program, while discussing gun-control legislation, spurted with but slightly

controlled anger; "Just because two politicians were killed . . ."

There is no revulsion here from violence. Let all the pious outpourings that we heard after the assassination mislead no one. Violence here is a daily occurrence, and daily it goes unnoticed. It is noticed only when someone very rich and important is the victim. If any change in this climate toward violence is to take place, it will have to

start with the admission of this truth.

To act shocked from a violent deed at the very time when young men are sent to prison for refusing to commit violence is a degree of hypocrisy difficult to describe. Perhaps the most violent of all violent acts is the violence used against those who refuse to engage in violence.

Is it not true that we hold up the man with the fixed bayonet as a hero, with the intent of instilling a desire in our young to emulate him?

Is it not true that we pride ourselves every day for the last number of years in how many Vietnamese we kill?

Is it not true that we will take a foreign national, put him in power -- against the will of his people -- keep him there, as long as it suits us, and then, if it suits, we will kill him? See Ngo Dinh Diem, for an example.

There is no limit as to how many examples one could cite to demonstrate that all pretense to the contrary, violence is and was an intrinsic fiber in the United States fabric.

And if those holding the nation's rein do not shrink from having a man killed ten thousand miles from our shores, if he seems an obstacle to their plans, why would it be incomparably worse if some interests in this country cause the killing of a native of whatever importance if HE appears an obstacle to THEIR plans?

There is talk now of violence; a great deal of talk. Some will consider it cynical, but it is our feeling that this talk about violence does not derive from a genuine sense of sorrow, or from a sense of the moral decay it manifests; rather, these despicable assassinations are used as an excuse to further restrict those who clamor for an end to the great injustices in our society.

Even a cursory examination of the victims of this latest chain of killings starting with John F. Kennedy, will disclose that they all spoke for change of varied degrees in our social structure, and in our nation's approach to the peoples of other lands.

John F. Kennedy had set the basis for a reconsideration of our involvement in Viet-

nam shortly before he was killed.

Robert F. Kennedy declared: NO MORE VIETNAMS!

Martin Luther King, of course, said that and much more.

There are too many to mention them all. They seem to assume an aspect of purposeful terrorization. One need not be a very important person to become a target of its cold, brutal force; even this writer was warned of having a hole blown through his head.

Since it was a Kennedy whose life was snuffed out in this latest tragedy, it brought back memories of his brother, and of the circumstances that prevailed following HIS assassination. We could not help noting certain similarities in the two sad events.

To begin with, both suspects became connected by the powers-to-be, not excluding the media, with a foreign situation about which there were strong feelings in the United States. The accused Mr. Oswald was connected with the Cuban situation, the Robert Kennedy suspect with the Israeli-Arab conflict.

There was an attempt in both cases to taint the accused with communism, without proving any connection, not to mention involvement of communists.

The powers-to-be find it important to so taint the accused, for even a suggestion that the accused is a communist, or a communist sympathizer, or a 'pink' -- whatever that means -- has sufficient subliminal effect on the average citizen to make further questioning unlikely, and conviction almost certain.

Oswald's history from the time he left the United States Marines to the very moment he was shot, is still an enigma.

There is one episode in that period that seems especially significant to this writer; one that, in our view, has its analogy in the treatment of the suspect in the Robert Kennedy assassination.

A man handing out leaflets on a street corner in these United States then, was not, and would not be today, of sufficient news value to warrant the hauling of television cameras to the spot to record it; especially in a city as large as New Orleans. And yet, only hours after the assassination of the late President, Mr. Oswald was shown distributing leaflets that supposedly favored Castro, on a street corner in New Orleans; hundred of miles from the scene of the crime.

The event becomes even more significant if one asks why that tape should have been so close at hand to replay so soon after the assassination? In fact one can ask if it was perhaps taped with the expectation that it will be shown under such circumstances.

In the case of the late Sen Kennedy's

suspected killer the communist issue was injected by Mr. Yorty. Although one must concede that Mr. Yorty has evolved into an accomplished inflamer of hate, it would be a mistake, we feel, to assume that re-painting of the accused was but a whimsical flaunting of that talent.

Mr. Yorty has personal reasons for engaging in outbursts and artifices that tend to defame communists, for, doing so, he obscures something of which he is reminded from time to time; that his political ascendance was not without help from commun-

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ists. It is a matter which Mr. Yorty would like people to forget. Parading at every occasion as a virile anti-communist crusader, he succeeds to becloud that past. But this was not at the time his primary consideration either, we feel.

Being a drum beating anti-communist could be helpful to him in still another matter, which we do not wish to discuss at the present, for it is pending in court; if we did, we would be no better than we think Mr. Yorty is.

Mr. Yorty is a very ambitious politician, who wants to get up there. How? Whatever way he can. At the early part of his career, leaning on liberal, progressive people, of whatever political affiliation, was advantageous for him; so he spoke in a vein that would please them, and would parade as a benefactor of mankind.

