

Through Politics

The Fourth Reich: Watch It

By Carl Oglesby

The definitive radical task of the sixties was the critique of the Vietnam war. The parallel task of the seventies must be the critique of the current rise of domestic fascism on its base of militarism, corporatism, and organized crime: surely an organic consequence of the pullback of the Vietnam expeditionary forces.

Today as eight or ten years ago, we are talking about warnings, not autopsies. If the warnings are heeded broadly and wisely and promptly within the institutions, maybe the fascist impulse can still be successfully averted, as in aikido, although it is probably already too late to resist it, as in karate.

But if the pattern of the sixties holds, that won't happen. The wolf-criers will again be treated just as though there had not been wolves before when they said so,

big ones, and the condescending put-down about "paranoid conspiracy-mindedness" will tickle the incredible vanity of the straight once again into refusing as though on principle to face an avalanche of indications that the apparatus as well as the motive of an authentic American fascism, an apple-pie police state, have long been forming underneath the visible world, and that we are not just talking about a few spies or the odd payoff. As Boston economist David Deitch argues in a powerful and subtle piece in the current (Nov. 12) *Nation*, "Whether the most aggravated and pervasive inflation in a generation, and the most intractable to any sort of economic management, will lead to class struggle in any meaningful sense remains to be seen, but the inflationary process is building the conditions for depression and

fascist solutions by a ruling class determined to avoid such an outcome."

Indication of a portentous new development this way came last week, as I was informed by a reliable-seeming Washington correspondent of mine, who usually writes with detached irony but who popped out of the envelope this time in near hysterics.

"Have tried calling you but get no answer. Here's something you & the rest of the underground press *have* to move on if we want to try to stop *covert fascism's* move. I got this from Tris Coffin Saturday. (Coffin is a long-time observer of the Washington scene, reputedly ancient in his wisdom.) On Friday, per Tris, Nov. 2, there was a small back-of-the-pages announcement about the setting up of a mandatory petroleum allocation program in the Interior Department. Ap-

parently this was done by executive order. To run this program a large group of *military* people are being organized. Head of the group is *Admiral Eli Reich*. They were ordered to work in civilian clothes. When the oil crisis hits us (Tris estimates in January, today's *Post* [Nov. 5] says 6 weeks) Nixon will declare a state of national emergency & this group will swing into action. All of its formal orders pertain to the oil crisis, but underneath there is the *informal* & more significant *raison d'etat* — to clamp down on the country. Whether it goes by the name of war emergency powers, martial law, or Rhenquist's quasi-martial law, the real meaning of it is the surfacing of the powers that carried out Dallas 10 years ago. The only way to stop Nixon & Co. is to blow them out *before* they move. There are only a few weeks left & the underground press will

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Crash

have to do the job. Tris says his Nov. 15th newsletter will carry the full story but he wants *others* to go ahead. Today's *Post* has an article on the oil situation — already there are massive shut-downs in factories all over the US. Plastics, auto parts suppliers, grain storage outfits closing down & laying off hundreds of people. As you already noticed, the Northeast & Midwest are being screwed hardest." This comes alongside a *Globe* report that American oil experts in 1973 "will drastically surpass 1972" — a 224% increase — because the lure of big profits abroad is too great for US oil firms to resist. My friend continued:

"My guess is that the earlier military alert had something to do with practice for the real thing to come. In connection with all

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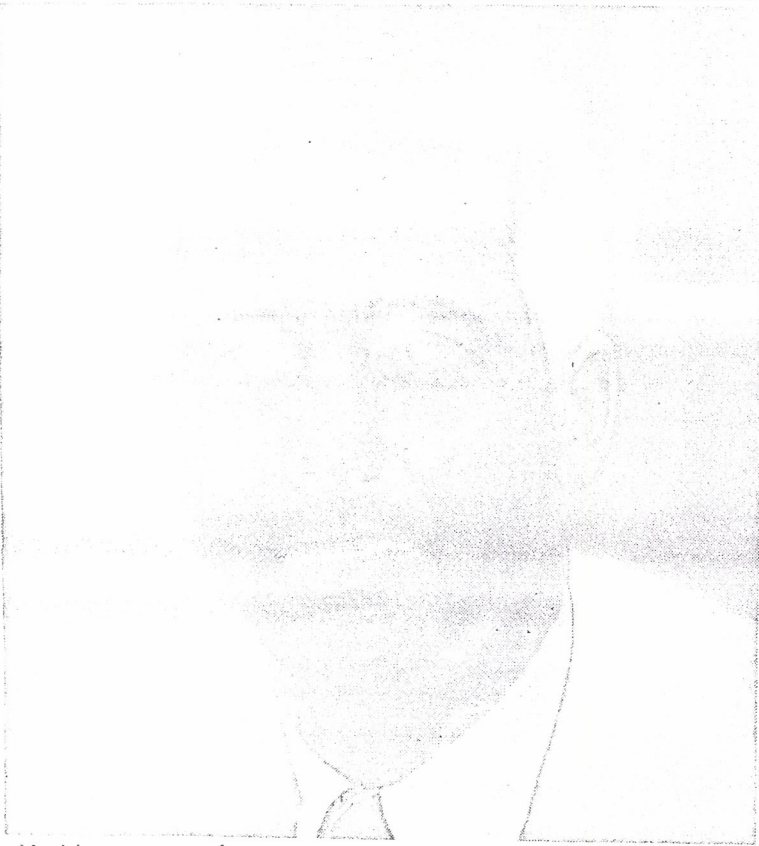
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this, it is significant that nothing ever came of the 'lists of radicals' being prepared in the White House [i.e., by Magruder's so-called Room 16 Unit]. Picture in today's *Post* of Nixon wrapped in what appears to be a sheet. He's with Rebozo on his boat. Brings back something Jeff Gerth said in his Nov-Dec '72 *SunDance* article. Nixon cracked up back in the 40s during the Hiss episode & his friends rushed him down to Miami to spend a week on Rebozo's boat. I feel sorry for Nixon, but unfortunately it's not just him at this point. We are all going down with him. Stock exchange dropping sharply. Down 16 points today. Watch it crash."

