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Sparta, Tennessee 38583

Thursday, September 16, 1993 Two

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Sections

New Sparta book publisher begins in controversy

By DENISE ANDERSON
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A new book publisher will be opening soon in Sparta, and its first project will be the second book written by James Earl Ray, the alleged assassin of Martin Luther King Jr.

Mike Sherrell, Sparta resident and friend of Ray's, is starting Praetorin Press in order to publish and distribute Day Of The Pathogen in the middle Tennessee area.

"Ray is a perfectionist," said Sherrell. "I hope he will have the book finished within the next few weeks. He is typing it himself in his own words, in Riverbend Prison in Nashville. We are just waiting on the

book to be finished. He didn't want the publisher of his first book to do this one because he couldn't be sure they wouldn't change anything. He wants this book to be distributed overseas because they question things more, and they don't accept as gospel everything they see on TV or read in the press."

Ray's first book, *Who Killed Martin Luther King?*, was published in 1992 and 1993 by National Press Books, Inc. in Bethesda, Maryland.

Mark Lane, an attorney, former member of the New York legislature, and author of nine books, wrote the preface to the first book. He comments, "Ray, sentenced to 99 years in prison, has been incarcerated for more than two decades for a crime that I am convinced he did not commit."

"A personal and human drama lurks on each page and increases in tempo and volume with each chapter. Much of the drama is unspoken and unwritten but it thunders at the reader, who must contemplate how this man, America's most notorious political prisoner, maintains his sanity, not to say his apparent calm, as his life is spent in a cement tomb. Yet Ray writes with humor, that while touched with bitter irony never devolves into self-pity."

"If a skilled, experienced investigator and writer with newspaper morgues, libraries and other archives at his command aided by a secretarial staff equipped with transcribing machines, word processors and edito-

rial assistance produced this book, it would be noteworthy and commendable. That Ray, devoid of a support system, relatively uneducated in the formal sense, pecking away surreptitiously in his cell, has achieved such a result is monumental.

"Yet Ray recounts his early years, a petty theft, a robbery, his service in the U.S. Army and his confinement in various prisons. Primarily what distinguishes this work from other

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Jesse Jackson**

prison works is the fact that Ray was subsequently arrested, extradited and sent to prison for 99 years for the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"And what distinguishes Ray from other political prisoners is that, Catch-22-like, he was sentenced before the trial, indeed, instead of a trial.

"If you are going to read just one book this year, read James Earl Ray's *Who Killed Martin Luther King?* You will learn more about our flawed judicial and intelligence systems than you may have cared to know."

In the Foreward of the first book, Jesse Jackson said, "James Earl Ray may or may not have been part of the conspiracy. I have no proof or facts one way or the other, nor am I in a position to know. Read his story and draw your own conclusion about him.... Thus, while I do not know, I have a strong sense that there was a government conspiracy to kill Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"Where I do agree with James Earl Ray is that he deserves a full and fair trial, and the American people deserve to know the truth to the best and fullest extent possible. We have appointed independent special prosecutors for less important crime. Denying James Earl Ray a trial and sealing the evidence to the year 2027 does not seem to me the best way for justice to be served. Justice delayed is justice denied."



ALLEGED ASSASSIN. James Earl Ray has proclaimed his innocence for 25 years. He is now a prisoner in Riverbend Prison in Nashville.