The cold war came; and then Joe Mc Carthy. To be known in this land of the free as a liberal or progressive, of whatever political affiliation, became a millstone for one with political ambitions. So Mr. Yorty changes his tune. He concluded that vociferous anti-communism could be a passport to a higher office.

He got himself elected Mayor of the city of Los Angeles, a 'non-partisan' office. There were many signs that he considered that office only a springboard. In fact he

made no secret of the fact that he would like to become U. S. Senator.

He is a registered Democrat. When John F. Kennedy ran against Mr. Nixon for the Presidency, Mr. Yorty supported Mr. Nixon. Quite possible that Mr. Kennedy had too much integrity for Mr. Yorty. But then again Mr. Nixon was vice-President, and he had Mr. Eisenhower's endorsement; by estimation, a more likely winner. Is there any doubt that a man in the presidency can do more for a politician than a defeated runner? And, having stuck his neck so far out, he should get a truly fat reward.

The Kennedys seemed to be consistently bad luck to Mr. Yorty.

In the Robert Kennedy-Johnson feud about

which so much was said and written, Mr. Yorty took sides with Mr. Johnson. Since the conflict became extended to include the Vietnam war, Mr. Yorty became perhaps the loudest, the bloodiest-mouthed advocate of continued slaughter.

It is not difficult to see that Mr. Yorty would have found it the thing to do. After all; Mr. Johnson was (still is) the incumbent, the political machine in his palm, certain to run (it seemed) and just as certain to win. He would be in with the 'ins', at last.

But again, developments proved Mr. Yorty -- among other things -- a poor judge

of events in motion. To Mr. Yorty's consternation, a change began to set in in John Doe's feeling about the war. His eagerness to see more American young men bleed to death in a foreign country did not find much favor with the people in California. (For which they deserve honorable mention.)

Samplings of voters' feelings disclosed that Mr. Yory could not win the nomination for Governor, and later for Senator and did not succeed in masking his disappointment over these developments.

And then; to top it all off...Senator Robert Kennedy steps into the arena to court the Presidency. If Mr. Kennedy were successful it might in fact mean Mr. Yorty's retirement from politics.

So here is a man with tangible reasons not to want to see Robert Kennedy become President.

The day after the assassination Mr. Yorty called a press conference to state that the accused man had communist sympathies, and connections.

What evidence is there that the suspect has communist sympathies?

The evidence is that he is an Arab; and since he is an Arab, he is anti-Israeli. Here it became a little vague. Since he is an Arab, and since the Soviet Union gives Egypt and Syria arms, the suspect

must have communist sympathies. The other approach was that the suspect is an Arab, as such he is anti-Israel; since the Soviet Union gives arms to Egypt and Syria they must be anti-Israel too. Since both, the accused and the Soviet Union are anti-Israel, it follows in Mr. Yorty's logic, that the suspect must have communist sympathies. The fact that Egypt has its communists in prison, Mr. Yorty did not consider relevant enough to mention.

Mr. Yorty sounded overcome by a compulsion; as if to defend himself.

Expressed opinions that his assertions which sounded speculative at best, and malicious, would prejudice the case, one by State Attorney General Lynch, did not deter Mr. Yorty. It took a court order to stop him.

Mr. Yorty had to say something regarding

communist connection, so he divulged that the accused had contact with the DuBois clubs; and the DuBois clubs are on some list of 'front' organizations. So now; what else can anybody want? He is an Arab and therefore anti-Israel, and therefore a communist sympathizer. He has contact with the DuBois clubs; no, A DuBois club, and therefore . . . All roads lead to Rome.

It was almost unbelievable that a news conference in these United States could be conducted as that one was. Instead of hearing newsmen probe for essence, relevance, consistency, for facts as opposed to fiction, in a word, for truth, as newsmen should, they seemed eager only to ask questions that would lend credibility to Mr. Yorty's whatever it was.

There was also some mention of a diary. What was revealed about it sounded terribly fictional. It's not necessary for us to deal with it at this time.

It seemed that the gathering of synophants was ready to adjourn when someone in that gathering found the courage, or the common sense, or human decency, or whatever it was that was so terribly lacking in that large group of American newsmen, to ask what evidence the Mayor has that the accused had connection with a DuBois club. Has he ever been seen at a meeting of a club, asked this sensible newsman.

No, came the reply, but, the Mayor went on, his car had been seen in the general vicinity of the club's meetingplace.

At one point Mr. Yorty stated that he is the chief law-enforcement agent of the city of L.A. At another point he said that the relationship between him and Chief Reddin is most harmonious.

The question arises: Is Mr. Yorty telling the truth? If he is, one must ask: Why would the chief law-enforcement officer, or his Police Chief, find it necessary to keep track

HE MAY HAVE PULLED THE TRIGGER,



BUT WHO LOADED THE GUN?

