

# People and the PURSUIT of Truth

Vol. 1, No. 12

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### No Unemployment in China

Pien Hui  
"China Reconstructs"  
Wai Wen Building  
Peking (37), China

Every able-bodied person among China's population of nearly 800 million is guaranteed a job. The severe unemployment inherited from the old society is a thing of the past.

In 1949, there were over 4 million workers and intellectuals in the cities who had no jobs, one out of every three. In the countryside there were tens of millions of bankrupt and jobless peasants.

The constitution of China provides that "citizens have the right to work." ... Placing of labor power is done in a planned way; and the state makes careful arrangements for young people entering the labor force from the schools each year. The majority of them live in the countryside, which is the home of 80 percent of Chinese. They are

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This magazine is devoted to:

- facts, information, truth, and unanswered questions that are important to people, widely suppressed, and not adequately covered in the usual American press; and also to
- solutions to great problems that are functioning well in some countries or places, yet are almost never talked about in the usual American press.

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placed by the commune production teams to which they belong according to each person's ability and situation. A great deal of labor power is needed for:

- water conservation projects
- soil improvement
- commune-run industries
- work on mechanization
- scientific farming and diversified industries
- development of education
- cultural activities
- medical and health work

Many of the graduates of ordinary secondary schools are assigned to jobs in industry, commerce, transport and construction. Many others have been chosen by groups of their associates to go to universities. Some are elected to commissions or boards of central, provincial, or municipal units. A great number become "barefoot doctors," teachers, agricultural technicians, etc. ...

(Based on a report in "China Reconstructs", October 1975)

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From: Berkeley Enterprises, Inc.  
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# An Introduction to the Assassination Business

L. Fletcher Prouty  
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New York, N.Y.

*"Foreign assassinations, and to a degree domestic assassinations, are set in motion not so much by a specific plan to kill the intended victim as by efforts to remove or relax the protective organization around him."*

Assassination is big business. It is the business of the CIA and any other power than can pay for the "hit" and control the assured getaway.

The CIA brags that its operations in Iran in 1953 led to the pro-Western attitude of that important country. The CIA also takes credit for what it calls the "perfect job" in Guatemala. Both successes were achieved by assassination. What is this assassination business and how does it work?

## Passive "Displeasure"

In most countries there is little or no provision for change of political power. Therefore the strongman stays in power until he dies or until he is removed by a coup d'etat — which often means by assassination. For instance, King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, for all of his wealth and seeming power, died from an assassin's bullet even though he was protected by an elite guard trained by a private contractor selected by the United States Department of Defense. This brings up the question of the mechanics.

Foreign assassination, and to a degree domestic assassinations, are set in motion not so much by a specific plan to kill the intended victim as by efforts to remove or relax the protective organization around the target. Thus, if the CIA secretly lets it be known that it is displeased with a certain ruler and that it would not act against a new regime, some cabal will certainly move against him. Firstly, such CIA sentiment encourages cabals into action and, secondly, it frightens the existing "elite corps." Most palace guards are hated because they are oppressive. When they learn that their CIA support is being removed or weakened, they think of themselves first and begin to head for exile, leaving the ruler vulnerable to the designs of a cabal. This is how the passive "displeasure" of the CIA kills. The same applies to domestic assassinations. Consider the following event.

## A True Story

The autopsy was routine: suicide. A high government official, recently promoted, was found alone in his house, dead and with his rifle beside him. A single bullet had shattered his head. There were no other signs of violence. A poorly typed note to his wife and son lay on the table near him. The hastily scribbled signature was his own. But the "suicide" was an assassination. After his promotion, the official had found papers in the files of his predecessor that showed that the law had been broken, that huge payoffs had been made, and that cases had been judged on the basis of favoritism and bribery. Con-

Reprinted with permission from the September 1975 issue of "Gallery."

sequently, a major industry had suffered grievously. An earlier administration had accepted this corruption as part of its technique of staying in power.

The new official, a fair and honest man, had been deeply troubled by what he had found. He had told his superiors and was stunned when they told him to keep his mouth shut, that they would take care of things. He had begun to drink heavily, and when he was drunk, he had talked. He had become tense. But he worked long hours and went through all the cover-up files. He reconstructed what had happened and prepared a complete report and had just about finished it. He did much of his work late at night at home.

