

## LAMBS AT PLAY

Approximately forty persons, all white, and all but one agreeably young, but of indeterminate political persuasion, attended a "public discussion" led by Trent Gough, National Chairman of the Kennedy Assassination Inquiry Committee, Friday evening, November 22, 1968, in the premises of an existentialist society in New York City. Subject of the discussion, as stated in a leaflet distributed by mail prior to the meeting, was the haunting question: who killed Kennedy-King-Kennedy?

The discussion was apolitical. Gough's committee, another leaflet explained, rejects the Warren Commission Report as "incomplete and inconclusive," but does not subscribe to any single assassination theory, nor does it support any single theorist, including Garrison. Why was not indicated.

"Rather" than a theory the committee believes "an open non-political investigation is called for" and to this end has "activated a national petition campaign." Gough's group also pledges "the committee to obtain(ing) a full investigation of the assassinations of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Senator Robert F. Kennedy," which, he thought, were related "morally and politically" to the murder of President Kennedy. What an "open non-political" and "full" investigation would look like, how, by whom, and under what auspices it would be conducted Gough did not explain. But possibly with the experience of the Warren Commission and Garrison's investigation in mind, if not the ten official probes of the Pearl Harbor disaster, or the travesty of Rep. Samuel Dickstein's five year effort to have Congress investigate the German-American Bund which culminated in

Creation of the House UnAmerican Activities Committee, Gough's group thinks "official investigations of these crimes bear close checking." Echoing Mark Lane's Citizens Committee of Inquiry of 1964, Gough said he would not speculate on "why John F. Kennedy was killed." Presumably he would be equally restrained with respect to the murders of Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy. Establishment of motive, he thought, would follow identification of the assassins. Probably because his committee has no "position" on whether Oswald was an assassin, a patsy, or was involved in the assassination in some other way, but was "not innocent," Gough made no reference in this connection to the Warren Commission Report which "identified" Oswald as the sole assassin but confessed itself unable to establish an explicit reason for his crime. Or to note the world believes the assassination of John F. Kennedy to have been politically motivated and the killers and their employers shielded by the government.

To the observation the world knew Ruby assassinated Oswald-- Gough characterized it as a "political crime"--but was still in the dark about the reason, Gough made an indirect and, therefore, evasive reply. Although the killers of Malcom X were imprisoned, Gough thought "very little" is known about that murder and referred his audience to Louis Lomax's "To Kill A Black Man" in which the author attributes that assassination <sup>to</sup> Black Muslim gunmen but "is convinced that the American government, particularly the CIA, was deeply involved" (p.252).

Like Lane in 1964, Gough, having forsworn theory, problems of motive, and speculation, confines himself to investigation of physical evidence. But whereas Lane in 1964 was concerned with only a single, rather a three-part, assassination, Gough in 1968 confronts three, possibly four, assassinations and a string of related murders and deaths. Lane assigned himself the relatively simple task of demonstrating Oswald's

legal innocence by controverting the government's evidence against his "client." Gough is looking for links to connect the assassinations. While the investigation of John F. Kennedy's assassination has yielded a mountain of fact and documentation in 5 years, independent research into the murders of Martin Luther King and Robert F. Kennedy, both done in 1968, can be said to have only begun and thus far to have yielded only a meager crop of data. Hence the bulk of Gough's task was an unenlighteningly meticulous examination of trivia reaching in the direction of identification of suspects and of connection among the assassinations, each and all in sum, less promising than the fruitless investigation by Salandria of that seemingly most likely JFK assassination suspect--Vaganov.

On the face of it, not much can be anticipated from Gough's committee. If not for the weather and the time of year the meeting could have been held in the Sheep Meadow in Central Park. Yet it cannot be excluded Gough's gambols may uncover something of value. The muse of history delights in irony and sometimes chooses the most unlikely instruments to effect her purposes.

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