

# Assassinations and denial

by Jim Douglass

**I**n a talk last year on "Martin Luther King and the Future of America," Vincent Harding anticipated the emergence of a monstrous question that our national psyche has repressed since the 1960s:

"We must go with King far enough finally to be able to face the fact—the hard, necessary fact—that there is a very strong likelihood that the agencies of our own federal government were deeply involved in his assassination. Now what do you do with that? What do we do with that?"

The more we learn about "that," the worse it gets. After a year researching the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and John and Robert Kennedy, I see the four of them as expressions of a single politics of assassination.

Now what do we do with that?

We can begin by studying two remarkable books which confront head-on the reality we have repressed: on the King assassination, William F. Pepper's *Orders to Kill* (Carroll & Garf, 1995); on the JFK murder, E. Martin Schotz's *History Will Not Absolve Us* (Kurtz, Ulmer, and DeLucia, 1996; distributor Plough Publishing House).

I am neither neutral nor objective in writing about these books. They turned my life in new directions. Pepper's work can be characterized as the physics of one assassination plot. Schotz's is the metaphysics of another. Each is unique and

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brilliant in challenging us to think beyond our perceived limits. Above all, they are works of extraordinary moral courage.

I discovered *Orders to Kill* in a bookstore in December 1995, four months after its publication. As I turned its pages, I was amazed and puzzled by its labyrinthine story. Pepper's 18 years of investigating King's murder showed that U.S. intelligence agencies had coordinated organized crime, the Memphis Police Department, and a U.S. Army sniper team to assassinate Dr. King. Why had this book of revelation into our greatest prophet's death not been headlined and debated? As I confirmed from its author and publisher, there had been almost total media silence in response to *Orders to Kill*.

In the summer of 1997 that is no longer the case, thanks to Dexter and Coretta Scott King's outspoken support for James Earl Ray and his lawyer, William F. Pepper. The Kings were convinced by *Orders to Kill* of what they only suspected before, that Ray was a patsy in the government conspiracy. As a result of the King family's appeal for a trial for Ray, *Orders to Kill* is now no longer ignored. It is under attack. That is because at the end of its twisting, turning journey down into the repressed reality in our unconscious we are given an invitation. It is that each of us stand with Martin on that Memphis balcony and realize the evil of the moment when the U.S. government killed him.

I first read *History Will Not Absolve Us* in Dallas on November 22, 1996, the thirty-third anniversary. Then I walked the motorcade route as a pilgrimage. I was a pilgrim to Dealey Plaza not for JFK

alone but for the millions who have since died with him, as a result of policies carried out in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia by his executioners. That is the greatness of *History Will Not Absolve Us*. It provokes in us the historical understanding necessary to see the mass crucifixion of America and the world in the shooting of John Fitzgerald Kennedy.

Martin Schotz is a Boston psychiatrist whose psychotherapy is the truth. His book is "The Emperor's New Clothes" as applied to Dallas. When one looks closely, the generals and intelligence agents stand naked in the center of Dealey Plaza. As Fidel Castro recognized in a speech the day after the assassination (which Schotz includes as an appendix), "CIA" was written all over Lee Harvey Oswald.

Castro and Nikita Khrushchev also saw the CIA's motivation: Kennedy's beginning rapprochement with the USSR and Cuba, and the startling disarmament vision of his American University speech (another enlightening appendix). These were Cold War heresies, treason in a president.

Martin Schotz is not interested in conspiracy details. It is enough to identify the CIA as the switchboard for the execution. From there Schotz's relentless analysis takes us beyond conspiracy into the deeper waters of Orwellian control and public denial.

William Pepper and Martin Schotz have guided us to the ocean floor of our national psyche.

What kind of people are we who can live for decades in denial of government forces that killed a prophet and a president?

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