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THE NEW GUARD



STAMPS AND THE COLD WAR

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Assassination

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The Climate of Hate

By Henry P. Durkin

"What most of us at first thought (was) that the crime had been committed by a Southern racist. Indeed, if we look deeply into our souls, I think many of us will recognize that we were disappointed to learn that such was not the case. . . . Had the assassin been a Southern extremist, it would have fitted our own prejudices and our own political commitment. Our grief would have been tinged with a spirit of hatred and revenge. This way our sorrow is pure: there is no hate in our hearts."

That was the opinion of H. Stuart Hughes, a Harvard professor of history, when he analyzed the Kennedy assassination for *The Nation* on December 14, 1963.

It is difficult to comprehend what sort of rationale motivates supposedly intelligent persons to blame, not the doer of the deed, but the entire nation; to blame not the guilty, but the innocent.

The fact that an admitted Marxist named Lee Harvey Oswald shot a president of the United States is ignored. The machinery of the ultra-Left and its liberal satellites moved swiftly to fix the blame, not where it belonged, but on the conservatives who had been critical of the Kennedy administration. Completely ignored was the anti-Kennedy hatred that was being spewed by *The Worker*, the newspaper of the Communist Party, and by *The Militant*, the weekly publication of the Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party. Oswald subscribed to both.

Not once did the liberals explain that the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, of which Oswald was a member, was continuously distributing Castro propaganda portraying Kennedy as an imperialist warmonger and a tool of big business monopolies. Not once did the liberal press mention the threat to Kennedy's life that was broadcast from Red China by Robert F. Wil-

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liams, an expatriate American who had defected to Cuba and who was active in the Fair Play movement. In September, 1963, Williams broadcast over Radio Peking that Kennedy had persecuted the American Negro long enough and that "soon we will be avenged." And why did the liberal press not make mention of the fact that nine months before the assassination Fidel Castro ordered a hate parade in Havana? A mob paraded through the streets carrying a coffin which bore the legend: "Here lies

RUSH TO JUDGMENT, by Mark Lane; Holt, Rinehart & Winston, \$5.95.

OSWALD: ASSASSIN OR FALL GUY? by Joachim Joesten; Marzani & Munsell, \$3.95.

WHO KILLED KENNEDY? by Thomas G. Buchanan; Putnam, \$4.95.

INQUEST, by Edward Jay Epstein; Viking, \$5.00.

WHITEWASH — THE REPORT ON THE WARREN REPORT, by Harold Weisberg; self-published, \$4.95.

THE OSWALD AFFAIR, by Leo Sauvage; World, \$6.95.

President Kennedy, the Cuban Revolution killed him."

And a man named Lee Harvey Oswald—a member of the Castro-financed Fair Play for Cuba Committee—turned the inscription on the coffin into a grim and bloody reality.

That was the *real* climate of hate, but the Left was not about to allow the blame to rest where it had fallen—it had to twist and distort, to invent the most insane of lies in an attempt to cleanse itself of the obvious guilt that covered it.

James Reston of *The New York Times* remarked that "The indictment extended beyond the assassin, for

something in the nation itself, some strain of madness and violence, has destroyed the highest symbol of law and order." The *Memphis, Tenn., World* stated that "A task remains for us the living, from this day forward, to challenge the warped and twisted minds of the hate mongers who spread their poisonous venom under the guise of being patriotic Americans." And the *Long Island Star-Journal* indicted 190 million Americans with the words "We all helped pull the trigger."

But these were not the voices of the far Left. Rather they echoed the thoughts of the liberal community, and their tone is relatively mild. The real hate-producing editorials after the assassination came out of the typewriters of the groups who had inspired Oswald with their perverted logic and twisted Marxist demagogery.

November 23, 1963 was a rainy Saturday in New York. Few people were in a mood to wander the streets; they stayed home, watching television or listening to the radio—all stations were carrying the unfolding story of the murder of John Fitzgerald Kennedy the day before. Yet there were some on the streets, standing on the corners, distributing a special edition of *The Worker*, emblazoned with the headline "DEFEND AMERICA! PUNISH THE ASSASSINS! UNITE FOR DEMOCRACY!" The statement by James Jackson, a leading figure in the Communist Party, accused not Oswald—but J. Edgar Hoover, Senator James Eastland, Governor George Wallace, the John Birch Society, and countless others—of being the assassins.