The above makes us reflect as well on the sudden shift, brought about by the tapes crisis, in which the Yankee forces embodied in Richardson and Cox were beaten back out of the White House (at some cost to Nixon to be sure) and their positions were occupied by Saxbe and Jaworski. Saxbe had always struck me as a humane and reasonable person, however conservative, but his virtually first utterance was to the



Nothing came of "Radicals List" prepared by Jeb Magruder.

Wade Martin

effect that he may not reopen the Kent State inquiry after all. And Jaworski is the exemplification of the rightwing Cowboy with big connections in Houston and a CIA clearance and a past visibly rich in top-level intrigues. McCord lawyer Bernard Fensterwald told me that as an attorney for the Warren Commission Jaworski stumbled upon the FBI-Oswald-CIA connections but dropped everything upon confronting the first official denial that there could be anything more interesting about Oswald than his mother's psychosis. "He's one of those who know without being told what to look into and what not to." The restoration of Cowboy control over the Justice Department is of course far from complete, but it represents in institutional terms a retreat for Yankee and other anti-Nixon forces. The idea is perhaps that this sort of public encounter exposes Nixon to so much humiliation that the loss in institutional advantage is compensated by a larger and more aroused and convinced base of public opinion. But this is not necessarily what happens. Suppose Nixon is politically finished. What is there after the second term anyway? He has had his way in the Mideast, has he not, and rung the whole world up the shaft of a general military alert without even

answering for it. He may be dead, but it's his and his hands alone, mates, on the tiles of our poor old squat white heat of an America. And fascism is always the expression of a ruler's degradation anyway, not of his confidence. It is Nixon's radical and deepening weakness within the system of law that drives him daily toward more openly confronting that system and at least provisionally challenging it to do his darndest. Connally in September: "What if we choose to disobey the Supreme Court and stand here in power with our arms folded?" The muscles turn against the nerves, the technical intelligence against the moral sense, the Fast Fish get hit with mania storms and panic levels of confusion and resentment, the Loose Fish head for the Great Wilds in their souls if not in bodies, and an audible sound of shredding fills the land. Meanwhile, here comes the comet of the millenium, right on time.

McMillian's Castle

A sizzling new Watergate variation — a new illustration of our main theme — has come to light in the November issue of the staunchly conservative journal *American Opinion*. I will only repeat the outline of

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the story here, but afficianos does might make an effort to check it out.

The victim is a retired but active naval hero, vastly decorated in World War II, self-made from Texas, a poor boy with a Sam Rayburn appointment to the Naval Academy, a seagoing Col. Tony Herbert, only much higher and bigger: Admiral Ira E. McMillian, a solidier rightwing patriot could not be found today.

In 1970 McMillian decided that the politicians in Washington had no intention of ending the war by winning it. So rather than waste American lives — we are not told his feelings for Vietnamese, if any — McMillian thought it would be best to get out. And he evidently thought

the reason the Paris talks were not leading that way was that the Vietnamese were playing games. He thought he might be able to do something about that because in a diplomatic tour he served in Iran in 1951 he had become personally close to the man who in 1970 had become North Vietnam's leading political figure, Le Duan, the head of the Vietnamese communist party. Maybe McMillian could persuade Le Duan to get serious in Paris. So he got an audience with Kissinger, Haig and Nixon, laid out his plan, and got thanked with the news that Nixon had no intention of stopping the war for two more years. The crucial passage from the admiral's diary

goes as follows:

"I had another contact very high in Moscow and I thought I could use him in conjunction with Le Duan to bring the war to a close. At this point the President interrupted and said, 'Well, we'll do that in October 1972.' It was the most cold-blooded statement I ever heard."

