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The Death Of A State

What we are seeing these last weeks in Indochina is, for libertarians, a particularly exhilarating experience: the death of a State, or rather two States: Cambodia and South Vietnam. The exhilaration stems from the fact that here is not just another *coup d'etat*, in which the State apparatus remains virtually intact and only a few oligarchs are shuffled at the top. Here is the total and sudden collapse — the smashing — of an entire State apparatus, its accelerating and rapid disintegration. Of course, the process does not now usher in any sort of libertarian Nirvana, since another bloody State is in the process of taking over. But the disintegration remains, and offers us many instructive lessons.

One lesson is an illustration of the profound truth set forth by David Hume and Ludwig von Mises: that no matter how bloody or despotic any State may be, it rests for its existence in the long-run (and not-so-long run) on the consent of the majority of its subjects, on the "voluntary servitude" (as La Boetie first phrased it) of the bulk of its victims. This mass acceptance need not be active enthusiasm; it can be passive resignation; but the important thing is that it rests on the willingness of the masses to obey the orders and commands of the State apparatus — to accept the dictates of the oligarchy, to pay its taxes, to fight in its wars. What happened in South Vietnam, in particular, was what often happens after a long harrowing period of losing war: a sudden and infectious decision of the masses to say: Enough! We've had it; we quit. The supposedly mighty million-man South Vietnamese (ARVN) army, trained for decades by American commanders, armed to the teeth by the United States, praised as "little tigers" by the U. S. military, just quit and ran, leaving behind over \$1 billion in U. S. taxpayer-financed arms.

The best description of this momentous event has been portrayed, not by one of our famous heavy-thinking pundits, but by the supposedly "light" San Francisco columnist Arthur Hoppe. (Arthur Hoppe, "The Land That Never Was," *San Francisco Chronicle*, April 7, 1975). Hoppe's column is worth quoting at length:

"All last week we watched the Republic of South Vietnam fall apart. One day The Republic of South Vietnam was a sovereign nation. It had an army of a million men. It had an air force, tanks, artillery and tons of ammunition. It had a president and a vast bureaucracy of tax collectors, prosecutors and policemen. It had its own diplomats, its own currency, its own flag.

It had a population of 20 million people who, whether they favored it or not, believed that there was such a thing as The Republic of South Vietnam. It had, then, all that is required for an area delineated on a map to be termed a sovereign nation.

And yet, virtually overnight, this sovereign nation all but ceased to exist.

What happened? . . . Why didn't the soldiers of this sovereign nation fight? Yet no rational soldier fights because he wants to fight. He fights because he is told by his sergeant who is told by his captain who is told by his general

who is told by his president, who is the embodiment of the sovereign nation, to fight.

He and his fellow soldiers fight because they believe in the power of their sovereign nation to require them to fight. And they flee when they no longer believe in that power. So the soldiers fled because they lost faith in their officers and the power of the sovereign nation they represented. And the people and the bureaucrats fled in bloodshed and terror because they lost faith in the army and the power of the sovereign nation to defend them.

So this loss of faith spread in an ever-expanding chain reaction until the sovereign nation of The Republic of South Vietnam all but ceased to exist . . .

In the way it rapidly fell apart in horror last week, it seemed to demonstrate that sovereign nations exist on faith alone. They are created in the minds of men. They exist only in the minds of men. They have power over their citizens solely because their citizens believe they have power. . . . And once that mystical, ephemeral faith that binds together the citizens of any sovereign nation is all but lost, that sovereign nation inevitably all but ceases to exist."

Precisely! And whatever we may say of the myriad supporters of the PRG and of the North Vietnamese regime, they certainly have the faith. An essential reason for the loss of faith by the South Vietnamese soldiery and population is that the government had no real roots in popular support. The Saigon regime has for generations been a puppet of some outside imperialist power: first of the French, and then of the United States. Hence its supporters were mainly only that relative handful that either worked for the Americans or were the recipients of American largesse. If it were not for the might of France, all of Vietnam would have — almost did — gone Communist in 1945, and if not for the increasingly massive intervention of the U. S., would have done so in 1954 or any of the years since.