The Communists were scared. They were faced with a case where one of their own had perpetrated a most heinous crime. Would the American people sit idly by and take it, or would they demand that all Communists be held accountable? The party tacticians got busy. They drafted a statement which they released to the press, through their public relations director, Arnold Johnson.

The statement read: "We categorically deny all insinuations or declarations by anybody that the suspect now arrested, Lee Harvey Oswald, has any association with the Communist Party." The Communist Party, in the same press release, also said: "We further declare that all history of our party proves that such acts of violence and terror are diametrically opposed to the policy and program of the Communist Party. . . . As a basic tenet we reject such practices."

Shortly after the party issued its self-serving declaration of innocence, Marina Oswald gave the FBI the letters that Lee Harvey Oswald had received from the Communist Party—signed by the very same Arnold Johnson who professed never to have heard of Oswald. Once this fact had been made public, the party suddenly discovered, as if by surprise, that indeed Oswald did write to them, and that Mr. Johnson had written back to him.

Arnold Johnson was called by the Warren Commission to discuss his correspondence with Oswald. Now Mr. Johnson was playing the role of the concerned citizen who "felt duty bound to cooperate in full with the government in any investigation of this assassination."

He also made a remarkable statement to the Commission counsel, J. Lee Rankin. Johnson said: "Communists just do not believe in assassination as a method of social change." Mr. Johnson either made that remark out of ignorance of Marxist theory, or he was deliberately lying. It is doubtful that he was in ignorance of party philosophy, or he would not have risen so high in its leadership. The only alternative is that Mr. Johnson was lying when he made that statement—and he knew he was lying. As a good and faithful Leninist he certainly must have been aware of Lenin's lecture on guerrilla warfare, in which this leader of world revolution stated that "The phenomena in which we are interested is the armed struggle. It is conducted by individuals and small groups. . . . In the first place this struggle aims at *assassinating individuals*, chiefs and subordinates in the army and police."

Oswald wrote several letters to Johnson. On June 10, 1962 he told the comrades, proudly, that he had formed a Fair Play for Cuba chapter

in New Orleans. He asked for party literature and sent honorary membership cards in his chapter to Gus Hall and Benjamin Davis—"those fighters for peace." On August 13 Oswald sent an honorary card to Johnson himself "as a token of esteem." Oswald's August 28 letter asked Johnson for advice "on a problem of personal tactics"—whether he, a former defector to the Soviet Union, should disassociate himself from all "progressive activities." Replying on September 19, Arnold Johnson gave him that advice: "There are a number of organizations, including possibly Fair Play, which are of a very broad character, and often it is advisable for some people to remain in the background, not underground."

Hardly had the Communist Party made its statement of never having



heard of Oswald, than Vincent Theodore Lee, national chairman of Fair Play for Cuba, got into the act. Even Castro had to make a disclaimer, saying that "Oswald never had any contact with us." Castro lied, as did his paid agent in the United States. V. T. Lee's signature was on the membership card that Oswald carried identifying him as a member of the national organization. Lee also wrote letters to Oswald, on Fair Play stationery, which are reproduced in Volume XX of the Warren Commission's exhibits.

The international Communist apparatus also worked swiftly to spread lies and distortions about the assassination. Radio Moscow blamed it on the right wing (using as its source an earlier Voice of America broadcast which said the same thing). The

World Marxist Review, a Communist theoretical journal edited in Prague and published in 27 languages, announced that "a plot was being concocted to shield the real culprits and to whip up a new anti-Communist, anti-Soviet, anti-Cuba hysteria."

The Soviet magazine *International Affairs* commented that the murder of President Kennedy was being used by the right wing as an attempt for a "ferocious new campaign against the progressive movement at home and against the Soviet Union and revolutionary Cuba."

Other foreign voices also had their ax to grind. Radio Cairo denounced the assassination as a "Zionist plot," while the then-in-power Kwame Nkrumah blamed it on the "evil maneuvers of imperialism, capitalism and racialism."

In Peking only two references appeared in the press. One was a cartoon showing the President "biting the dust," and the other was a photograph of a group of Chinese children cheering at the news.