On one of those evenings his wife had gone off on a visit and his son was at college.

The phone call was calm and official-sounding: "This is the police. Have you heard from your son recently? Well, something has happened."

The policeman said he would come right over to talk about it, and added that he was out of uniform and was driving an unmarked car. Yes, he would have identification: Fairfax County Police.

The car pulled up quietly. There was a quick knock on the door. The policeman entered, showed his identification and was invited to sit down. At the split second when the official turned to usher the "policeman" into the house, he was hit a sharp blow on the back of the head. He suffered a massive concussion and was dead. The "policeman" went to a closet where he knew a rifle was kept (the house had been well cased). The rest was simple. He hoisted the body up on the end of the rifle with the muzzle in the victim's mouth. One shot blew the top of the head off, removing evidence of the first blow. The suicide note had already been typed on the official's typewriter and the signature had been lifted from another paper signed with a ball point pen.

In moments the "policeman" was on his way. The unmarked car was left in back of the Forrestal building, where it had been taken from a pool of cars, and the assassin was on his way by taxi to Washington National Airport. He shuttled on the last flight to New York. He had already made arrangements for a series of flights that would take him to Athens. Less than twenty-four hours later, he was on the beach south of the city, among old friends and acquaintances in the modern world's equivalent of the Assassin Sect. He was a faceless, professional, multinational "mechanic." He earned good money and was convinced he was doing an essential job for the power center that he believed would save the world from communism. This story is, in most particulars, true.

## Patterns and Motives Expose Methods

Some time ago it was revealed that the CIA had been issued kits in the name of the Fairfax County, Virginia, police department. This does not necessarily mean the CIA planned to use those identities for the purpose of assassination. In fact, it isn't clear what the CIA planned to do with those documents.

The CIA has many gadgets in its arsenal and has spent years training thousands of people how to use them. Some of these people, working perhaps for purposes and interests other than the CIA's, use these items to carry out burglaries, assassinations, and other unlawful activities — with or without the blessing of the CIA.

Crimes such as these, some of which have remained open for years, cannot be solved by any one individual. But there are patterns and motives that serve to expose methods. In 1963, about one month before President John F. Kennedy was murdered in Dallas, a prominent Washington Lawyer died. It was ruled a suicide because it appeared that he had put his own rifle in his mouth and pulled the trigger. His name was Coates Lear, and he was a law partner of Eugene Zuchert, then Secretary of the Air Force. Lear knew a lot about special airlift contracts and about the plans for Kennedy's fatal visit to Texas. Then, for unexplained reasons, he began drinking excessively. And when he drank, he talked. Soon he was dead.

### Trademarks of the Professional "Mechanic"

The same pattern fits the case of William Miles Gingery, the scenario of whose death we have outlined above. He had been promoted to chief of the office of enforcement of the Civil Aeronautics Board. He had found many irregularities in that office when he took over, and he was scheduled to appear before Senator Edward M. Kennedy's Committee of Administrative Practices and Procedures.

Gingery, a nondrinker, had begun drinking and was obviously terribly upset. One night he was found dead. His death, in early 1975, was ruled a suicide; it was found that he had put the muzzle of his rifle into his mouth and fired.

These are interesting cases. There were many reasons why both of these men might have been assassinated, and they both died in the same manner. That type of "suicide" is one of the trademarks of the professional "mechanic," the kind of killer who works in the international assassination game.

