

The Police Establishment

MS Book Review

By Steven J. Burton

tor's note: Steve Burton is an investigator for the District Attorney's office in New Orleans and chairman of the Citizens' Committee Inquiry, a group critical of the (New Orleans Report).

Someone has finally set down for permanent record what so many of us have known for so long. In it, uncompromised and cogent, Bill Turner exposes the Police Establishment for what it is: Since its inception the police establishment has conducted itself as the agent of the power structure than the servant of a realistic society....The police represent a white middle class morality that is alien to broad segments of our population....

It is not, of course, necessary to shoot the black man in the ghetto, the "cerk" in Los Angeles, New York or San Francisco, the rebel students in Berkeley, or the white middle-class "nigger-lovers" in the North read this book in order to find they are oppressed by uniformed, litigious moralists. These people are the stuff of which this book is

ut this book is essential reading for every "socially conscious" person because it goes one step further than the simple documentation of police riots.

By drawing upon the experience and credentials of ten years as an agent (he was kicked out of "The Sun" for harshly criticizing J. Edgar Hoover), Turner provides a "sincere" insight into the mind of the police. Because of his long service in the field, Turner was considered a member of the police "club" when he reviewed various police officials. Some of the facade of police relations was dropped and real men behind the billy clubs revealed.

Too many cops emerge as racist, conservative, uneducated, ignorant snobs. This description is as much to the upper echelon officials as to the patrolman he beat.

It applies to former Los Angeles Chief William H. Parker, who on a television audience during the 1965 Watts rebellion, "It's asserted that by 1970, forty-five per cent of the metropolitan area of Los Angeles will be Negro. If you want any protection for your home or your property, you're going to get in and support a strong police department. If you don't do it, come 1970, God help you!" A year earlier, Parker told a real investigator, "You can't rely on the genes in the behavior of people."

It applies to former Oakland Chief Edward M. Tothman, who died prematurely because, he told his men, he was fed up with civil disobedience and peace movement activities. He put his house up for sale with a "Caucasian Only" sign in it.

It applies to those policemen who displayed Goldwater-for-President stickers on police vehicles and who hand out John Birch Society literature in the station houses and from patrol cars.

Of course, the police do not admit that this bigotry exists. If a concrete example is produced, they claim that it is an "exception." But ever when an "exception" is acknowledged, there is no effective machinery for punishing the officer involved. Civilian review of alleged police malpractice is unheard of except in Philadelphia.

The police see themselves as above and apart from the society at large. If an officer is proven to have savagely beaten a black man, he is usually suspended from the force for a period of time; as a civilian, he could have been indicted, tried, convicted and sentenced to jail for criminal assault.

In most states, officers can shoot to kill a suspect fleeing the scene of a suspected crime. When this happens, the officer is playing prosecutor, jury, judge and executioner at once. Turner notes that the only valid use of the firearm is to prevent harm to a civilian or the policeman himself.

But most often, charges of brutality or murder go completely unheard. The cop has a virtual license to intimidate.

This situation has given rise to calls for civilian review boards, the anathema of the police. Turner notes that a review board is necessary not only to process complaints but also to bring the police within the conceptions of American democratic thought.

As it is today, police are protected by civil service, and promotion is based mostly on seniority. In most cities, no elected official has any significant control over the police. Only the district attorney can have influence—but he usually will not cross the police because he depends upon them. Turner points to New Orleans as an exception.

Without civilian review of some kind, the police are the only powerful governmental agency outside of a checks-and-balances situation—even given the practical limitations of such checks and balances.

In response, the police vehemently charge that they are fully competent to carry out self-discipline. "Civilian review plays into the hands of the communists," they say.

In New York, the police obtained John Birch Society funds to lead a successful election fight against a civilian review board.

Turner concludes that what is needed is a new breed of police officer. "Upgrading the police profession necessarily means the weeding out of the indolent, lackluster types.... the 'gung-ho' bully to whom the authority of the badge and gun is the license to intimidate.... the sadists and psychopaths whose present number have provoked calls for the psychiatric testing of all applicants," he says.



Kennedy Memorial Statement

by Jim Garrison

(This statement was recorded by Art Kevin of KHJ-TV—Ed.)

It is now 5 years since they killed John Kennedy, they killed him because he was ending the cold war, which had become the biggest business in America. More than \$20 billion a year by 1960—now it's worth more than \$50 billion a year, as we get thrown deeper and deeper into Asia.

But making of the machines of war is big business, and John Kennedy was slowing it down. Between August 1, 1963 and October 1, 1963, he had reduced American troops in Viet Nam from 15,000 down to 14,000, and he had ordered his Sec. of Defense to have all the remaining 14,000 returned to America by 1965. But there is billions of dollars to be made in war, and Asia is a great new market for the makers of war machinery.

Instead of having all the soldiers back from a useless war in Asia, as Pres. Kennedy had intended, we now have 545,000 soldiers and the warfare expenditures grow higher and higher, and more and more American soldiers are returned home in body bags and refrigerated airplanes.

The others who oppose the war in Viet Nam have been murdered, too. Martin Luther King, killed by a professional shot which severed his spinal column, and Robert Kennedy, killed by a frangible bullet, which broke into pieces in his brain.

It's always the lone assassin, an unusually lonely person, not connected with anyone, and then another opponent of the Viet Nam war in gone. And there is always a pronouncement from the Justice Department that there is really no conspiracy and everything is fine.

When is this country going to wake up to the fact that national leaders are being systematically murdered and that the government has been lying to the people? If we have become so complacent, and so easily fooled by false

"The officer needed today must not only be mentally and physically superior, he must possess the breadth of vision and social consciousness that will enable him to deal fairly and humanely with the desperate individuals he encounters."

pronouncements from Washington, then our sons will fall in Asia just as John Kennedy fell in Dallas.

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