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THE FOURTH DECADE

1963

1973

1983

1993

2003

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COCKBURN DOES DALLAS

by
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The first half of 1995 has seen a significant number of books on President Kennedy's assassination such as Norman Mailer's *Oswald's Tale*; Harold Weisberg's *Never Again*, and John Newman's *Oswald and the CIA*.

There is one other work which has thrust its way upon the literary scene, however, that may well have escaped notice for those who closely monitor and laboriously examine each book for both its evidentiary value and political relevance. That book is Alexander Cockburn's latest one, *The Golden Age Is In Us*, a compilation of a series of the author's "reflections" on political events covering a period of time from 1987 to 1994. Of key concern here for our purposes are the 21 pages devoted to the JFK assassination. For those unaware of Cockburn's position on this matter, he defends the Warren Commission's conclusion of "lone assassin" and supports their additional version of history that there was no conspiracy.

Why single out Cockburn whose book totals some 434 pages with only a brief mention of the JFK affair, you may well ask? As many readers of this publication are well aware, Cockburn is a "Nation" magazine correspondent whose regular columns are eagerly read by the tens of thousands. He is seen by many as the daring "lefty" iconoclast engaged in muckraking enterprises of his own. Thus, his word, and world for that matter, it can be said, are taken for "gospel" by his readers on various issues. I, myself, know several who "swear" by him. It would be difficult, indeed, to underestimate the powerful influence he has on wielding opinion.

Cockburn proudly boasts in the foreword of his book that "...if we arrange things differently the world can be turned upside down; that is, the right way up." Immediately after this sobering thought, Cockburn counsels us that with "the Golden Age in us" we then ought to "know where to look, and what to think."

Good advice! But Cockburn abandons his own sage admonition and, indeed, turns the world "upside down" in the brief mental musings he pursues on the JFK case.

After having read the 21 pages in his book, I had the

occasion to confront Mr. Cockburn in San Francisco when he appeared at the "Modern Times" bookstore (June 9, 1995). He was there discussing his book as part of a promotional tour he was then engaged in.

It was a loving and adoring audience that greeted him that evening. You could tell that by the questions that were being tossed his way. At about the time after the third or so questioner got up I rose and pointedly aired my objections to what I found in his work calling attention to the 21 pages devoted to the JFK case. I began my remarks by stating I was deeply disturbed and dismayed by what he had written and said that he had moved from minor errors to major and glaring ones.

Since Cockburn is very fond of quotations, some obscure and some not (previous books by him have chapters where a quotation is referred to as a method of introducing his chapter's subject). I offered a few of my own before this very adulatory audience. First, I said, there was Oscar Wilde who once wrote that "the only duty we owe to history is to rewrite it" and I added to this the famous American lawyer Clarence Darrow's observation that "what we learn from history is that we don't learn from history." I was then about to cite a few of the errors in his book but before I did I said that tonight he (Cockburn) had a chance to rectify his ways (or "make amends" as I put it to him) in getting (and setting) the historical and political record straight. As I emphasized to him, any good journalist, just as any scientist respected in his field, can admit to having made a mistake and also to say that they do not know when important issues are discussed. I recalled for him something I had read about the great French writer, Emile Zola, who was instrumental in helping to free Dreyfus, a French military officer framed by the French government at the tail end of the 19th century. Zola at first did not want to become involved, apparently believing Dreyfus to be guilty.

Cockburn seemed quite taken aback by my "confrontation" with him. (There was a married couple whom I knew quite well and they came up to me after the question period and wanted to know why I was "so hard" on him. I replied that it was because of Cockburn's influence and because voices like mine are seldom heard that I did so. This couple had not read what Cockburn had written but were ardent admirers of him nonetheless. "What else do we have", they implored me, "if we don't have people like Cockburn writing?" I answered by declaring that there was always the truth that must be told regardless of who tells it from the highest to the lowest).

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Cockburn, probably not expecting my grand assault, reacted to my query with the same kind of response I get from so many defenders of the Warren Commission. His reply to me was a terse: "Well, you have your 'facts' and I have my facts!" Quite obviously this did not settle the matter for either the audience nor for myself.