### Kennedy Implicated in Diem Assassination

We hear much today about the CIA and the subject of assassinations. The agency has been linked to the assassination in 1963 of Ngo Dinh Diem, the then president of South Vietnam, and of his brother Nhu. The Diems were killed in October 1963. During the summer of 1971, Charles Colson and E. Howard Hunt, among others, were interested in seeing what could be done to forge and alter official State Department messages to make it appear that President John F. Kennedy was directly implicated in these assassinations. This is an important point. If the White House wanted so badly to tie in a dead president to that plot, it must have known then that President Kennedy was not involved and that records proved that he wasn't. The timing of this "dirty tricks" project is interesting. Some months previous, the New York Times had published the Pentagon Papers. The Times version of the Papers contained a somewhat detailed

but mixed-up version of the events in Saigon during the late summer of 1963, just before the Diems were killed. Anyone reading those papers carefully would discover that the CIA had been close to the assassination plan and that it had men on the scene. But nowhere in the Pentagon Papers is there any message or directive that states in so many words, "The Diems will be assassinated." Even lacking this explicit document, many researchers will still conclude that the CIA was mixed up in the affair, and will conclude also that Kennedy did not order the murders. In 1963 Hunt was an active CIA agent and was deeply involved with the then former Director of Central Intelligence, Allen Dulles, whom Kennedy had fired.

So when the Nixon White House directed Hunt to forge State Department records in order to make it appear that JFK had directed the assassination of the Diems, the White House knew what it was doing, and Hunt most certainly knew what he was doing. But they goofed.

### A Sacred Religious Duty

Even if they had succeeded in making it appear that JFK had ordered the killing of the Diems, it would not have stood up, because that is not how political assassinations are done. The clue is that assassination is a murder of an enemy of the sect (and this can mean many things today), and that it is performed as a sacred religious duty. No one has to direct an assassination — it happens. The active role is played secretly by permitting it to happen. Take the case of the Diems.

By the summer of 1963 the Diem regime had been in full control of South Vietnam for ten years and the country was going from bad to worse. By August 1963 memoranda were being circulated in the government; they were unmarked, with no classification, and were hand-carried from person to person. These memos stated such things as, "We must find a way to get rid of the Diems." This was the summer of extreme and fanatical discontent in Vietnam, including Buddhist uprisings and self-immolations.

The situation led to a series of inquiries from the CIA in Washington to Saigon in order to assess the opposition — what its strength might be and whether any of its prospective leaders might be better suited for the interests of the United States than were the Diems.

The CIA, which had placed the Diems in power, was severely split over this problem. One faction wanted to keep Diem and go along with his further demands. Another was ready to drop him and begin again with someone else. There were two favorites in Washington and many more in Saigon. Thus the ground work for an assassination began.

### Death in the Air

Word got out that the United States "might" withdraw its support of the Diems. This played into the hands of every Saigon cabal. But it did something more important. As the word got out, the people affected most were those who benefited from the Diem regime. The Diems' secret police, their elite guard, and the Diems' inner circle began to realize that they had better move fast. They had been oppressors, murderers. They had stolen hundreds of millions of dollars. Without the support of the United States, the CIA, and the Diems these inner elite were dead. As word began to get around Saigon, everyone began to think of evening their scores against the hated

Diems. Death was in the air. As the elite began to fade away, the Diems' strength was dissipated rapidly.

Yet in Washington, removed from the harsh reality in Saigon, it seemed only wise to study the situation from every angle. As August gave way to September, President Kennedy vacillated, the State Department did little, and the CIA kept firing out messages to its agents on all sides. Gradually a plan took shape. Madame Nhu, who had ridiculed the Buddhist victims by saying that if they wanted to "barbecue" themselves it was none of her business, suddenly realized that it might be a good time to take a long trip to Europe and the United States. This was the first phase. Next would be to get the Diems out of the country. Plans were made for them to attend an important meeting in Europe and they received formal invitations. A special plane was to fly them there.

#### "For the Good of the Cause"

As their departure date approached, the CIA instructed its agents to work closer with the prospective new regimes. This hastened the disintegration of the Diems' elite guard. Then, for reasons that have never been clear, the Diems having gone as far as the airport, turned, stepped back into their car, and sped to their palace. They must not have understood how the game worked. If they did not leave the country, they would be dead. They returned to an empty palace. All of their guard had fled. The actual killing was a simple thing — "for the good of the cause." The United States and the CIA could wash their hands of it, for they had nothing to do with it. Like all assassinations, it just happened. In Washington the White House had tried to "save" the Diems, and by so doing, had preordained their deaths.

This is the assassination scenario and it works in almost all cases, even when there is no elaborate plan. It would have seemed that the White House, and especially an old professional like E. Howard Hunt, would have known that it had happened that way and that changing the records would only have implicated them deeper than they already were by the summer of 1971.

