

A British View:

Politics of Hate Blamed

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LONDON — Nations, like people, can have nervous breakdowns. And America is very near the edge of this situation.

Paralyzed with fear, tormented by indecision, it is allowing violence — the fatal flaw in the national character — to become the most dominating influence in its life.

In neurotic times, one word is sufficient to trigger off a senseless act of destruction. And all through spring and early summer the word "Kennedyism" has been given that built-in potential.

Their very name is a lightning rod for those two extremes of dedication and viciousness that vie constantly for the control of the American personality.

Victim of the System

It doesn't really matter who carried the gun in the hotel. He was merely the hypnotized victim of the system.

What does matter is that Americans have not learned the lesson of Dallas — that John Kennedy's memory is as dead as his body — and in the name of defending democracy Americans are effectively killing it.

The freedom to poison the mind with hatred and fear, to publish filth and lies about the men wishing to take on the onerous task of leading the country has become blandly accepted in

Last month in America, I read articles about Robert Kennedy's life and family so obviously motivated by malice and fury that no civilized printer should have handled them.

And when I asked how it could happen I was told, "We have the freest press in the world."

No country can really afford the politics of hate. But America, with its obsession with guns and killing, can afford it least of all. It is incomprehensible to the rest of the world that Americans are allowed to go on buying and selling and

exchanging guns in the name — once again — of freedom.

Yet after John Kennedy, after Dr. Martin Luther King, all attempts to bring the gun-happy psychosis of America under observation, let alone control, died in the lonely backwaters of Congressional committee rooms.

Only a few days ago, Kennedy faced the gun question. He had arrived in one of those small but quite beautiful little towns in Oregon and there in a picnic field were angry and bitter crowds who loathed him and showed it.

They knew that he was supporting a Senate move to introduce registration of guns. So they surrounded him with signs that said "Protect your right to keep and bear arms."

'Another Hitler'

They pushed and hustled him and they defied him to challenge them.

Of course he did. And he told them how he strongly, he said. There was murder and violence and senseless killing all over the United States and he thought that there might be a little less if there was more control on guns.

"You want to be another Hilter!" screamed one man.

"That's how it all started in Nazi Germany — when they made the people register their guns."

And a woman shouted: "We'll keep our guns and we'll keep our democracy!" and she believed what she said.

These are the conditions which stain and rot the fabric of American life.

It is very hard not to believe in America if you have lived there. And yet it is frightening to see, as I have, the remorseless personality changes which have transformed a confident and thrusting people into a socially sick nation.

Those changes began I believe when Lee Harvey Oswald killed John Kennedy almost five years ago.

Five years later — as if ordained — his brother became a near parallel victim of the American syndrome of violence.