The exchange between Cockburn and myself reminded me of the time I gave a copy of a paper abstract to a researcher and published author. I had originally presented my paper at a "COPA" conference on the JFK assassination held in Washington, D.C. in October, 1994. My abstract was compelling evidence that the first shot fired in the JFK shooting was not a missed shot and that it was a hit on JFK and JFK alone and that the necessary conclusion followed that there was a conspiracy.

The researcher/writer I gave my copy to was Gary Savage whose book, First Day Evidence, staunchly defends the Warren Commission's version of Oswald as the single gunman (and no conspiracy). I allowed time for Gary to read it and study it and offer his criticisms. When I approached him later on, I then asked him if he had any comment to make. His reply was almost a virtual duplicate of what Cockburn retorted to me at the bookstore ("virtual reality?"). Gary stated: "Well, you have your witnesses and I have my witnesses!"

Although this is neither the time nor the place to argue the merits of either Savage's or Cockburn's "short and sweet" replies, the fact of the matter is that Savage does not have those witnesses and Cockburn's "facts" are anything but!

As Cockburn was autographing his book before the many faithful who purchased his book I waited until the very end and approached him about his "facts" contained within his book. I could see he was in a hurry and while he listened to me (without, in my opinion, really hearing what I was saying) I called off two of the "facts" cited in his work (as this article will certainly demonstrate there were a lot more "facts" I could've cited but time was of the essence).

The first of these "facts" noted in Cockburn's book can be found (page 17) in his stating that Fair Play for Cuba leaflets were handed out by Oswald in Dallas in 1963 and that these same leaflets were sent to Oswald from one FPCC organization in another city!

I told Cockburn that although this was a minor error, the fact of the matter is that the leaflets were run off by a printing company in New Orleans and it was New Orleans where he handed them out not Dallas.

But the second error I pointed out to him was a far worse and grievous error and one that had deeper and sinister political implications. To explain this one you have to take into account Cockburn's view of Oswald. Trying as hard as he can to pin the disgruntled, Marxist and "true believer" syndrome on Oswald, Cockburn cites (page 253) "the (communist) clenched fist salute" Oswald allegedly shows off to a nationwide audience while in the custody of the Dallas police. This comment by Cockburn obviously refers to the well-known "clenched fist" salute communist sympathizers present at various rallies and demonstrations throughout the world which represents their defiance of established authority.

I showed Cockburn a xerox copy of the cover of a little known record produced in 1964 by Billy Hargis of the "Christian Crusade" which featured Oswald speaking on radio in New Orleans in August, 1963. Among the many political topics he discussed were on Cuba, Russia and Marxism. Titled "The President's Assassin Speaks" the record was a virulent anti-communist attack on Oswald linking him with an alleged world-wide conspiracy culminating in the murder of President Kennedy. The back of the record states that, after listening to this record: "You will be able to decide for yourself who gave the orders to Oswald to take the life of President Kennedy."

As an aside, this record (which I own) was the very record I used to establish Oswald's infamous "slip" where he stumbles when being questioned about his stay in Russia and says he "was under the Protection of the U.S. government" and then retracts that admission by immediately thereafter saying he was "not under" (U.S. protection). When I compared what Oswald had actually stated with what the Warren Commission Volumes printed I discovered they left out Oswald's "slip" saying he was under protection.

I did not go into the matter of this "slip" with Cockburn at all for my intent then was to call his attention to the photo appearing on the front cover of the Hargis record. It shows Oswald raising his hands while handcuffed. In fact, he was then protesting the treatment he was receiving as a suspect in a crime—the murder of a policeman (Tippit). Subsequent to this, Oswald was charged with murder of the President.

Moreover the photo, while showing a manacled Oswald, blacked out the background! What was deleted was a Dallas cop! All this as part of a very clever plan by Hargis (and others, of course) to "reveal" to the world the "clenched fist salute" of "Communist" Oswald.