#### Fragility of Third World Governments

And now, in 1975, there has been a flood of charges about assassinations. Of course the CIA has been involved. It made it its business to get close to the elite guards of a great many of the Third World countries. As long as these nations' leaders play the game, like King Hussein and the Shah of Iran, all goes well; but if one of them gets out of line, or if some cabal begins to grow in power and offer what might seem a better deal, then, as in the case of the Diems, the power of the United States will be withdrawn. Then, without doubt, the King is dead.

Most Americans are not aware of the fragility of Third World governments. Many have a military no larger and no more effective than a good-sized army band. Many have a "King's Guard" that is inadequate. The most trusted of the guard control the ammunition supplies; every time ammunition is issued for training, a close count is kept of expended rounds. Therefore no matter how wealthy the king may be, or how much wealth his country may possess in valuable raw materials, it will not assure his security. Rather, his money tends to threaten his life.

#### How It Begins

Thus these puny sovereigns must appeal to some greater power for their protection. For many years the United States, usually through the CIA, has provided the training for the elite guard. Without his guard, King Hussein of Jordan would have been dead or deposed long ago. His guard is trained by the CIA, even including paratrooper training by a clandestine military assistance program provided by the United States Air Force and the Army, though it is under CIA control. Similarly, many rulers in Asia, Africa, and Latin America owe their positions and in most cases their lives to the United States and the CIA, and most recently, to private corporations hired to train, and thereby control, the "elite guard."

This is how it begins; then comes the escalation. An elite guard is a small organization. As the ruler realizes his vulnerability, like the Diems and like the now deposed Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, he begins to look beyond the guard. He discusses an increase of his small and unskilled army with his "trainers" — the CIA. They are quick to say that he should have a larger army and that they can get him a military assistance program from the United States, provided he pledges undying loyalty. Now the program begins to pay off. A modest military assistance program of, say, fifty million dollars is begun. Of course, the entire amount is spent in the United States for American equipment. An old rule in the military assistance program is that whenever a piece of equipment is provided, ten times its cost will be spent for spare parts before it wears out. This is where the manufacturing companies make a real killing, for with spare parts they can charge whatever they want.

#### "Coup D'Etat" — A Euphemism for Assassination

The next escalation is as follows: if the ruler of one country has been given a fifty-million-dollar program, each of his neighbors asks for similar programs for self-defense. Since World War II this has been a trillion-dollar business. Meanwhile, trade missions from the United States begin to work over the client states to see what natural resources can be acquired and for what price, while the CIA works with selected American manufacturers to portion out various franchises, such as Coca-Cola and Singer Sewing Machines. Through this device other selected families in the client country are put on the road to becoming millionaires and powers in their own country. This creates power centers that at times are played off against each other, as the CIA sees fit. Eventually, the structure explodes, the elite guard weakens, and unless the ruler is a hard-headed pragmatist and leaves immediately, he will be assassinated.

Since World War II, there have been hundreds of "coups d'etats" — a euphemism for assassination. That list will grow as long as the United States does its diplomatic work clandestinely. Why else has Henry Kissinger "shuttled" from country to country in the Middle East? If his relationship with each of these countries is an under-cover relationship, then he cannot meet with them publicly and in a group.

#### Why President Kennedy Was Killed

Eventually, practitioners of assassination by the removal of power reach the point where they see that technique as fit for the removal of opposition anywhere. That was why President Kennedy was killed. He was not murdered by some lone gunman or by some

(please turn to page 6)

# The CBS Inquiry and Report into the Shooting of President John F. Kennedy

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The sun hardly shines on a day that doesn't have assassination, clandestinism, or cover-ups in the news. The A.I.B. cannot hope to comment on each and every report. However, there was a recent media event (November, 1975) of such scope and political significance as to warrant a reply. This event was the Columbia Broadcasting System four-part inquiry into the shootings of John F. Kennedy, Robert F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and George Wallace. These special broadcasts were offered as a response to this country's clamor for the truth. In reality, they proved to be officialdom's retreat to a second line of defense.

