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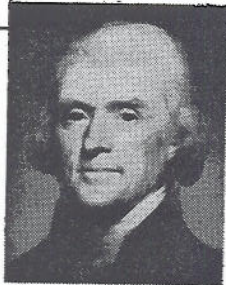
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compared it to the Pact of Tordesillas in 1494, by which Spain and Portugal divided the world among themselves.

MANY EUROPEANS used to cultivate a distaste for Coca-Cola. Whatever their tastes are today, I was in the company of a few the other day who savored Coca-Cola as even few Americans do. We were on skis trying to cross the Theodul Pass from Zermatt, Switzerland, to Cervinia, Italy, in thick fog and with gusts of wind blowing the snow into our faces. The Coca-Cola Company had the fine idea of providing markers along the route, and I can testify that a few Europeans who, at least for an agonizing hour when we could hardly see from one marker to the next, appreciated Coca-Cola more than any other drink in the world.

THE EUROPEAN press may not be giving the war in Vietnam the space it used to, but New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison's investigation into the Kennedy assassination "conspiracy" is certainly getting it instead—at least for the moment. The European preoccupation with "conspiracy" has revived another, still unresolved case involving the man who was accused of having set fire to the Reichstag in Hitler's days. The accused was a strange loner named Van der Lubbe, a Dutch Communist. After thirty-four years the mystery as to whether he committed this act out of madness or was the instrument of the Nazis or Communists remains unresolved.

A documentary on German television about Van der Lubbe's famous trial, shown four weeks ago, aroused great public interest. The historian Dr. Hans Mommsen followed the same line of argument presented in a book by Tobias, published in 1963, leading to the conclusion that Van der Lubbe was not a tool of the Nazis but that he had committed an isolated act of arson. (The version that the Communists had inspired him was never given much credence.) A German political scientist and a French journalist on that show marshalled just enough arguments to show that there were serious loopholes in the Mommsen theory. But in the end they both had to admit that no precise proof existed that the Nazis had instigated the setting of the torch to the German Parliament. The facts that the action helped Hitler and he exploited it to his great advantage do not yet prove that he or the Nazis were accomplices.

The Kennedy assassination will certainly continue to mystify people. I wonder whether in thirty years there will still be the loopholes that create so many doubts today.

—HENRY BRANDON.

SR/April 8, 1967

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