And it was this photo and undoubtedly propagandists using (or rather misusing) it that convinces Cockburn and others to form their impressions and, in turn, mislead others! Where, I asked Cockburn, was his "propaganda detector" functioning then if it wasn't already at a level of zero? He had no answer and I suspect will not have any in the near future.

Talk about "faked" Oswald photos with the alleged assassination rifle (which, incidentally, I happen to believe and believe strongly were not faked based on my own personal investigation)!

Apparently the "Golden Age" may be in all of us as Cockburn puts it but the "Golden Detector" seems missing in Cockburn in so far as the JFK case is concerned.

As Cockburn was leaving, I briefly mentioned the interview he did of Wesley Liebler, Warren Commission Assistant Counsel (pages 257 to 262). I told Cockburn that Liebler pulled a real "con job" on him but there was no time to go into detail on that score. I will, of course, in this article, discuss how he managed this.

As a final "chapter" in my brief "encounter" with Cockburn, I handed over to him my "COPA" abstract on "The First Shot" and another paper I had written on the fatal shots (plural) evidence, both of which provided compelling evidence for conspiracy. I asked for any comments he'd like to offer and gave my address. As of now, it is more than three weeks and have had no reply nor can I honestly state that I truly expect one!

As noted previously, Cockburn devotes six pages of his book to an interview with Wesley Liebler. This particular interview appeared originally in the "Nation" magazine several years back and it is possible that some readers of my article may recall reading it then. The "Nation", in the most recent period, can hardly be classed as being in league with the "conspiracy crowd," but Cockburn's piece really went the distance in dumping a mountain of misinformation upon the unwitting reader.

Not that the untutored reader of Cockburn's views would be taken in by what Liebler has to say, for just prior to this interview (page 253) Cockburn offers us this gem of a thought: "Whether JFK was killed by a lone assassin or by a conspiracy has as much to do with the subsequent contours of American politics as if he had tripped over one of Caroline's dolls and broken his neck in the White House nursery."

This bold pronouncement and rush to judgment on the political scene of the 1960's almost makes the Cockburn/

Liebeler interview anti-climactic. But for our purposes here, the less said about this astonishing statement the better! Whatever "map" Cockburn was consulting about the "contours of American politics," it seems clear that it wasn't a Dallas road map or city street guide showing him around Dealey Plaza.

Things start off badly for Mr. Liebler from the beginning. For example, in describing the different investigations done by the Warren Commission and the House Select Committee, he states that the "evidence" is "consistent with the proposition that the first shot missed" (page 258). Cockburn lets this "fact" fly past him without any comment.

There is overwhelming evidence to the contrary that, indeed, the first shot did not miss but struck the President and struck him alone. None of this is even entertained as a thought by Liebler nor hinted at. Cockburn provides the perfect foil for Liebler's follies.

Without going into too much detail on this evidence, one can find this in my "COPA" paper of October, 1994 which is also available on a video wherein I summarized my findings.

With this first albatross hung around Cockburn's neck, Mr. Liebler proceeds to hang a few more. On the same page (258) he calls attention to the HSCA finding that at "around (Zapruder) frame 190" a shot was fired and "struck" JFK. It should be noted that Liebler does not argue against this finding and in no way refutes it but he neglects to inform Mr. Cockburn that this Z-190 shot had to be fired during a time when the alleged assassin (Oswald) had his view obstructed on the sixth floor of the Depository Building by a tree! Moreover, Liebler says nothing about a witness to the assassination, James Tague, wounded in the cheek by a fragment chipped off a curb from a missed shot. Tague's testimony before the Warren Commission, given at a late date when they could no longer ignore him, contradicts Liebler's assertion that the first shot missed. Who needs a "magic bullet" in this case when you can have a witness like Mr. Tague "disappear" from the scene almost at will?

Perhaps if Mr. Liebler were apprised of the fact that the shot "around Z-190" meant that Oswald fired, nevertheless, through a tree and hit the President, anyway. No problem! After all, this would all be taken care of by Mr. Cockburn who offers up an Oswald who progresses from a super-marxist to a super-marksman and eventually a "superman" who can be made to do anything within the confines of a mere 21 pages!