Parts I and II examined the assassination of John Kennedy. The first show reviewed the assassination itself; the second, the background of Lee Harvey Oswald.

Part I still concluded that Oswald was the lone assassin. To reach this conclusion, CBS was guilty of brazen omissions, unprincipled use of "experts" and their testimony, and deft mixing of truths, half-truths, and untruths.

Here are some of our observations.

## Two out of Eleven Expert Riflemen

Eleven expert riflemen were used, under controlled optimum conditions and after intensive practice, to verify the Warren Commission's three-shot theory. Only two were able to duplicate the shooting within the extreme parameters of the Commission's scenario. So, CBS concluded the lone assassin theory was tenable, and therefore true.

This conclusion is truly absurd. Oswald did not fire under ideal conditions, did not practice, and was by no stretch of the imagination as talented with a rifle as CBS's experts. The fact that only two of the eleven professionals were able to fire three accurate rounds within 5.6 seconds is even one more indication that Oswald could NOT have performed the shooting as hypothesized by the Warren Commission. In addition, the relevancy of this test is of course questionable due to the very strong evidence that more than three shots were fired and that one gunman was involved.

## The Identity of a "Lone Assassin"?

CBS's next step was to further prove that it was Oswald indeed who was the lone assassin. They offer as evidence simply a dubious and vague motion in the sixth floor window of the Texas School Book Depository as recorded on film by spectator Robert Hughes. Sobriety and common sense dictate that this proves nothing. To CBS, it seems to be a quantum leap into

Oswald's guilt. But CBS did not offer one iota of real evidence against Oswald, and they ignored the testimony of such witnesses as Mrs. Arnold and Officer Baker that suggests Oswald was not even on the sixth floor during the shooting. Needless to say, CBS's case against Oswald would hardly influence a court of law.

## The Magic Bullet, Commission Exhibit 399

CBS's attempts to demonstrate the tenability of the single bullet theory (a single bullet that wounded President Kennedy and Governor Connally) were deliberately misleading. There is truly overwhelming medical, eyewitness, and photographic evidence that explicitly shows that Kennedy and Connally were struck by different bullets. Yet CBS concluded otherwise. The reasons they offer are a slight and questionable movement of the Governor's hand after Kennedy was struck. If this is the best they can do to buttress the cornerstone of the Commission's findings, then here is further proof of the implausibility of this theory.

## The Motion of Kennedy's Head at the Final Shot

Their attempt to defend the lone assassin theory against the violent backward motion of Kennedy's head upon the impact of the last shot is highly implausible. Their ONLY explanation for this graphic movement is that Jacqueline Kennedy could have pulled him backwards. This premise attributes to the President's wife super-human strength and reflexes. It is not demonstrable scientifically with any of the photographs. It is a totally fictitious explanation. It is indicative of CBS's desperate attempts to legitimize the Warren Commission's conclusions. Their expert's verbal claim that Kennedy's brain matter and bone were thrown forward is in direct contradiction to the abundance of eyewitness and medical evidence on the official record which states that over 98% of such material was blasted BACKWARDS.

## Dr. James Weston

To reach these flawed conclusions, CBS was forced to make heavy-handed and unprincipled use of its "expert".

The use of Dr. James Weston, president-elect of the American Academy of Forensic Science, to support Warren Commission findings may be impressive to the layperson, but it is extremely unethical in light of the fact that the current president and his three predecessors have all expressed grave reservations publicly about the lone assassin theory. If CBS was concerned with an honest presentation of the facts, they would have made note of this on their show.

## Itek Corp., A CIA Contractor

Perhaps even more offensive was the use of the Itek Corp. to support major conclusions. Itek's credibility as an impartial authority would suffer considerably had the American people been informed that one of Itek's major clients is the CIA. Both the president and vice-president of Itek have admitted to being former CIA agents — facts certainly known to CBS.

CBS implies that because these people are experts, we should accept their undocumented conclusions blindly. In other words, Americans should trust the experts, not the evidence, not their eyes looking at photographs, not their common sense. We were asked to accept the Warren Commission Report in the same way as in 1964.