All over the world the mythology was created that Oswald was innocent. Bertrand Russell, Prof. Hugh Trevor-Roper, Sir Compton Mackenzie, and a host of others in Great Britain formed the "Who Killed Kennedy? Committee." A like organization was set up in Denmark. The parent organization of these and similar bodies was the New York-based "Citizens Committee of Inquiry," headed by attorney Mark Lane. Mr. Lane has long been associated with left-wing causes, several of them cited as Communist fronts: the National Lawyers Guild, Emergency Civil Liberties Committee, National Committee to Abolish the Un-American Activities Committee.

It is Mark Lane who almost single handedly has led the left-wing attempt to prove Oswald's innocence, culminating in the recently published book *Rush to Judgment*. The initial printing was 30,000 copies, according to Holt, Rinehart & Winston vice-president Arthur A. Cohen. Mr. Cohen calls it a "horrifying book" which has "shaken me and my associates." The publisher paid \$16,000 for the American rights—an unusually high sum for a book that purports to show inaccuracies in the Warren Re-

port, while it itself is full of inaccuracies.

Mr. Lane portrays Oswald as a modern day Dreyfus, and sees for himself the role of an equally modern Zola. While attempting to show Oswald's non-guilt, Mr. Lane does not, in the book, speculate as to who the assassin may have been. However, on July 30, 1964 he issued a press release from his Committee of Inquiry which said that "Serious questions must be asked as to possible police participation in the assassination of President Kennedy."

His book is somewhat more restrained in regard to making charges he cannot substantiate. Still, while playing the role of truth seeker, he has a remarkable disregard for the truth. He insists that Mrs. Helen Louise Marham, an eye witness to the Tippit murder, described the killer as "short, a little on the heavy side, and his hair was somewhat bushy." For this statement Mr. Lane relies on his telephone interview with Mrs. Markham. Reading the transcript of this conversation (which is printed in Volume XX of the Commission's exhibits) shows that on at least five instances, during that conversation with Mr. Lane, Mrs. Markham denies ever having described Oswald in that manner.

Concerning the origin of the three shots that were fired, Mr. Lane proceeds to quote a statement by Secret Serviceman Paul E. Landis Jr., to the effect that when the *first* shot was fired, Landis stated that his first reaction was that it came from somewhere toward the front. Reading what Landis *actually* said shows that he was under the impression that the *second* shot came from the front, while the first came "from behind me, over my right shoulder" (Landis was in the follow-up car, directly behind the President's limosine). Then Mr. Lane proceeds to ignore the statements of seven other Secret Servicemen who unanimously reported that the shots came from the rear.

Mr. Lane hints that there may have been some conspiracy on the part of the Dallas police department to allow Ruby to enter the basement at the time when Oswald was scheduled to be transferred. Lane quotes a former Dallas policeman, Napoleon J. Daniels, who saw a man enter the ramp leading to the basement, al-

leging the man looked like Ruby, and that the policeman stationed at the entrance to the ramp did not challenge this intruder. Daniels says the man *did not wear a hat*. Yet all photos of Ruby in the act of killing Oswald show him wearing a hat. Mr. Lane devotes quite a bit of space to Mr. Daniels, while the Warren Commission, quite accurately, gives little credence to his testimony.

Another of Mark Lane's pet arguments is that the assassination rifle was described by Patrolman Seymour Weitzman as a German Mauser, when it actually was an Italian Mannlicher-Carcano. Mr. Lane uses this "discrepancy" and blows it out of proportion for the purpose of sensationalism. Weitzman's testimony shows that he never handled the weapon, that he saw it from a distance of several feet, and that to him it looked like a Mauser—"In a glance, that's what it looked like." Captain Fritz of the Dallas Police was the first person to actually handle the rifle, and he, along with a Lieutenant Day, described it as an Italian carbine. Yet Mr. Lane still believes that some conspiracy must exist because one officer, who did not touch the weapon, was in error in describing it.

His book hints at dark machinations in this regard, while on July 6, 1964 he was more open in his allegations. A press release of his Committee of Inquiry stated: "Lane charged that the Dallas authorities 'have switched rifles in order that a rifle allegedly mailed to Oswald's post office box in March appeared to be the murder weapon.'"