A corollary lesson of the collapse, then, is the long-run impossibility for an imperialist-dominated regime to survive, when opposed by guerilla warfare backed by the great majority of the population. And this despite the enormous advantage in firepower and in modern weaponry that the imperialist power, and then its puppets, initially enjoy. Where did the guerrillas manage to get their arms from? Not mainly, as U. S. mythology so long proclaimed, from the Russians, or down the so-called "Ho Chi Minh Trail." Where they got it was from losing and defecting puppet forces themselves, who served as a conduit for American arms. The ARVN's leaving behind of over \$1 billion of American arms for the benefit of the PRG and North Vietnam is only the most dramatic manifestation of this vital fact.

Imperialism, then, cannot win; and we have now learned this lesson

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after the Johnson-Nixon regimes managed to murder a million or more Vietnamese, North and South, along with over 50,000 American soldiers. All that blood and treasure just to postpone the inevitable!

But while the American public has apparently learned this cruel lesson, the egregious and absurd Ford Administration obviously has not. There they go, down with the ship, to the bitter end, mouthing the same tired old hokey: about "one more chance", about the need for the U. S. to spend yet another \$700 million to buy a few months' time, about the old discredited "domino theory", about the necessity of the U. S. taxpayer to "fight for freedom throughout the world" as Ford once again put it. For "freedom" read a bloody fascist dictatorship (of the Thieu clique in Vietnam, the Lon Nol-Long Baret clique in Cambodia); for "one more chance" read another billion dollars to be poured down the same old rathole in which we've already poured countless billions. And then, the final slice of baloney: the need to send in American troops once more, this time to "evacuate" those South Vietnamese "to whom we have a commitment" and who will suffer a "bloodbath" if we don't rush in. Fortunately, praise the Lord!, Congress and the American people have apparently had enough themselves. Maybe they could be tricked into massive aid and another war somewhere else; but in Vietnam? Again? The left-liberal Democrats are militantly opposed, and even the Republicans seem, at long last, to be sick of the whole affair and eager to stay out. Fortunately, the 1973 Congressional prohibition against military intervention by the U. S. stands like a bulwark against the Ford-Kissinger itch to get into the fray once more. If they want to fight, let Ford, Kissinger and company outfit a boat or plane themselves with their own money, and set sail. Let us see how far they get without the American soldiers and the American taxpayers as suckers to pay the price. And good riddance! As for the wailing about the "bloodbath", it comes with ill grace indeed from the very U. S. government which has caused rivers, oceans of innocent blood to be shed in Indochina. Enough!

And of course, through it all, the eternal leitmotif of U. S. imperialism is sounded once more by Ford and his crew: the attack on "isolationism." Well, after several decades of bloody intervention everywhere, with nothing to show for it except murder, waste, militarism, and the continuing growth of indigenous Communist regimes, the collapse of interventionist imperialism should be evident to everyone. It is dawning increasingly on the American public, and even on the deluded liberals, that isolationism is precisely the only sane — much less libertarian — foreign policy for the United States. To paraphrase the late Harry Elmer Barnes, the chickens of the interventionists have come home to roost, and we are all absorbing the lesson. At the least the liberals are, and all that the conservatives need to get interred with the dodo bird is to continue their post-World War II enthusiasm for American global intervention. Knowing the mind-set of conservatives, that, of course, is probably exactly what they will do.

Fortunately, too, there has been in recent days a healthy backlash in the United States against the "baby hysteria", which looks very much like a desperate, last-ditch ploy by the administration to get us involved in Vietnam by appealing to our humanitarian and sentimentalist instincts. Many knowledgeable Vietnamese-Americans have been pointing out that (a) the Communists are scarcely about to go around butchering babies, whatever their other faults; and (b) that there is grave grounds for suspicion that the American welfare agencies have been literally kidnapping many of the babies from the Vietnamese orphanages. Many of these babies are not really orphans at all, but parked there by parents for temporary safe-keeping, until the fighting is over. Apparently, the agencies have been deliberately stripping the babies of all papers and markings, and then spiriting them to the United States, so that their Vietnamese parents will never be able to recover them.

One of the abject failures now starkly revealed is the once-famous Nixon policy of "Vietnamization". Remember that one? The Nixon theory was that we could withdraw American troops and planes, and leave a heavily armed and well-trained ARVN force to carry on; and we were assured of the success of this plan by the Pentagon until recent weeks. The howls about the North Vietnam and PRG "violation of the Paris agreements" come with peculiarly ill grace from an American-Saigon team which violated those agreements from the very beginning: egging the ARVN on to seize a large chunk of PRG territory at the

LP Convention — Come One, Come All!

