

DANGER! POLITICIANS AT WORK.

Politicians are playing games with the Kennedy assassination.

Four months after his brother was done to death in the street in Dallas, Texas, and while the commission appointed by his brother's successor was at work ostensibly to solve the assassination, Attorney General of the United States, Robert Kennedy, made a written agreement with Professor William Manchester whereby the latter was to write a definitive account of the assassination. By the terms of this agreement, as revealed by former Presidential Assistant Press Secretary Malcolm Killduff, nothing Manchester wrote was to be published without the prior approval of Mrs. Jacqueline Kennedy and Robert Kennedy. In the summer of 1964, months before the Warren Commission completed its work and submitted its findings to President Johnson, Robert Kennedy went to Berlin in connection with the dedication of a monument to his brother and there announced to the world exactly what those findings would be. He has since been quoted as saying he has not read the Report of the Warren Commission. Almost three years after John F. Kennedy was murdered the executors of the slain President's estate, of whom Robert Kennedy was one, released to the National Archives the autopsy photographs which neither the autopsy surgeons nor the Warren Commission had seen. Robert Kennedy has said nothing publicly about the Warren Commission, either in cri-

ticism or defense of it. Taken in the context of his ambition for power and his measured conflict with President Johnson, Robert Kennedy's restrained and ambiguous actions may be read as thrusts at minor aspects of Johnson's policy of denuding the assassination of political meaning, thereby cautiously avoiding in this matter as in others, at least until he judges the time opportune, a head-on conflict with his powerful and equally unscrupulous opponent.

When Governor John Connally of Texas heard a rifle shot and then was wounded his instant thoughts were an assassination attempt was in progress, one gunman was firing with an automatic weapon or two or three gunmen were shooting, and enigmatically before he knew Kennedy had been hit, "They are going to kill us all." He said he knew at once he had been hit by a bullet fired after the one he heard. The Warren Commission's finding he was struck by the Bullet he heard after it had passed through Kennedy, he considered an impossibility. When Life magazine gave him an opportunity to examine enlargements of still frames derived from the motion-picture film of the assassination taken by Abraham Zapruder, Connally proclaimed with emphasis he was of the same opinion still. Knowing that his asserted belief, on which Life based its belated opportunist doubt a single gunman killed Kennedy, struck a grievous blow at the Commission's theory of a solo assassin, Con-

nally, who said he had read neither the Commission's Report, its compendium of testimony, nor books and articles critical of them, pronounced his acceptance of the "substance" of the Commission's "over-all findings," saw no need for a new investigation unless compelling new evidence is adduced, defended the collective and individual integrity of the Commissioners, impugned the motives of the Commission's critics, and upheld the credibility of the Federal government. The astute and experienced politico, leader of the conservative wing of the Texas Democratic party and of that party, representative of vast oil, insurance, banking, and defense ~~interests~~ interests, is willing, for undisclosed reasons, to help stir the pot after others have lit the fire, but has no taste for the cooking stew, and is careful to offer no offense to the national government presided over by his old friend Lyndon B. Johnson, creator of the Warren Commission and publisher of its Report. At the same time he leaves open a door through which he may pass with seeming safety should later developments in the continuing controversy ~~make~~ make it advisable or necessary for him to do so.

No less calculatingly adept is the Luce establishment. While Time magazine decried the idea of a new investigation, its sister journalistic fille de joie, Life, called for Congressional examination of the

assassination. The profit from both publications flows into the same pockets. But Life, possessor of the original Zapruder film which it bought for \$25,000, showed Connally only still frames derived from the film, which it confuses in its columns, as do others, with the film itself. Suppressed by Life and, astonishingly, unremarked by all the Commission critics without exception, is the fact the Zapruder film, as distinct from the still frames derived from it, demonstrates irrefutably and conclusively the shot which took Kennedy's life hit him from the front and right, thereby establishing the presence of at least two assassins that day in Dallas and the~~x~~ existence of a conspiracy. Understandable is the reticence of the Commission about the only indisputable piece of hard evidence in the case. Comprehensible, too, is the reluctance of an establishmentarian Luce publication to challenge the government head on. But how explain the silence of the Commission's critics? Do they understand their failure to make this piece of evidence, available to the world in the form of a copy of the original film, donated to the National Archives by the FBI, abets the government's game of suppressing the truth about the assassination?

Senator Richard Russell was an unwilling member of the Warren Commission. His attendance at its hearings was minimal. He voted for its Report. Three years

later, with the Commission under intense fire, he announced publicly his disagreement with its finding of a single assassin and professed a belief Lee Harvey Oswald had help in killing ~~X~~ Kennedy. He favored a new investigation. Russell is a consistent Southern reactionary and a representative of the military establishment. His purpose in favoring another investigation must mean he is willing to discredit the President's prestigious commission of which he was a distinguished member in order to procure a new investigation which will find a conspiracy, including Oswald, hatched by Communists. Russell wants to realize one of the aims of the original assassination plot which was aborted by Johnson's policy of denuding the assassination of political meaning.

