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Visitor Shocked at Anti-JFK Talk

By Drew Pearson

It hasn't leaked out of the diplomatic corps, but the President of Costa Rica while on a visit to the King Ranch



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in Texas was so shocked at fascist conversation that a protest was made at the State Department. President Francisco J. Orlich and his party spent three days at famous King Ranch, largest in the world. They enjoyed viewing its amazing operation of Santa Gertrudis cattle and its quarter horses. But they were dumbfounded to hear some of their hosts talk about the assassination of the late President Kennedy as if it were a boon to the country.

In Costa Rica, President Kennedy has been almost deified, and President Orlich was so upset about the gloating over the Kennedy death that his party complained about it to State Department officials.

Old Bob Kleberg, senior member of the family which owns the King Ranch, was the height of courtesy. He did not engage in any fascist conversation or gloating; it was the younger members of the far-

flung family in attendance, and some of the guests. Most of the people there were ardent Goldwaterites.

The King Ranch covers 837,000 acres of Texas land. The Klebergs also operate ranches in Australia, Argentina, Peru, and up until seizure by Castro, a 30,000-cattle ranch in Cuba. In Pennsylvania, the family owns the Buck and Doe Run Valley Farm of 10,000 acres near Coatesville, and in Kentucky it owns a horse breeding farm near Lexington.

President Orlich and his party stayed at the Santa Gertrudis Ranch House, named for Alice Gertrudis, for whom the King Ranch special breed of cattle is named. But the guests would drive 50 miles to another ranch house for lunch or dinner—incidentally, without leaving the confines of the ranch.

Dinner was called for 8 p.m. But the family lingered over cocktails around the swimming pool until around 11 p.m., when they finally sat down to dinner. By this time some of those present were pretty well oiled and the conversation took on a fascist tone. There was gloating that John F. Kennedy had been killed, speculation that the time had come for real people to take over the U.S.A.

During more sober daylight visits, however, the Costa Ricans saw an amazing ranch operation, including a screw fly factory, where boxes of sterile male screw flies are packed. The boxes are then dropped over the ranch by airplane. When the box drops, it breaks open releasing the sterile male flies. Each box contains food for the flies to live on temporarily, and when released they mate with females, thereby reducing the fly population.

The Costa Rican president also inspected the huge new brushclearing machine invented by the Klebergs, which consists of two bulldozers in tandem. It chops up cactus, mesquite and underbrush, chews it up and spews it out to one side. The machine weighs 107,000 pounds and cost \$1 million to develop.

The King Ranch has also developed its own grasses, the Klebergs having gone to South Africa to experiment with different types.

One of the most impressive sights is the forest of oil wells that dot the ranch, together with the oil cracking plant, owned by the Klebergs, which produces oil worth \$250,000 a month.

As the Costa Rican party drove over the vast acreage, they passed herds of red

bronze Santa Gertrudis cattle, herded by Mexican cowboys who sat stern and motionless as statues on their cow ponies. Much of the labor is Mexican and never leaves the ranch.

The ranch is one of the most fascinating feudal empires in the world, and the Costa Rican President who represents one of the most democratic countries in Latin America was both awed and concerned over it.

Intelligence reports that North Vietnamese battalions had crossed into South Vietnam have turned out to be exaggerated. They were based upon capture of three North Vietnamese soldiers who told about hundreds of others. But no others materialized . . . President Johnson has personally approved plans to carry out his promise not to make civil rights an issue in the coming campaign. He has ordered Party officials to avoid inflammatory debate of civil rights at the Democratic Convention, but to deplore violence and plead for racial peace instead. The Democrats will point out that ignorance and poverty are the real causes of racial injustice and that the President's antipov-erty program offers the best way to correct abuses.