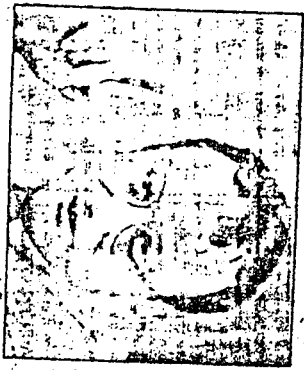


Legacy of a Great Dissenter

LOWENSTEIN: Acts of Courage and Belief
 Edited by Gregory Stone and Douglas Lowenstein
 Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$18.95

When Alard Lowenstein was shot and killed by a former student at Stanford University on March 14, 1980, the emotion many observers felt was shock tinged with embarrassment. The shock needs no explanation; the embarrassment — how crude it seems now — resulted from the sense that Lowenstein's assassination was somehow inevitable, even fitting. The 1960s could not become history while Lowenstein lived; that decade of death, seared by assassination, could not be laid to rest while he was around to insist that "people matter" and that every individual could make a

BY CHRIS GOODRICH



Lowenstein: Elongated common sense

difference." Those years are behind us now, for fier and one great, plaintive, question: Must we always use our leaders of vision?

"Acts of Courage and Belief" is a collection of writings by Lowenstein, strung together with pieces about him, and the result is an effective, quick-cut documentary of the man and his times. We hear him returning to Stanford after traveling in the South on civil rights issues, and calling Mississippi "the foreign part of all of us in our

mind." There is Lowenstein recognizing the folly of Vietnam, organizing the "Dump Johnson" campaign and later one called "Dump Nixon." There is Lowenstein dead, eulogized by Edward Kennedy as "perhaps the greatest dissenter of his time, a patriot who understood that dissent is the essence of democracy."

Lowenstein was a graduate of Yale Law School and could have led a life of ease, but he chose instead a unique niche in public life as an advocate of progressive politics. He was an elected official for only two years — serving as a congressman for Long Island before being ferryman-dered out of his seat in 1970 — yet had a following of millions, many if not most of them college students.

His charisma was such that he made friends on the right — William F. Buckley Jr. admired him greatly for his humanity and independence of thought — and enemies on the left, who feared he would seduce the unsure away from the socialist revolution. In fact, what he spoke was an eloquent common sense, leading David Broder to note that Lowenstein "brought more young people into American politics than any individual of our time." Lowenstein, as portrayed here, is a man in perpetual motion, traveling the globe like a bus, signifying for human rights, (indeed, as a board member of the Southern Christian Leadership

'DECISION'/Continued

Conference, he was listed on one of the SCLC programs as "Reverend Alard Lowenstein." When he pointed out that he was Jewish, his subject to head, Harpers left, and right, Lowenstein?

In this book we learn that he did not sugar-coat his ideas, nor sell his soul for votes; he pointed out that his own generation was "antiseptic" and a victim of "premature old age," that the United States was suffering from "the miseries of abundance." He could go directly to the heart of a problem, when busling was a major issue, Lowenstein pointed out that the real underlying question was why a country of such wealth could tolerate such bad schools.

Acts of Courage and Belief is haunted by Lowenstein's death. Who better than Lowenstein could inspire another antiseptic generation, cannot more with getting jobs than of California Laundry magazine.

S.F.
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