

LABOR

Vanishing Vote

"There is a question," rumbled George Meany last week, "where the vote went." Labor had undeniably failed to elect most of its favorite candidates. What was especially galling to the A.F.L.-C.I.O. president was that the federation's campaign arm, the Committee on Political Education, boasted a stronger organization this year than ever before. While anticipating two rough years for labor legislation on Capitol Hill, Meany promised to take "a real good look" at C.O.P.E. operations.

Labor not only lost such champions as Senate Candidate G. Mennen ("Soapy") Williams in Michigan, Illinois' Senator Paul Douglas and California's Governor Pat Brown, but also did worse than it expected in the general run of races across the country. "We had one handicap this time," noted Meany. "We didn't have Goldwater against us."

A good point, but even when the batting average was compared with mid-term 1962, big labor took a beating. In the last mid-term election, 72% of the nominees whom C.O.P.E. supported for the Senate were elected, as were 60% of its choices for the House and for gubernatorial seats. The winning percentages this year were 50% for the Senate, 54% for the House and a feeble 31% in the governors' races. This despite the fact that C.O.P.E. spent just under \$1,000,000 this year compared with \$800,000 in 1962. Nearly all C.O.P.E.-backed candidates were Democrats.

Blunted Issue. "We raised more money, put more workers into the field and made more contacts than ever, but we just couldn't overcome factors beyond our control," said Alexander Barkan, C.O.P.E. director. Barkan cited civil rights reaction, Negro apathy in some areas, and Democratic fraternal strife in key states. What Barkan failed to mention—and Meany's investigation will hardly alter—is political history. As time and continuing prosperity erase memories of the great Depression and blunt purely economic issues, the Democrats cannot continue to count on reflex support from rank-and-file union members.

As far as achieving its legislative goals in the 90th Congress is concerned, big labor has ample reason for feeling glum. Meany was guilty of understatement when he said that the chances were "pretty dim" to repeal Section 14 (b) of the Taft-Hartley Act (the right-to-work provision), which triggered a long and bitter filibuster even in the liberal 89th. Equally bleak is labor's chance of getting restrictions on construction-site picketing eased. By contrast, the 90th Congress may prove far more receptive than the 89th to further limitations on strikes—such as airline stoppages—that have national repercussions.

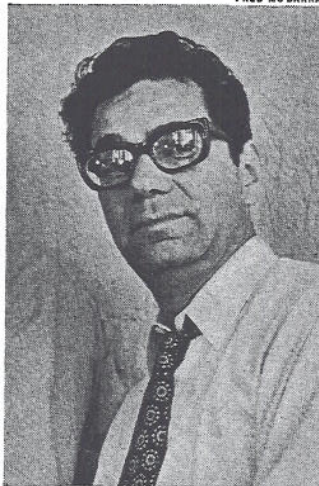
THE ASSASSINATION

The Phantasmagoria

In Los Angeles, bookstores hawk posters, buttons and bumper stickers that ask WHO MURDERED KENNEDY? In Brussels, theatergoers are packing a new play, *Dallas*, 22 November 1963, 12:27 p.m., in which right-wingers and Dallas police frame Lee Harvey Oswald for John Kennedy's assassination. In publications from *Esquire* to *Commentary*, college professors, journalists, novelists and would-be hawkshaws are fairly stepping on each other's lines to find new ways to challenge the Warren Commission's conclusions, investigatory technique, language, logic, legal methodology and moral intent.

The Warren Report, issued more than two years ago after a ten-month in-

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ATTORNEY LANE
Instinct for the capillaries.

vestigation into the killing, said flatly that Lee Oswald—alone—shot Kennedy, wounded Texas Governor John Connally, murdered a policeman and was, in turn, shot dead by Jack Ruby, whom it pictured as a demented loner. The report was widely praised at first—but no longer. The discrepancies—real or imagined—surrounding the assassination have become an increasingly obsessive topic the world over.