Perhaps a book ought to be written comparing Mr. Lane's inconsistencies and distortions of the claimed inaccuracies in the Warren Report.

In addition to the Mark Lane opus, several other books have been written since the assassination. Let us comment briefly on them.

The first to be published in the United States was Joachim Joesten's *Oswald: Assassin or Fall Guy?* Joesten's theme is that there was a plot to assassinate Kennedy—that an arrangement was made "deliberately designed to slow down the motorcade to a point where the President's car would become a perfect target for a sniper." Among Joesten's charges: "Patrol-

(Continued on page 20)

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We should also reinstate the popular Champion of Liberty series and continue to honor such men as Simon Bolivar and Tomas Masaryk. And thirdly the "Credo" stamps, clear and simple expressions of principle by great Americans, should also be revived. Perhaps most people are not aware that the latter two programs were cut off abruptly with the 1961 change of administrations. The doves moved in on the New Frontier and the last Credo, "Give me liberty or give me death," was issued on January 11, 1961 while the last Champion of Liberty, Mahatma Gandhi, had already been delivered so that his appearance on January 26 could not be prevented. But since then, only stamps for the UN, the fine arts and, quite apropos, "Circus."

When are we going to close the stamp gap?

MULTIVERSITY (Cont. from p. 12)

must be protected vigorously and respected by all.

In the final analysis, however, the university may justifiably limit the activities of the student while he is on the campus if the university believes that such activity is antithetical to the purposes for which the student is enrolled, which is to learn. The question of what activity is or is not part of the legitimate and relevant educational process is, of course, a difficult one; but I think the university may, if it chooses, decide that a panty raid is not a logical means for the biology student to learn his subject. Yet at Berkeley, such a decision would probably trigger a revolution.

HATE (Continued from p. 15)

man Tippit and his killer (Oswald) knew each other"; the rifle used in the assassination "was planted by the police"; "There is no question in my mind that Oswald was a minor CIA agent"; and finally, "The conspiracy involves, I believe, some officials of the CIA and the FBI as well as some Army figures such as General Walker, and reactionary oil millionaires such as H. L. Hunt." This is a reckless book, full of wild charges and theories. Yet Mark Lane's Citizens Committee was actively pro-

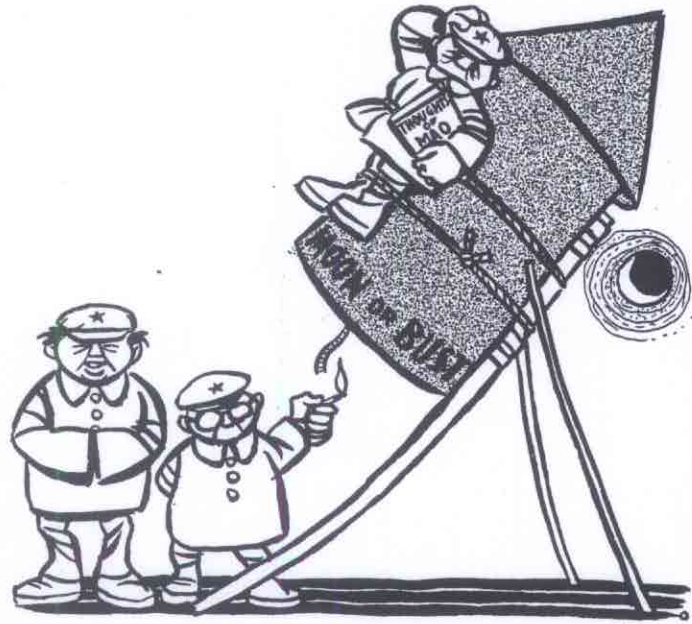
moting and distributing it in 1964.

Another 1964 volume was Thomas G. Buchanan's *Who Killed Kennedy?* This one was so far-fetched that even Mark Lane stated it was filled with "irresponsible speculations." Buchanan has twice been identified under oath as a Communist. He admitted his party membership in 1948 and was subsequently fired as a reporter for the *Washington Star*. He was active in the Communist front organization, the Civil Rights Congress, in the 1950's, and now lives in Paris. Buchanan blames the assassination on a southern city "where the chief of po-

lice, encouraged by some of the most respected citizens, and with the aid of petty criminals recruited from the local bars, set out to kill the President of the United States."