The Libertarian Party is beginning to gear up for its greatest extravaganza to date: a mighty national convention in New York City this Labor Day weekend, August 28-31. At the convention, approximately 300 delegates will meet to choose a Presidential ticket for 1976, to give the LP plenty of time to get on as many state ballots as possible. But there will be place for 1,000 people in the auditorium, and so any and all interested observers are welcome to attend, at minimal cost. The party actively welcomes friends, sympathizers, and interested citizens to attend and see Libertarian Party people in action. Presumably, there will also be discussions or attempts to change the party platform. Further concrete details of time and place will be listed in the *Lib. Forum*. But think of it: the massed distillate of the leading LP members throughout the country will be gathering for the big event. Who can pass up such an opportunity?

Already, we have our first announced candidate for the Presidential nomination: Roger Lea MacBride, lawyer and author, who provided the LP ticket in 1972 with an electoral vote from Virginia. MacBride has formidable qualifications for the post. Bright, articulate, aristocratic, a purist libertarian who yet has a strong sense of reality, MacBride would furnish the LP ticket with a sparkling, full-time, extremely active and energetic campaign. Already, MacBride has been flying around the country (often in his own private plane) addressing LP groups and other meetings and organizations interested in the libertarian cause. In a MacBride race, we would have a candidate capable of mounting a newsmaking campaign that would yet remain sound in principle. MacBride would be shooting for a seemingly wildly remote goal: one million votes in '76. But considering the candidate, and considering the breakdown of the major party system, of the economy, and of the old misplaced American faith in government, MacBride might just be able to do it. Surely here would be a campaign and a goal for which to work with enthusiasm.

Meanwhile, New York's Free Libertarian Party has had its annual spring convention. Your editor is living in California for the spring, and so was not able to attend, but from all reports the convention was almost remarkably smooth and harmonious, free of the factionalism and of the barely suppressed hysteria of the year before. In a personal triumph, the able but formerly widely attacked Gary Greenberg has been elected state chairman. The National Office continues to be ably and dynamically run by national chairman Ed Crane; unfortunately, Ned Hutchinson, former Reagan appointments secretary and highly experienced political pro, died suddenly and tragically after joining the LP and becoming its full-time national director. He has been replaced by Robert Meier of Illinois, and by Toni Nathan, vice-presidential candidate in 1972.

All in all, the Libertarian Party continues to improve, both organizationally and in devotion to principle, year after year. Exciting times loom ahead. ■

precise time the cease-fire went into effect; refusing to carry out the agreement to allow Communist political parties to participate in free elections; leaving "civilian" advisers in Vietnam to carry on covert American intervention. The chickens of Vietnamization, too, are coming home to roost. As is the Nixonian intervention into Cambodia, which only prolonged and intensified the agony of the Phnom Penh regime, as the Cambodian ambassador has recently charged. And now, at the last minute, the pitiful goal of the U. S. to buy time so that the Communists will negotiate with Saigon and Phnom Penh. Why, after so many rebuffs, should the Communists negotiate now when they are at the point of victory? What boos would they have to be to do so? And the even more pitiful covert requests by Washington to bring back Prince Norodom Sihanouk to try to cheat the Khmer Rouge out of their victory in Cambodia; and this after the U. S. engineered the right-wing coup against Sihanouk in the first place! What gall, and what stupidity!

And finally, the pitiful and egregious Ford is preparing yet another "stab in the back" myth for his 1976 campaign. All would have been well, supposedly, if only Congress had agreed to one more intervention, one more dose of massive aid, one more military adventure. Does he think

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The AIB Conference

From Scholarship To Political Activism In Assassination Revisionism

By Alan Fairgate*

Libertarians who were active in the anti-draft and anti-war movements of the late 1960's and who despaired over the wave of political apathy that accompanied the collapse of the New Left at the end of the decade, will undoubtedly be encouraged to learn that a new, and potentially very promising, effort is being made to organize a mass-based political movement. The first tentative steps in this direction were made at a three-day "Politics of Conspiracy" conference sponsored by the Assassination Information Bureau in Boston on January 31-February 2, 1975. Carl Oglesby, the former president of SDS and author of the eloquent book *Containment and Change* which called for an alliance between the New Left and the libertarian Right, has emerged as a leading organizer in this new movement and it has been largely his vision that has shaped its initial organizing efforts. The focus of this new movement is a broad-based campaign to challenge the credibility of the "official" theories which have been advanced to explain the constellation of political assassinations beginning with John F. Kennedy's death in Dallas on November 22, 1963.