J. Edgar Hoover, comitragic fading chief of the FBI, decades-old hero and darling of the cold-war, anti-Communist crusade, one of whose ~~xxx~~ targets is Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren, is a victim of the assassination of Kennedy. Had <sup>the</sup> murder plot succeeded in attributing the President's assassination to a Communist source Hoover's career would have been capped with glory, his political life justified. But robbed of the opportunity by Johnson's policy of denuding the assassination of political meaning, Hoover, national crime fighter number one, was reduced to the minor role of supplying information to the Warren

Commission and compelled almost three years later to denigrate his official reports to it in support of it against its critics. Pitiabile and ludicrous is the role of Polonius-Hoover in guarding the gate to the source of the assassination in the bosom of the right.

His opposite number in tragicomedy is Mark Lane, erstwhile leftish New York State Assemblyman. To the latter's credit be it said he was one of the first to challenge publicly the official version of the assassination, for which he suffered disdain and slander as is the wont of controversy in American capitalist democracy. He developed evidence to demolish the official version of the assassination. Before there was demonstrable objective basis for it he was the central figure in an investigatory body rivalling the Warren Commission. After the Report and testimony were published, establishing good ground for further work to discover the truth about the assassination, and <sup>after</sup> Lane's Citizens' Committee of Inquiry was defunct, ~~Lane~~ <sup>he</sup> called for a new investigation by a non-governmental body. For more than two years from public platforms he posed the question, Who Killed Kennedy?, and after proving the government had no case against Oswald disclaimed any idea of conspiracy. In his best-selling book, Rush To Judgment, he demolished the government's version of the assassination and affirmed his belief it was the

work of a conspiracy but <sup>made</sup> makes no effort to identify it politically.

While his book was being readied for the market Lane addressed a Public Inquest at Columbia University on June 2, 1966, on the massacre of Communists in Indonesia. His contribution to the Inquest, creditably, was an attack on the "leadership" of the American government for its war in Vietnam, and on the American press for its indifference to the massacre in Indonesia. He felt there was insufficient evidence to accuse the CIA of playing a major role in the blood-bath in Indonesia but noted "there is no evidence that precludes that possibility." He cited the "emergence of the CIA as a major policy-making force of our government" and as "an agency which establishes its own policy and then seeks to carry it out; sometimes...behind the back of the President." He cited the instance of the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961, "planned, financed and directed by the CIA," and noted before it was launched the New York Times and the government conspired together to prevent the truth about the CIA's involvement from being known."

In the next breath he referred to "Another and closer example of press and governmental cooperation to prevent the facts from reaching the people...The myth that one lone unhappy man was responsible for the death of President Kennedy was developed by the govern-

ment; beginning with the Dallas police, continued by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Central Intelligence Agency; endorsed by President Johnson's Commission and then sold by the uncritical and accepting press." To a limited audience gathered under the auspices of Youth Against War and Fascism, and in the context of a liberalistic political attack on the government of the United States, Lane accused the government of knowingly suppressing the truth about the Kennedy assassination.

The larger public who reads his book will be unaware this is his thought. And the much larger audiences who see and hear him on TV and radio explaining with pointer and patience the impossibility of the government's case, cannot know his political ideas about the assassination. When Connally attacked him as a scavenger he replied the governor was "abysmally ignorant of the implications of his own testimony," an obvious insult to the governor's intelligence and political perspicacity, and charged the governor, according to the New York Times, with questioning the loyalty and motivation of those who will not accept a false government edict while "the American people had made Mr. Lane's book a best seller." A personal defense; another opportunity to politicalize the issues lost!

Why the two public attitudes of Mark Lane? Who benefits from them? Mark Lane or the work of establishing



why Kennedy was killed?

In fine, the right is moving against the Johnson policy of denuding the assassination of political meaning. The furor resulting from persistent attacks by the critics of the Warren Commission gives it opportunity. The critics' failure to project ideas about the political source of the assassination and their insistence on investigating a murder mystery rather than an historical political event of great magnitude permits the right to conceal its aims behind preoccupation with problems of evidence. Thus, as often happens when people refuse to recognize the political truth staring them in the face and immerse themselves in legalistic and moral concerns, the critics who eschew "politics" find themselves embarrassed by "allies" who regard them as a ragtag of contemptible nuisances. Politics has its own logic. Life sometimes punishes illogic with irony.

Against the opportunism of the government and of its rightist critics and opponents it is necessary to assert the murder of the thirty-fifth president of the United States was motivated by powerful forces in American society which recognized menace to their interests in Kennedy's policy. The work to be done is exposure of the conflict over policy and identification of the interests which spawned the assassination. The burning question is Who Killed Kennedy? The great question is Why Was Kennedy Killed?

Thomas P. Sanger  
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