By December 1971 McMillian grew impatient with Haig's doubletalking letters and went to Washington to pursue the matter more directly. He is well-connected. He talked to many prominent people, all of whom put him off in one or another way, including James Rowley, Director of the Secret Service, Tyler Dedman, Assistant Chief of Naval Operations, Alex Butterfield, White House CIA liaison and undercover agent, Roger Shields, Assistant Secretary of Defense for POWs, Martha Mitchell, Hugh Sloan of Creep, Averell Harriman of the Yankee kingdom (who seems to have sensed a trap), Sen. Strom Thurmond, Kissinger again, and Richard Helms. He got nowhere but persisted, often in the face of warnings not to. Thurmond for example told him that if Nixon's remark about not making peace until October '72 ever got out (Kissinger's "Peace Is At Hand" speech was delivered Oct. 26), it would lead to defeat in the '72 elections, and that he, Thurmond, would therefore oppose his, McMillian's, efforts to publicize the statement.

On March 17, 1972, then, about 2 pm, McMillian was returning to his hotel from another meeting: "When I got back to the Mayflower Hotel, I

got out of the taxi and paid the driver. At that moment an Armed Forces taxi pulled up, and the driver and a man from the back seat got out and pushed me into the back seat. It happened so fast I didn't know what was happening." Briefly, the admiral was abducted to Bethesda Naval Hospital, site of the "mysterious deaths" of James Forrestal and Joseph McCarthy and the "botching of the JFK autopsy," and was held there for about a month incommunicado, finally winning release through a service friend's angry intervention with Kissinger, and apparently winning it on the condition that at least through the elections he would not talk.

The *American Opinion* article is done by a conservative publicist named Gary Allen, who ended with this observation: "Whenever a citizen can be arrested without a warrant, denied his civil liberties, and incarcerated without charges or even a hearing, you have a police state, whether it be Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, Red China, or the United States of America. And any Chief Executive who would permit officers of his Administration to kidnap a man from his home in the night, or bodily to abduct a citizen from the street, should be required by the people to answer for his actions." So refreshing to hear it from the right.

Executive Action as Kuhnian paradigm . . .

Some dislike *Executive Action*, the new movie that opens up for public view the Cowboy conspiracy theory of JFK's killing, but I was frozen solid by it. I thought director David Miller's approach was close to perfect. Look at his problem: how to blend reconstruction with actuality without confusing them. Trumbo's book is a masterpiece of structure in this respect, and Miller makes the camera a supple, unobtrusive ally of the Lane-Freed-Trumbo vision. Besides, the big part of the acting is done by masters Lancaster, Ryan and Geer, and the requirement this story places upon them as actors in a contemporary re-enactment to make this villainy a credible act, to hold a specific culture responsible for it, that of Texas jingoism, and to do this without naming names, so to speak, results in very nicely disciplined performances. I can't remember ever liking Lancaster as an actor as much as in this movie. For once he is serious enough to put the ideas before his vanity, so he relaxes sexually and does not try so hard to give us glimpses of the powers smoldering underneath. The film-staging of the Dealy Plaza killing is a masterpiece of dignity, of the triumph of passion over fear and the union of technical description with mimesis. For one thing about this movie may never be doubted, whatever one's technical reservations may be: that those who made it stand in moral horror of the forces they are trying to name. They convince me that they hold the truth of the Presidential assassination, as I do, in fear and awe, and that it is in behalf of getting the truth told that

they made this movie.

Its power as a weapon of consciousness does not lie chiefly in the power of its technical arguments against the Warren Commission report. These are held to a minimum and stated without the self-righteous smirking that marred Ted Charach's *The Secret Gun*, which showed at the Chert complex before *Executive Action*, and which was just as frightening in its argument (the same thing applied to RFK) but lacking badly in grace of conception and execution. Facts by themselves are never persuasive because facts by themselves are by definition speechless. They do not speak until visited by hypothesis. Before you can find out which facts are truly facts in some systematic sense and which are just debris you need a theory. And the powerful thing about *Executive Action* is that without apology and without embarrassment or equivocation it plunges into the construction of a new conception of Dallas: it sets up a new paradigm. Once grasp this paradigm, entertain it ever so briefly, and the facts will rush to arrange themselves upon it like the body upon the soul. The climactic character of political murder in the life of the American sixties comes leaping out. It is in the Vietnam war, the repression of the blacks, the evisceration of domestic reform, the curdling of the Atlantic Alliance. Murder starts the white of all this sixties madness, and *Executive action* states the elegantly minimized case for coming to grips with the implications of that.