Amateur Sherlocks. Recently, Pollster Lou Harris found that no less than 54% of all Americans now think the commission left "a lot of unanswered questions about who killed Kennedy." A sizable number of people are so concerned that they have in effect turned the quest for the "real assassin" into an evangelistic vocation. Self-appointed investigators are at work throughout the nation, hoping to trip over some bypassed pebble of evidence that will crack the case wide open. They pore endlessly over the 10,400,000 words contained in the commission's report and 26-volume collection of testimony and exhibits. (The Government Printing Office has sold 1,820 sets at \$76

each, plus 145,266 copies of the report itself.) Amateur Sherlocks have besieged the National Archives with requests to see the President's autopsy X rays and photographs recently acquired from the Kennedys, even though the family ruled unequivocally that for five years the material would be available only to certified Government investigative agencies or private investigators approved by the Kennedys.

Minutiae & Half Truths. For cocktail party dissenters, as well as the burgeoning cult of parlor detectives, the chief stimulant has been an outpouring of critical books on the subject. The biggest seller of all (110,000 copies) is Attorney Mark Lane's *Rush to Judgment*, which in effect is a defense brief for Oswald. Actually, the author admits: "My book is not an objective analysis; I've never said that I believe Oswald did it or did not do it. I say that had Oswald faced trial, he would not have been convicted."

Like most of the current crop, Lane's book is essentially a staggering accumulation of minutiae and half-truths based on minutiae. Yale Law Professor Alexander Bickel, himself a critic of the commission, has dismissed Lane's opus as "peripheral and indiscriminate," concluded: "Great trial lawyers, like great detectives, have an instinct for the jugular; Mr. Lane has an instinct for the capillaries."

Fact & Fantasy. In all the verbiage expended on the Warren Report and the assassination, an incredible variety of hypotheses—and "facts" to make them true—has been tossed out to support contentions that Lee Oswald was innocent or in league with another rife-man or the dupe of sinister powers. In its December issue, *Esquire* rounds up 35 theories about the whos, whys, whats and hows of the assassination.

Mark Lane—and others—theorize that Kennedy was shot from a grassy knoll in front of the motorcade, that Oswald's 6.5-mm. Italian rifle was planted in the Book Depository sniper's nest to frame him, that Jack Ruby was part of a widespread plot to eliminate Oswald before he squealed, that slain Patrolman J. D. Tippit was likely in league with the assassins, and that a bullet fired from Oswald's rifle and found on a stretcher at Parkland Hospital had been planted there by unknown conspirators.

Then there are the "Oswald Impersonator" advocates, notably Authors Léo Sauvage, Harold Weisberg and Richard Popkin, who believe that one (or more) plotters was skulking around Dallas, pretending to be Oswald in order to implicate him in the crime. There is the "Manchurian Candidate Theory," which was supported by CIA men at one point: that Oswald had been brainwashed to become an assassin during his three-year self-exile in Russia.

The "Dallas Oligarchy Theory," argued by Author Thomas Buchanan, has it that the assassination was engineered by a Texas oil millionaire who thought

lawyer named Dean Andrews has already been sentenced to 18 months for perjury. Each of these Garrison targets has been accused of having information useful to the investigation, but none has been accused of actually having anything to do with the assassination. Indeed, despite his boast of having solved the case, Garrison has yet to charge anyone but Shaw.

Nonetheless, as Garrison quite properly points out, until the trial takes place the only one who knows the strength of his case is Jim Garrison himself. His friends in New Orleans like to remember that he has won many a tough one before. He cleaned out the well-entrenched B-girls on Bourbon Street and also took on eight local judges, winning the right to criticize them in the U.S. Supreme Court. On the other side, local enemies, of whom he has his share, recall that he was discharged from the Army for mental reasons and that he has a sister who has been hospitalized as a schizophrenic.

Though political gain has been suggested as a motive for his undertaking, almost everyone who takes the time to talk to him comes away with the impression that he is sincere. Charming and forceful, he presses his case with compelling ease. Despite being married and the father of two, he has been working on it seven days a week, for nearly two years. "It should be evaluated in a courtroom," he says. "If it's a fraud, I should be removed from office." No matter what the outcome, a courtroom can only be an improvement on the current wonderland.