### The Second Show

The second show, while cautious and flawed, drew a bottom-line conclusion that was more in accord with the historical realities it examined. For CBS acknowledged that the CIA and FBI had not been candid with the Warren Commission in their disclosure of Oswald's activities.

The A.I.B. criticizes this show because it failed to examine the issue of Jack Ruby's shooting of Oswald and failed to adequately explore the many intriguing questions and implications that this raises.

Among the comments that may be made are the following.

- CBS noted that Oswald learned Russian but accepted the view that Oswald was self-taught and ignored Warren Commission evidence that indicated Oswald had been instructed in Russian by the Marine Corps.
- CBS ignored the overwhelming evidence that Oswald could not have financed or arranged (i.e. including air travel London to Helsinki on October 10, 1959) his 1959 voyage to Russia, which culminated in his defection.
- CBS interviewed U.S. Consul Richard Snyder, who had served at the Embassy in Moscow. But they failed to take note of the testimony of John McVickar (a U.S. embassy official) whose impression was that Oswald "was following a pattern of behavior in which he has been tutored by a person or persons unknown ... that he has been in contact with others before or during his Marine Corps tour who had guided him and encouraged him in his actions" (see Commission Exhibit 941, 18th volume of the hearings, page 155).
- The CIA, for the first time, through Director Colby, admitted to CBS that the CIA had intercepted Oswald's mail to and from Russia. Recent official investigations have revealed that the CIA routinely photographed mail between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. and opened and read many letters. Yet when asked by the Warren Commission the CIA failed to produce any of Oswald's correspondence. So what did CBS do? It let Colby off the hook.
- CBS presented important information concerning a September, 1963 conversation between J. A. Milteer (a right-wing extremist) and an informant of the Miami police intelligence unit. In this talk, Milteer spoke of a plot to kill

Kennedy in a southern city with a high-powered rifle from a high vantage point. CBS reported that the information was taken seriously by Florida officials who then passed on the information to the Secret Service and the FBI. But CBS failed to add an essential part of Milteer's story, which was that a "patsy" would be picked up after the killing — just to throw the public off the track.

- CBS was able to pinpoint many indications that Oswald's New Orleans political activities were evidence of his role as an informant and provocateur, most likely for the FBI. CBS presented important statements from admitted FBI informant Oreste Pena that he had seen his contact, FBI special agent Warren DeBrueys, on many occasions in a New Orleans Greek restaurant conversing with Lee Harvey Oswald. □

### Prouty — Continued from page 2

limited conspiracy, but by the breakdown of the protective system that should have made an assassination impossible. Once insiders knew that he would not be protected, it was easy to pick the day and the place. In fact, those responsible for luring Kennedy to Dallas on November 22, 1963 were not even in on the plan itself. He went to Texas innocuously enough: to dedicate an Air Force hospital facility at Brooks Air Force Base in San Antonio. It was not too difficult then to get him to stop at Fort Worth — "to mend political fences." Of course, no good politician would go to Fort Worth and skip Dallas. All the conspirators had to do was to let the right "mechanics" know where Kennedy would be and when and, most importantly, that the usual precautions would not have been made and that escape would be facilitated. This is the greatest single clue to that assassination. Who had the power to call off or drastically reduce the usual security precautions that always are in effect whenever a president travels? Castro did not kill Kennedy, nor did the CIA. The power source that arranged that murder was on the inside. It had the means to reduce normal security and permit the choice of a hazardous route. It also has had the continuing power to cover up that crime for twelve years. □

### Gardner — Continued from page 8

#### The Candidate's Background

Citizen pressures and media skills should combine to produce the kind of campaign that will reveal the candidate's values, character, leadership, and ability to build a team. As a matter of course every news medium should do at least one thorough background story on each candidate — showing the candidate's past political performance, examining the manner in which he or she handled crises in the past, reporting objectively on controversial incidents. The emphasis should be on events that enable citizens to make their own judgments of the candidate's political philosophy and mode of handling complex issues, and on the candidate's temperament, depth, sensitivity, character, candor and probity.