As we travel down through these torturous "contours"

Cockburn has mapped out for us, Liebeler walks a road stretched to even more ridiculous lengths. On one page alone (page 260) there are these incredible roadblocks passing as observations by Liebeler on the Zapruder film: (1) "Ask yourself where the bullet went after it came out of the President's neck if it didn't hit Connally." (Why not ask Liebeler why the examining physician, Dr. Malcolm Perry, repeatedly stated the neck wound was one of "entry" or why both Governor and Mrs. Connally insisted that the first shot hit JFK virtually from day one. See Seth Kantor's notebook published in the WC volumes, a document little noticed by many researchers. And there is also Mrs. Kennedy's testimony and physical reactions to the first shot that are consistent with a first shot striking JFK); (2) "(Governor Connally's) hand was on his thigh, which is consistent with the Zapruder film." Absolutely false, and Liebeler knows better than to utter this. As the film clearly shows—not his thigh, which can't be seen in any event—but Connally's hand is holding on to his Stetson hat, and (3) Liebeler (on the fatal head shot): "It (JFK's head) doesn't move backward. It moves slightly to the left and downward..." Again, absolutely false! Mr. Liebeler cannot be excused on this one as he has viewed the film many times. President Kennedy's head goes sharply forward and thereafter much more violently straight back. Then it (the President's head) moves "slightly to the left and downward" as the President falls over entirely to his left, and onto Mrs. Kennedy.

When it comes to the matter of the controversial autopsy photographs and X-rays, to borrow from Cockburn's phraseology in the foreward of his book, Liebeler does, indeed, have the "world...turned upside down." Liebeler assures us (page 261) that the Warren Commission "didn't want to press Bobby Kennedy, who controlled them, for their release." Again, Liebeler knew better. The problem was not one of "release" since Bobby never denied the Commission the use of them. (Read Weisberg's account of this in Post Mortem). Besides which, not only did Arlen Specter, another assistant Warren Commission counsel (who is now running for President) view at least one of the autopsy pictures (he admitted as much in an interview he granted "U.S. News & World Report", December, 1966) but General Counsel J. Lee Rankin told a WC member that the Warren Commission had possession of those photos!

Then, also, there is Liebeler's facile and dismissive comment (page 262) about the famous (or infamous) "bag" which Oswald is alleged to have brought into the TSBD on the

morning of the assassination. Despite the fact that no one saw Oswald bring this bag inside the building (let alone making it there) Liebeler's comment on this is: "But fine, never mind how the bag got there."

Imagine how the O.J. Simpson defense team would've handled that fine kettle of fish if they were tossed this during O.J.'s trial!!!! Perry Mason's secretary would've choked on that line alone!

One impetuous and final thrust by Liebeler to bolster his defense of his Warren Commission buddies is to make an allusion to the Tippit murder as being solved in the great and glorious tradition of "forensic evidence." But that "forensic evidence" has more holes in it than does the proverbial piece of swiss cheese. Certainly there is less proof to be found there than in the "solid case" convicting Oswald for the murder of the President.

What was it that Lee Oswald told his brother, Robert, while incarcerated in a Dallas jail cell? "Don't believe all this so-called evidence!"

Cockburn's peculiar political perspective on this whole JFK affair is demonstrated by his thinking on Oswald's "motivation." Calling his reader's attention to what he claims are Oswald's political leanings he racks up a laundry list which describe him as a leftist, a Marxist and Castroite. His defiance of authority can only lead him to the ultimate act and the "clenched fist salute" is symbolic enough for Cockburn's purposes. Cockburn allows Liebeler the opportunity to slip in this enlightened reflection on Oswald's "motivation." Liebeler: "I guess he (Oswald) would have as much contempt for liberals as you or I." Cockburn, for his part, speaks in harsher terms and says of Oswald that his is the "homicidal petulance of a psychopath."

