

THE other day, our era's greatest living American raised a very significant question. Rush Limbaugh asked on his radio talk show, the most popular in the nation, why the city of Dallas has somehow been implicated in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Specifically, Limbaugh asked, when commemorating the 30th anniversary of the Kennedy assassination, why did CNN devote a lurid segment to the prevalence of right-wing zealots in Dallas in the early 1960s?

As always, Limbaugh speaks for normalcy and the commonsensical. After all, the president was not shot by a right-winger but by a left-winger. In fact, the left-winger was not a native of Dallas and had not even lived there very long. Moreover, the right-wing group most often mentioned when the media run through their cliché-ridden melodrama on Dallas, the John Birch Society, has never been associated with violence — merely with eccentricity. There is a difference.

Limbaugh's answer to his own question is that the liberals, who

Face it, Oswald was a

are so quick to chime in on the right-wingery of the 1960s Dallas when the real topic is the death of Kennedy, simply cannot accept that the president was killed by a leftist.

All right, but why not? It is because on the issue of political violence and on a growing range of issues, the liberal has fled into fantasy. Liberals, once among the staunchest advocates of reason, now have a strange affinity for unreason.

On the issue of political violence, it is a devoutly held liberal belief that the politically right most frequently resort to violence. Perhaps that has been true in Europe, where Nazism and fascism were embodiments of violence and contempt for authority — though, forget not the communists — but in America, the vast majority of street demonstrations, bombings, mayhem and, for a certitude, assassinations and assassination attempts have, since the death of

PUBLIC NUISANCES

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John Kennedy, been perpetrated by persons on the left.

In the student demonstrations of the 1960s, it was the SDS and other left-wing youth organizations that went violent and even murderous — not the Young Americans for Freedom or any other conservative student group. All the subsequently progressive causes, from environmentalism to animal rights to militant homosexuality to various peace movements, have, at one point or another, been dishonored by members resorting to force and lawlessness.

To find a similar incidence of violence on the right, you will have to look beyond tax protest-

11-27-93 NY

left-wing nut

ers, proponents of school choice, Cold Warriors, defenders of family values, antique collectors, and even beyond the friends of the National Rifle Association, to the fringes of the anti-abortion movement. Which is not to say that there are not conservatives who are pro-abortion.

To be sure, going back over American political history, probably the most violence — aside from pro- and anti-labor turbulence — has been wrought by racists. Yet, a careful evaluation of the views that these groups might hold on economics, democratic process and related issues would reveal many of them to have been left-wing populists, not conservatives.

Of course, it makes some sense that Americans on the left would be more inclined to violence than those on the right. The left, with all its bilge about alienation and its admiration for Dr. Marx, frequently perceives the American

political system as illegitimate. The right might be, at times, complacent in its acceptance of American customs, traditions and laws, but to find a person on the right who deems the American system illegitimate, one has to move off into the fever swamps of politics.

Yet along with their growing penchant for fantasies, liberals have another reason for talking as though conservative Dallas was somehow complicitous in the president's death; to wit, Lee Harvey Oswald was the epitome of the 1960s left-wing zealot.

He read Marx as a teen-ager. He blamed all his problems and America's on capitalism. He admired the Soviet Union, lived there for a time and tried to become a spy for the KGB. Then he fell in love with Fidel's Cuba.

The KGB had the good sense to recognize him as a nutso. But back in America, had he not turned to violence, he might have gained some gimcrack chair at an American university. Possibly, today he would be a leading animal-rights advocate. Tomorrow he might be on Donahue, railing against the fur coat.

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