Kennedy Assassination

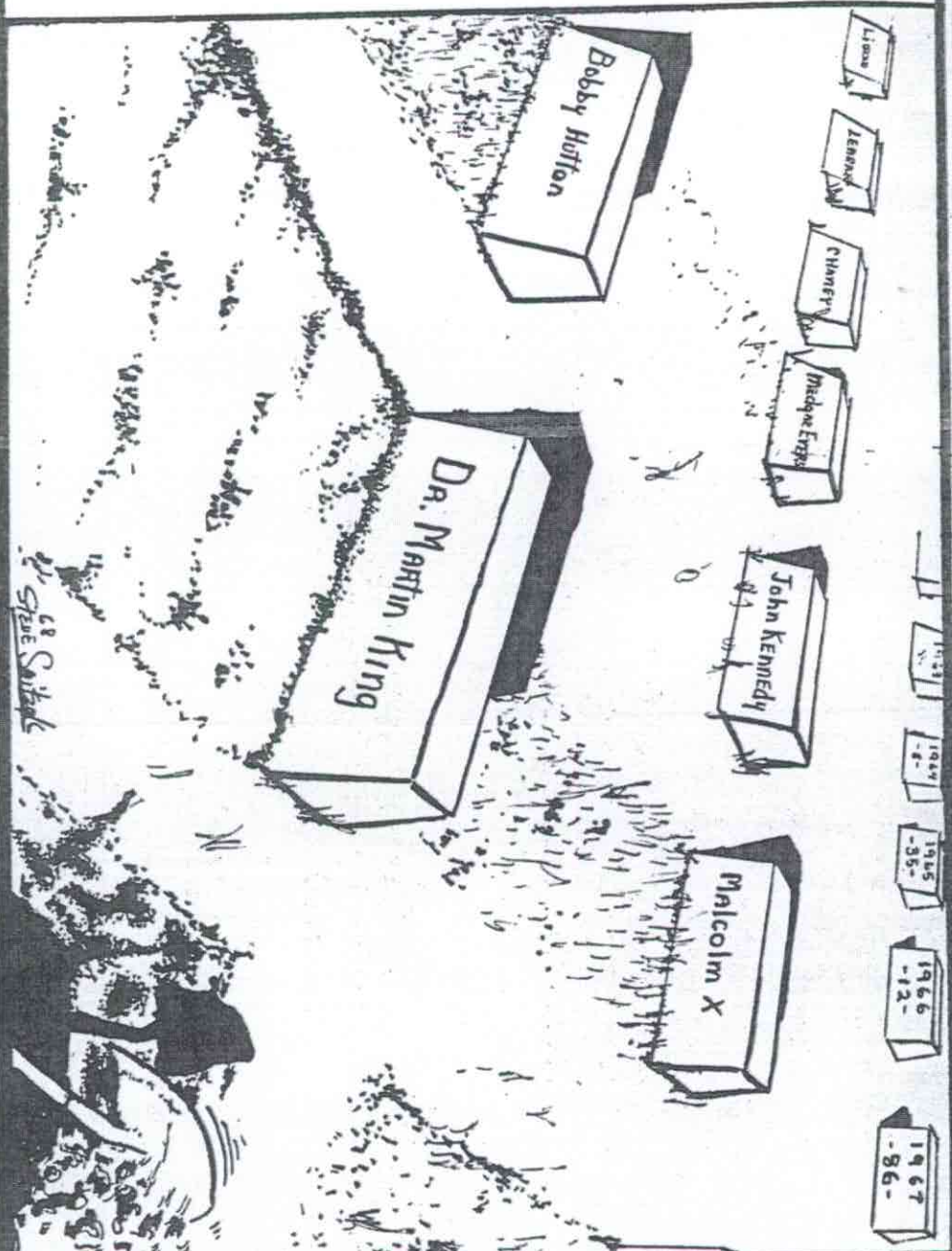
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of the car or a person so totally unknown as was the suspect before the assassination? Remember, we asked, in connection with the late President's assassination, if the distribution of the leaflets was recorded for television because it was planned that it shall be so used.

There are thousands of cars anywhere one goes; hundreds even in a small vicinity. How would the Mayor know where, AND WHY, this man's car was parked?

It is generally known that some people can be induce to do things that they would not do on their own initiative.

The man in custody might have pulled the trigger. Who loaded the gun?



Feelings Of A Cartoonist

This cartoon was published 24 days before the assassination of Robert Kennedy. Like everyone else, for days I asked myself, "Why?" Not why the murder, for in a time when thousands of innocent people are being killed in Vietnam, in our ghettos, in our homes, on our highways, why would another political assassination be so shocking? I realize I had invested too much in one man. For the hope of the future cannot, must not, be encompassed in one man. The cartoon asked, "How many?" Not "who?" History appears to show that there will always be another with the courage and determination to go on. The determining factor is us: Will we have that determination? The "who" has not stopped us before. It is only a question of "How many?"

How many more will it take for us to realize, for you to know, that nothing will stop us from reaching out for the dignity of man.

Caption was:
 How many deaths will it take till you know too many have already died?

Steve Saitzyk