

May 31, 1967

Feldman
Dear Harold,

Time runs away; I waste it working which drains my strength. Your letter is already three weeks old. It deserves a prompt-er response. Forgive me.

Your projected survey of Trotskyism awakens old memories, priceless now in retrospect, echoes of a distant time when hope was high and the days were filled with purposeful political activity. Go to it! When you have crystallized your ideas and your research has been embodied in thesis, article or book, I will esteem it a privilege to read it if you will give me the opportunity to do so.

I agree Trotskyism has always been incapable of independent revolutionary policy, as distinct from theory, if by that is meant independence in the sense in which first Marx and then Lenin used the term. I cannot agree the theory of permanent revolution is an absurdity. But I forbear to argue the point until I know your reasons for rejecting it.

So, too, with your other project concerning the theory of increasing misery. At the moment it is far from the concerns which monopolize my thought: the ominous approach of world war ~~war~~/111 and the Kennedy assassination.

With respect to the latter I am surprised you are marking time, waiting for Garrison to - do what? I note the latest Harris poll which shows "66% of the American people now believe that the assassination of President Kennedy was not the work of one man but part of a conspiracy..." (N.Y. Times, 5/30/67, p. 19, col. 3). This is an increase of 22% since February of this

year. "A major contributor to these feelings of doubt is the assassination investigation of District Attorney Jim Garrison of New Orleans...Nearly two out of three persons polled are following this investigation...and of these 45% believe it will shed light on the assassination. 46% believe it will not and 9% are not sure." Apparently you are included in the 45%, or in the 9%, I am not sure which, while I am included in the 46%.

Would you care to say why you think as you do? Do you disagree with the views I advanced in Diversion in New Orleans? Have you found error of fact or of reasons in it? True, Garrison insists there was a conspiracy and says Oswald did no shooting. And now he implicates the CIA. But he places Oswald in the conspiracy which he does not connect directly with the assassination. And the evidence so far revealed is as spurious as that of the Warren Commission.

It is incredible to me that people who had the acumen to see through the Commission's case can subscribe to Garrison's. I cannot believe that an unprincipled establishmentarian demagogue, at odds for undisclosed reasons, with the national government, is going to lay bare the source of the assassination which is both the ultimate source of his own power and the arbiter of his political life. I think one can have as little credence in Garrison's theatrics as in Johnson's "peace" maneuvers.

No, the solution lies deeper than Garrison's blunt knife can reach. In this connection I invite your attention to a paragraph I spotted in Andrew Kopkind's review of Ralph Toledano's "R.F.K.: The Man Who Would Be President," in the N.Y. Review of Books of June 1, 1967: To realign U.S. foreign policy, there must

be basic changes in the operation of the corporatist system so that its decision-makers no longer perceive their interests to lie in destroying the independence of other countries." As well ask the leopard to change its spots. But note the vital connection between foreign policy and the operation of the "corporatist system," a euphemism for capitalism, which Kopkind posits. And the idea that changes in one sphere of this relationship necessarily involves changes in the other. For Marxists it is an old idea, an ABC idea, an elementary truth, is it not?

Apply these ideas to the Kennedy assassination; ask how the policies projected by Kennedy in the sphere of foreign relations - detente with the Soviet Union, agreement to let Cuba live, withdrawal of the missiles from Turkey, Alliance For Progress, accommodation with the new regimes in Africa, projected end of the war in Vietnam - and concomitant policies in the U.S. - veto of atomic carriers, reduction of defense spending, projected end of selective service, moral support of the struggle for civil rights - ask how these policies affected the vested interests grown fat and powerful on the cold war, waiting for opportunity to settle accounts with the Soviet Union and with China, and you have the inevitable clue to the assassination. Ask what interests the Kennedy policies advanced and you are on the high road to understanding of the assassination as a blow ^{an} in/intra-capitalist struggle of titanic proportions. And you can understand the real meaning of the Warren Commission Report as a falsification of the event, of history.

Yes, I agree, indeed I have been insisting, the government's case has been destroyed. But political solution of the assassination as a means of changing the policy of the government awaits

establishment. How can Garrison do it? It is beyond him, even if he knows the truth.