More recently, in the summer of 1966, three other books were published, in addition to Mark Lane's. Viking Press is distributing Edward Jay Epstein's *Inquest*. Mr. Epstein believes that there were two assassins—Oswald and another, whom he does not name. The book is not so much concerned with the facts of the assassination, but rather with the operating mechanics of the Warren Commis-

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sion and the writing of the report. He interviewed several of the members of the Commission, and his book is an interesting behind-the-scenes look at the deliberations of this body. One interesting fact that he brings out is that Norman Redlich and Alfred Goldberg were the two men most responsible for writing the Warren Report. Redlich was appointed to the Commission as assistant to J. Lee Rankin. At the time of the appointment, and all throughout the investigation, Mr. Redlich's name was listed on the letterhead of the Emergency Civil Liberties Committee—a cited Communist front. Rankin is now Corporate Counsel for the city of New York, and Redlich is his assistant.

The second 1966 book is titled *Whitewash—The Report on the Warren Report*, by Harold Weisberg. Mr. Weisberg charges that the Report is based on "misrepresentation and perjury." He states that the Commission's method was: "First, make invalid comparisons and then, when you get the best possible testimony, if it does not suit your purpose, just keep scraping the barrel until you get what you want." He levels such charges as "pure fakery" and "obvious errors"; "rather than making the crime fit the evidence, the Commission wanted to adapt the evidence to the crime." His book is reminiscent of the recklessness that characterizes the Joesten and Buchanan volumes.

A third volume issued this year is Leo Sauvage's *The Oswald Affair*. Basically it is a high-priced collection of empty words that add nothing to any intelligent discussion of the Kennedy assassination. In Mr. Sauvage's words, "Abandoning all pretense of having valid arguments to submit to a doubting world, the United States offered instead a crude exhibition of Soviet-style propaganda, made all the more intolerable by a dash of Hollywood syrup" (emphasis added).

A typical example of the author's "evidence" consists of devoting an entire chapter (13 pages) to the chicken bone mystery. This refers to the remains of a chicken lunch found on the sixth floor next to the window from which Oswald fired the shots. At first it was suspected that Oswald had eaten lunch there. Later it was discovered that another bookstore employee, Bonnie Ray Williams, had

eaten the chicken about 15 minutes before the shots were fired. Sauvage wonders why the chicken bones were not preserved, why plaster casts were not made of the tooth marks on the chicken bones, etc. He hints darkly that surely the tooth marks would not match those of Bonnie Ray Williams, but would point to . . . well, he doesn't say who. He concludes the chapter, a farcical one, with the statement: "The Commission's *entire case* may ultimately depend upon where Bonnie Ray Williams had lunch on November 22, 1963."

Three former associates of the late President Kennedy have written memoirs or "histories" of the JFK administration. Both Theodore Sorensen's *Kennedy* and Arthur Schlesinger's *A Thousand Days* contain chapters on the last moments of the President's life. Though both were published after the Warren Report and its 26 volumes were made public, neither book mentions Oswald as the assassin. You cannot find the name of the murderer in the text or in the indices to the two volumes. Sorensen merely says that "On November 22 his future merged with his past," while Schlesinger speaks of "the atmosphere of the city (of Dallas)." He quotes Judge Sarah T. Hughes, who administered the presidential oath to Lyndon Johnson on the plane back to Washington: "Dallas, I'm sorry to say, has been conditioned by many people who have hate in their hearts and who seem to want to destroy."

The third colleague of the late president, Pierre Salinger, shows a better sense of history. His volume of memoirs, *With Kennedy*, mentions Oswald as the assassin (though only once, on page 17). However, the context of the reference to the assassin is interesting in considering the over-all *climate of hate syndrome*. Salinger writes: "I remember now that there was almost unanimous opinion at the time that it would have to be a militant right-winger from the lunatic fringe of Dallas. The messages kept coming off the wire service machine and finally one started grinding out the story of Lee Harvey Oswald and his previous life in Russia and his membership in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee. *This went against all the preconceived theories we had established*" (emphasis added).

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