

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

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10/4, to Nation 10/10

Public interest in the assassination of President J. F. Kennedy is now, probably, at its nadir. But material relating directly and indirectly to that historic event continues to crop <sup>up</sup> and should be of interest and encouragement to those working on its many problems.

The following items were gleaned from recent publications:

Frank J. Donner, reviewing Jessica Milford's, The Trial of Dr. Spock, observed, "The central focus in a trial such as this is not the facts but the meaning of the facts, the inferences which could be drawn from them." (The Nation, Oct. 13, 1969).

A like approach to the Warren Commission Hearings can yield greater understanding and truer appreciation of that body's <sup>5</sup> role, as exemplified by Bucknell Professor Richard Drinnon in his analysis of the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, in the same issue of the Nation-- "Violence in America is... in the streets, so to speak, and in the libraries, offices, conference and hearing rooms...once recognized, it must be immediately reconcealed, rendered politically irrelevant. After all one of the traditional claims of the national state is that it provides security to its subjects. More important, the recognition of significant internal violence would call into question all the current myths that legitimize official violence. Seen in this light, Chief Justice Warren headed up ~~on~~ first national commission on violence, his task was to restore the feeling of security shattered by President Kennedy's assassination. This was accomplished by establishing the pretty truth that the ugly event had no meaning: Oswald was a nut. After the assassination of Robert Kennedy, Mr. Johnson followed what

had become standard operating procedure; he quickly announced the appointment of a 'commission of most distinguished Americans to immediately examine this tragic phenomenon.' Milton Eisenhower took up where Warren left off. Eric Hoffer replaced Gerald Ford as the solitary man of letters on the commission, and a new team took over." Dinno is refreshingly acute. But what of the Nation which supported Johnson's assassination policy and accepted the "fact" and findings of the Warren Commission?

Unfortunately criticism of Garrison's investigation and his trial of Clay Shaw has not yet risen above consideration of the "facts" and has not come to grips with its political significance. A clue to the underlying meaning of those events may be read in an AP dispatch from Baton Rouge, La. which appeared in the N.Y. Times of Oct. 5th under the headline, Oil Tax Write Off Aids Senator Long. It was the Senator, Garrison said, who interested him in exploring the assassination of JFK. "The Louisiana Democrat, who has been identified with the oil industry since he came to the Senate two decades ago, describes himself as a 'very small independent' in a field dominated by giant companies. 'Most of my income is from oil and gas,' Senator Long said in an interview." Add the group of some 50 local businessmen, Truth and Consequences, Inc. headed by another "small independent" oilman, who financed Garrison's investigation for a time, and a picture begins to emerge of a "complex" of regional industrial and political interests picking up the JFK assassination as a club with which to belabor the Administration for purposes to be determined by research and political analysis.

Further afield but intriguing are some sentences in China

The Other Communism by K.S. Karol. "After Stalin's death it was no longer possible to maintain a system of power based on the unlimited monopoly of the Party as governmental, political, and economic structure... Under pressure from the economic growth of the society, this system became impracticable in the U.S.S.R., but despite the beginnings of an examination of their conscience at the twentieth congress of the CPSU in 1956, the Soviets did not dare take the path of de-bureaucratization. They decided to preserve the Party's monolithism and political power which <sup>(e)</sup> making concessions to the economists and technocrats. The Soviets no longer counted on the effectiveness of their revolutionary appeals to the population and relied even more than in the past on material incentives to encourage workers in production. They further postponed the realization of the Communist utopia and accepted high differentials in incomes, functions, and powers in their country for a long time to come... "As far as Mao was concerned, this new policy ran counter to his egalitarian beliefs and his profound confidence in the revolutionary aspirations of the masses: in short, it negated his whole personal career and his convictions. He sensed in it the first sign of an alignment of the U.S.S.R. on the model of mass-consumption societies and of the weakening of its anti-imperialist spirit. For all these reasons, if he could not prevent the Soviets from following this road, he was still determined that China should take its own path. That is why, as soon as he had returned from Moscow, he began to work out a new general line, the line of the Great Leap Forward and of the people's communes. He proclaimed the necessity of giving absolute priority to political and moral incentives for the workers." (2nd Edition, pp. XI1-XI11).

Now Oswald proclaimed himself a Marxist from the age of about 15. In the Far East, in the United States, and in the Soviet Union, the core of his idealistic Marxism was the conditions of life of workers and peasants. On this basis he rejected capitalism as a social system, American imperialism, and, after first identifying himself with the Soviet Union, rejected it as an exploitive and repressive system; but he did not become reconciled to U.S. capitalism. That is why he told his captors and the world he was a Marxist but not a Marxist-Lennist.


As a politically conscious person he could not have been ignorant of the great conflict between the Soviet and Chinese governments and ~~the~~ communist parties. Yet nothing in his writings nor in the accounts of conversations with him indicates interest in that struggle, let alone sympathy for Mao's concern for revolutionary idealism and Chinese government policy based directly on improvement of the lot of Chinese workers and peasants. One would think that given his particular personal orientation he *Oswald* would have gravitated, at least intellectually, toward Mao's policy. The total absence of any reference to China in his political life poses a problem for biographical and political research to solve.

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