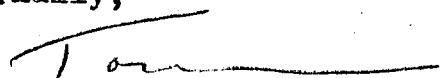
Apparently it has also been beyond the reach of the various critics of the Commission. As to that, I have a low opinion of Lane. I hold him to be a picayune political opportunist. I recognized him as a political charlatan when I heard his lecture, "Who Killed Kennedy?" in 1964 and heard him disclaim any thought or allegation of conspiracy. I knew little of the evidence then; the Warren Commission had not yet rendered its report. But it was obvious to me that a political assassination had been accomplished and that the government was engaged on a policy of ~~denuding~~^{denuding} the assassination of political cause and significance. To me this spelled protection of the malignant right in the United States and signified a new stage in the development of that force which had to have profound influence on government policy in the absence of a powerful countervailing force. The civil rights struggle, for all its drama, was manned chiefly by students and liberal whites under the leadership of clergy and reformists. The labor movement was passive. The national social order was in very little danger. In these circumstances the assassination augured a shift of government policy to the right. Its most important point of application came some six months later in the escalation of the war in Vietnam, designed as a stepping-stone for war with China. As it turned out the assassination was the key to expansion of the war in Vietnam. No hint of any of this, as fact or projection, could one discern in Lane's talks. Indeed, he closed the door on this approach. He decried Buchanan's theory as "A disaster." Later

the attack on the Commission to delineate it as an instrument of government policy to denude the assassination of political significance; of the failure to elaborate a theory of the assassination as a blow by the right to change the ^{basic} policy of the government. The necessary negative and successful accomplishment of demolishing the Commission's theory of the assassination without fixing the locus of the assassination in the "military-industrial"-governmental complex has left the right free to attempt to use the assassination for its ^{own} various ends. This is the significance of Connally's ploy about the number of shots fired at him and Kennedy, Russell's revelation of his consistent disbelief in the Report for which he voted, and now Garrison's spectacular sleight of hand. And of others to come.

You may chose to wait on a particular event. But political life does not wait. It boils. The right does not wait. It is at work. The assassination is part of political life. Lane called it the most sensitive issue in American political life. If one means to plumb the assassination one must enter the realm of political thought and, eventually, of political life. The truth will not come by supernatural revelation, nor from the mouths of "sincere" bourgeois demagogues, nor by discoveries on the part of treacherous critics like Lane, nor by honest critics like Weisberg whose loyalty to the existing order and its institutions blind him to the larger truth which stares us all in the face.

If we continue to work at ~~it we will have~~ opportunities to establish the political genesis and significance of the assassination of President Kennedy.

Fraternally,



he was joined by Sauvage whose political understanding is probably circumscribed by his journalistic career and by his Catholicism. It is an irony that the more effective Lane was in attack on the Commission - and he was very effective and did yeoman's work in exposing it - the tighter he seemed to shut the door on a political approach. Thus, while he attacked the prestigious accessory after the fact, he threw his weight against the earliest efforts to lay the foundation for establishment of the truth about the assassination which, in the circumstances, had to be political.

When demolition ^{with} of the Commission's case ^{there arose} arised, as it had to, the question of conspiracy Lane caustiously and opportunistically moved in that direction. I refer to Rush To Judgment in which he projects the idea of conspiracy, but not in political terms, even though he had already publicly suggested the CIA was the author of the murder. And I refer to Lane's Playboy interview, an unwittingly appropriate vehicle for it, in which he carefully limited the question of conspiracy to a legal definition: two or more persons plotting the commission of an illegal act. Bravo! Weisberg is essentially correct.

Lane must be exposed. His embrace of Garrison, his collaboration with him, is of the order of Humphrey embracing Maddox. They are all of a kind, egoistical, unprincipled opportunists. It is true Weisberg's attack on Lane in Whitewash II which I have just finished reading is ~~envenomed~~, obscure, and ~~non-~~ ^{non-}political. Nevertheless I see the justice of his point. Lane singles out Warren and by failing to to put Warren and the Commission in the context of political events gives aid to the reactionary impeach-Warren movement.

In a larger sense this has been the result of the failure of