The "Politics of Conspiracy" conference marked a major shift in strategy among the informal network of assassination researchers which has coalesced on a national level during the past five years. The earlier attitude among assassination researchers was typified by the activities of the Washington-based Committee to Investigate Assassinations, organized by James Earl Ray's attorney, Bernard Fensterwald. During this early period, assassination research showed dangerous signs of degenerating into an intensely incestuous activity among a small "elite" of researchers who would periodically gather and exchange reports about the latest progress in the detailed probing of events and personalities surrounding the assassinations. While much of the work accomplished during this period, particularly in the form of legal suits to compel disclosure of government documents, proved extremely valuable, relatively little attention was devoted to the equally important task of publicizing the results of the research which had already been performed. The Assassination Information Bureau, which was formally established last September, emerged as the rallying point for those researchers who felt the time had come to consider the political implications of assassination research, and to develop a strategy for focusing public attention on the issues raised by the research already done.

As the position paper of the AIB makes clear: "the purpose of the AIB is to politicize the issue of the presidential assassinations." The position paper, which was written by Carl Oglesby and distributed at the conference, argues that the question "Who Killed JFK?" serves as "the root political question of the current disorder" since the answer to that question necessarily requires considerable insight into the meaning, and shifting distribution, of power in contemporary American society. While stressing the critical importance of this question, the paper cautions that it will not be settled outside the courts and that any effort to formulate a preliminary answer must be carefully labelled as mere speculation. Even more cautiously, the paper suggests that there may be an underlying interconnection uniting the various assassinations of the past decade:

"... a sharp convergence of political and physical circumstances supports the view that to expose one of these conspiracies is to expose them all. We will abandon this hypothesis as coming evidence may dictate and certainly do not propose it as dogma. But on the face of the larger facts as they are currently discernible, the linked-conspiracy hypothesis illuminates better than rival theories the primary observable features of the situation three presidential assassinations and an attempted fourth (Wallace) have brought about."

In a section devoted to political strategy, the paper proceeds to outline a broad platform which can serve as an "appeal for a movement beyond the customary political lines of left and right and opening up the

possibility of new configurations." Scrupulously avoiding refuge in Marxist categories or rhetoric, Oglesby appeals to the "three main ideological traditions in American politics": democracy, republicanism and nonpartisanship. On the basis of these elementary values, Oglesby argues that all principled Americans will be able to unite in a movement dedicated to exposing the truth of Dallas. Such a movement, the paper proposes, will capitalize on the mass disillusionment precipitated by the Watergate revelations and the growing awareness of the need for "a new framework of political thought, a framework that coherently situates the seemingly random concatenation of murders in an overall perspective on the evolution of American politics during the Cold War." In addition, the fortuitous coincidence of the Bicentennial Celebration and the 1976 presidential elections provides an opportunity for a two-pronged strategy emphasizing a return to the original constitutional values, and exposing the role of Gerald Ford as "one of the most aggressive members of the Warren Commission in 'selling' the lone-assassin theory".

In a "tentative and experimental sketch" of the specific programs which might be launched to implement such a political strategy, the paper suggests: (1) structured discussions of organizing strategy, (2) inauguration of a newsletter service, (3) establishment of an information office in Washington to coordinate lobbying efforts, (4) the promotion of local organizing and educational programs, including the possibility of establishing week-long summer institutes to train educational cadre, and (5) continuation of national speaking tours and other programs for the systematic distribution of information in the form of books and tapes.

The conference itself was designed to gather the leading assassination researchers and political activists from around the country and to focus

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Nozick Award

We extend our warm congratulations to Harvard philosophy professor Robert Nozick for winning the prestigious National Book Award in Religion and Philosophy for his quasi-libertarian inquiry into political philosophy, *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. The book has performed the seemingly impossible feat of making the topic of libertarianism respectable in philosophic circles, and in making the doctrine something that philosophers have to study and conjure with. The book has therefore made it enormously easier for graduate students in philosophy to write dissertations on libertarian themes. Hence, it paves the way for libertarians to make great gains in the philosophy profession in the future. Professor Nozick has recently joined the Massachusetts Libertarian Party.