A piece of nation's future is decided on election night. In the months preceding that night, the citizens have serious business with the candidates, and searching questions to ask about them:

- What kind of leadership will a candidate give us?
- Will he play to our fears and hatred, or will he demand the best that is in us?
- Will he have the courage to stretch us? □

# Present Day Political Campaigning: The Process of Finding Out What a Presidential Candidate Stands for

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*"Under the hand of the modern political manager the presidential campaigns are becoming enormously skilled exercises in image manipulation and issue evasion."*

## The Diversion of Attention

People say the recent attempts to assassinate President Ford will damage American political campaigning and the President's "dialogue with the people" by stopping presidential crowd-mingling.

The statement is poppycock. It diverts attention from the things that are really killing presidential campaigns. Presidential crowd-mingling is a colorful but meaningless exercise. In the two centuries of our national life no more than a tiny fraction of the populace ever experienced it. Surely an even tinier fraction was the wiser for it.

## Manipulating Images and Evading Issues

The real problem is that under the hand of the modern political manager the presidential campaigns are becoming enormously skilled exercises in image manipulation and issue evasion. Too many citizens doubt that their concerns will be answered by any candidate and as a result turn away from politics and voting. The candidates, who should be engaged in robust debate with one another and lively dialogue with the voters, all too often dodge the crucial issues and avoid genuine give-and-take with citizens.

Journalists from television and radio, newspapers and newsmagazines are the first to assert that their coverage of presidential campaigns leaves much to be desired. Television and radio journalists are frank to say that they have difficulty in dealing with issues and personalities in depth, and many of them are uneasy about allowing too much of the campaign burden to be carried by 30-60 second commercials that are skillful public relations manipulations of candidate images.

## The Unconscious Assumption

One could blame the citizen for apathy, and the news media for superficiality. But neither is at the heart of the problem. The real difficulty is that everyone connected with a presidential campaign — candidates, media, citizenry, pundits — make the same unconscious assumption about the campaign: that the manner in which the political managers choose to run the campaign must be accepted uncritically as one of the facts of life. The candidate has his say, of course, but he's run ragged. It is the small cluster of political managers around him who determine the shape, tone, style and mechanics of the campaign.

The media have accepted that arrangement. They cover the candidates with energy; they spend lots of money; they have cameras in the right place at the

right time; they spend hours and hours waiting for an "event," and they complain remarkably little. The "boys on the bus" are stoical prisoners of a system designed by someone else. They accept the sequence of events as given and cover as best they can.

## The Citizens Play Doormat

Citizens accept the situation even more passively.

Why? Why should citizens and the media stand by fatalistically as though they were watching an act of God? What the candidate does or doesn't do, whether he or she faces an issue or evades it, whether or not he or she has press conferences are currently all decisions made with Machiavellian shrewdness. The shape of the campaign isn't an act of God; it's an act of political managers. If the citizens play doormat, the citizens are going to get walked on. The stakes are enormous, politics is not for the guileless, and power abhors a vacuum. The old proverb says, "If you turn yourself into a sheep, you will find a wolf nearby."

Political managers have every right to run their campaigns as they see fit, but citizens and the media should reassert their right to judge the manner of campaigning, the forums chosen, the issues dealt with, the accessibility and responsiveness of candidates. Campaigns are far too important to the body politic of this nation to be left solely in the hands of the political managers.

## Smoking Out the Candidate

The object of the suggestions in this article is to smoke out the candidates. What do they think? How do they think? How do they respond to probing questions? What do they reveal of their character, style, and philosophy?

We should ask each candidate to pledge himself voluntarily to a course of conduct that would provide the citizen with an opportunity to know him in depth. For example, he might commit himself to:

- Regular press conferences, conducted under rules that diminish the possibility of manipulation, with opportunity for follow-up questions.
- One-to-one, in-depth interviews with reporters not chosen by the candidate.
- Submitting regularly to unrehearsed questioning by panels of citizens or journalists not chosen by the candidate.

- Cooperating with citizens' groups to devise new means of interaction between the candidate and voters — Town Hall forums, hearings, and so on.
- Responding fully and explicitly to the concerns that are on the public's mind, especially as expressed in polls.