The above thoughts are, perhaps, not the identical words of those two well-known arm-chair psychiatrists, Gerald Posner and Norman Mailer, but the reader can get the drift.

Another howler that Cockburn provides us with is his ponderous query on page 353. "How many rolodexes in America after November 23 (1963) had Lee's name still lodged there? Never, ever heard of him."

This, dear reader, is to prove that Oswald was really one of those "lefties" of whom we are now ashamed to admit he was. And so why can't we accept this "fact" and that he did what he did solely out of political conviction to right a wrong (or wrongs)? It's as simple as that! Accept it and let us move on to more pressing problems and issues of our day!

What is truly ironic (and doubly so) about Cockburn's "rolodex" remark is what has been turning up in recently released secret CIA files. It turns out that the CIA has released a listing of the general membership of the Fair Play for Cuba members for the years of 1962 and 1963. These were the years in which Oswald, in one way or another, expressed his greatest interest in that organization. The 1962 listing of which I have a copy does not show Oswald's name in it nor should it since he actually did not join the FPCC as a member until 1963. So what does the 1963 CIA listing show—the fearless and dreaded FPCC member—Lee Harvey Oswald?!! No, it doesn't! Somehow he managed not to wind up on the CIA's "rolodex" for the entire year of 1963! Incompetence, I can hear some readers cry. Or did the CIA just "slip up" and make a human error? Were they "out to lunch" during the year of 1963 when Oswald joined? Don't they, as part of their job assignments, read newspapers, listen to the radio and watch TV? (Oswald was notorious that year appearing in the press, was on radio and television and if you have been reading John Newman's book on "Oswald and the CIA" the CIA was busy opening up and reading his mail). Add to this the liaison between the FBI and the CIA when he was arrested in New Orleans for the "crime" of distributing FPCC leaflets.

It could be that during the time Oswald was up to all his "dirty tricks" (and hanging out his dirty laundry no less) the CIA "clerks" were too busy watching Oswald's favorite TV show, "I Led Three Lives." You'll remember that show because it purported to be a true account of an FBI informant posing as a real live "Commie" who reported back to the bureau the nefarious "dirty deeds" of his "comrades."

Who knows, we may one day discover in one of J. Edgar's "lost files" a document establishing this as "fact" and it could wind up appearing in a Cockburn column!

MIND CONTROL AND THE JFK CASE

by
Harrison E. Livingstone

As I write this, in mid-1995, I believe we have reached the moment that all those who oppose evidence of conspiracy in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy have been waiting for. Researchers and critics of the Warren Report are in disarray, betrayed by their former leaders, tied in knots by conflicting evidence, overwhelmed in the media by Doublespeak and a tremendous onslaught of stories about Lee Harvey Oswald having committed the crime alone. Sincere truth seekers have too many choices of theory and evidence to make sense out of it anymore, and there is no clear leadership getting through to enough people to clarify what the facts really are.

This has come to pass because planned and deliberate operations of sophisticated mind control and propaganda techniques divided and conquered, making it impossible for any central provable concepts and evidence to get a fair hearing. The FBI office in Dallas was a source of those operations in place for more than thirty years. We all know what one of their offices did to Martin Luther King, and they did it to the Kennedy case, not to speak of others. I have to add that I don't mean this as a blanket condemnation of the FBI, which can be otherwise admired for all its mistakes.

There are two basic aspects to the kind of mind control I wish to discuss. One has to do with the operation functioning among researchers and critics of the Warren Report, and the other is that operating in the media. They are interconnected, as was demonstrated after the 1994 Coalition on Political Assassinations (COPA) meeting in Washington. I start with the COPA extravaganza because it is a symbol of the great failure after thirty years to make real headway in presenting a coherent case for conspiracy, or at least a case that will make waves and mean something to the press. An examination of the failure of the 1994 COPA conference is a good way to lead into the question of mind control in the JFK case, both in the media and in the research community. COPA, basically a convention of interested parties, lacked real focus or intent to blow the case apart and to truly instruct with regard to what we now know of the evidence. It was all very carefully defused, and

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