#### Assessments of Candidates by Journalists

Journalists should make frank and frequent assessments of how accessible and responsive the candidate is, based on the number of exposures to unrehearsed question-and-answer sessions, and records of whether or not the candidate had evaded issues of high public concern.

Such measures as these would make possible a politics of authenticity and candor, a politics that tests problem-solving approaches, a politics that faces tough questions rather than avoids them, an approach that reaches beyond grievance agitation and asserts that there needs to be a new spirit of making government work.

Our campaigns should be marked by robust debate. Candidates should carry on that debate with zest and responsiveness. If the news media are free to do their job, they will have played a major role in making all this possible.

#### Bringing the Citizens Back In

But we can't leave it all to the media. Citizens have to shake off their passivity and get back into the fray. Many will have no desire to participate beyond voting, but those who wish to participate more should have the opportunity to do so. The "campaign dialogue" today consists all too often of a candidate answering questions no one ever asked, and glossing over the real concerns of the people.

#### Polls on Issues

This might be remedied in a variety of ways. One way would be to make more effective use of the public opinion polls. The pollsters have demonstrated, generally between elections, that they can conduct excellent polls on issues, revealing what questions are of greatest concern to the people. But during campaigns, such surveys are foolishly superseded by "Who's Ahead?" polls.

Properly used issue polls could give the public a more active role in the campaign dialogue. Having determined, by polls, what citizens consider to be the most crucial concerns, newspapers, television and radio could then set out to nail the candidates down with respect to those crucial concerns.

But polls themselves do not give citizens a sense of direct participation. So it would be useful to supplement them with other means of obtaining citizen opinion. Television, radio and newspapers could in many ways supplement the polls, by asking the citizens to help define the issues.

#### Defining Crucial Issues

The station or newspaper could issue a call to citizens in a given area to send in their views as to what the crucial issues are. The station or newspaper should promise to read the submissions, tally them and report them widely, as well as submit them to the candidates themselves. Obviously, this would work well only if citizens believed their views would get through to the candidates.

Before a leading candidate came to town, the television station, radio station or newspaper might ask its listeners or readers what questions they would like the candidate to answer — and then call on him or her to answer the top ranking concerns listed. After a candidate had made a local appearance (or a network speech), the station or newspaper could call on its readers or viewers to send in their reactions to the candidate's performance. A newspaper might run a full page of reader comments; the television station might present a summary of viewer response.

These are only examples. The point is that we can and should invent new ways in which citizens can express their concerns and candidates respond explicitly to those concerns.

#### Insisting on Plain and Clear Responses

If we have good issue polls during the campaigns, the news media can insist on explicit responses and no evasions with respect to the crucial issues. For example, in the home stretch of the campaign, the networks might undertake an eight-week series, in which on a given evening each candidate would be required to respond to the same carefully posed issue question.

In the case of television, the most significant decision the media could make would be to assign more substantial amounts of prime time to the campaign — say 1-1/2 hours per evening between Labor Day and Election Day. Time is the crucial factor. The network nightly news might be expanded to provide more time for this crucial coverage.

Newspapers, with their capacity to cover subjects at length and in depth, can get to the heart of the candidate's views, explore inconsistencies and piece together the candidate's philosophy of government. They could run an "Issue Page" once a week, posing a crucial issue (as identified by polls) and printing in parallel the candidates' responses. The newspaper could urge readers to tear out the page so that by election time they would have a complete reference collection on candidates' views.

Campaigns are exciting and confusing. Too often, unexcited and unconfused political managers make excellent use of the tumult to design political campaigns in which:

- the candidate can successfully conceal his or her weaknesses;
- the media have to accept impossible conditions of coverage;
- the citizens are passive spectators at a cleverly planned magic lantern show.

It's time to call the political managers to account, to bring the citizen back into campaign politics, and to free up the media to make presidential campaigns the significant events that they should be and must become.

#### What the Candidate Proposes

The presidential candidates have to tell us what they want the country to be like. How do they plan to cope with a nervous economy and widespread unemployment? What do they intend to do to lessen economic inequity? to generate public revenues and private capital? to prepare for major changes in life styles in a world of resource constraints? What do they see as the trade-offs? How do they propose to deal with them?  
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