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that the American public is that dumb?

More and more, the Ford administration is shaping up as the true legatee of the Nixon administration. Aside from personal style, and — an important difference — the abandonment of the budding Cowboy police state at home, it's Nixon-Ford or Ford-Nixon all the way. The interventionist-imperialist foreign policy is the same, a Kissinger-Rockefeller policy; the wild-spending, interventionist economic policy under the cloak of free-market rhetoric is the same as well. Retiring Ford-Kissinger-Rockefeller to the showers begins to loom as one of the happy events to anticipate in 1976. ■

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discussion on strategies for politicizing the assassination investigation issue as a basis for a mass-based political movement. Following a keynote speech by Mark Lane on Friday evening, Saturday was devoted to numerous workshops designed to introduce the participants to the latest developments in various areas of assassination research. These workshops covered the JFK, Martin Luther King and RFK assassinations; the Wallace shooting; the Chappaquidick incident; "organized crime and the economics of conspiracy"; domestic intelligence operations; and a presentation of Carl Oglesby's Yankee/Cowboy model. Saturday evening was devoted to a panel discussion on the theme "Who Done It?", which sought to summarize the results of a decade of research, and then a general session on Sunday afternoon focused on an open discussion of organizing strategy.

The participants in the conference represented a broad spectrum of researchers and included many of the leading people in the field. Mark Lane, an attorney and author of *Rush to Judgment* (the first book effectively to break the "blackout" imposed by the mass media on assassination research), emerged as the leading representative of the "moderate" faction, arguing for caution and restraint in presenting the evidence of the assassination researchers to the public. On the other hand, Sherman Skolnick joined with Mae Brussel in throwing caution to the wind and thereby straining the credulity of even many of the conference participants.

Skolnick is chairman of the Citizen's Committee to Clean Up the Courts, a Chicago organization which has acquired considerable prestige for its investigative work resulting in the indictment and conviction of numerous prominent public officials on bribery and corruption charges. Largely by coincidence, involving another investigation on which he was working, Skolnick became interested in the crash of the United Airlines flight carrying E. Howard Hunt's wife, Dorothy. Skolnick believes the plane was deliberately sabotaged as a means of frustrating an attempt by the Hunts to blackmail Nixon. While many researchers agree that Skolnick has uncovered persuasive evidence of sabotage in the airline crash, his credibility has been damaged by other allegations such as the charge that Rennie Davis and Tom Hayden were government agents planted in SDS as "agents provocateurs".

Mae Brussel produces a nationally syndicated radio show entitled "Dialogue Conspiracy" and has written for the *Realist* magazine. She periodically boasts that she has read and cross-indexed all 26 volumes of the Warren Commission report and, relying on the research she has accumulated, Brussel is willing to list by name everyone who was involved in the JFK assassination. Brussel rivals anyone in her ability to detect an all-pervasive conspiracy, involving such diverse elements as systematic climate control and an obscure global network of Croat terrorists known as the Eustasi which are based in Australia, Spain and California.

In contrast, Carl Oglesby emerged as the leading proponent of the need for a more systematic, and radical, analysis of the political system which spawned the assassinations. Several other conference participants approached the discussions from a radical perspective, including Peter Dale Scott who has undertaken a detailed study of the configurations of financial and political power in Texas and has attempted to integrate this research within the context of a national power structure. Tim Butz, a former Army Intelligence officer, represented the Fifth Estate, a Washington-based organization dedicated to researching the structure and activities of the domestic and military intelligence communities. Donald Freed, co-author of the book *Executive Action* and head of the Citizen's Research and Investigation Committee in California, diligently sought throughout the weekend to foster unity among the conference participants and to minimize the disruptive impact of conflicting ideological positions and personal rivalries.

Finally, the conference participants included an extremely heterogeneous group of researchers which defied classification. Theodore Charach, a broadcast journalist and producer of the documentary "The Second Gun", has been perhaps the most active investigator involved in the Robert F. Kennedy assassination. The Martin Luther King assassination has been the major focus of the work of Wayne Chastain, a Memphis newspaper reporter who will soon publish his book *Who Really Killed Dr. King?* Penn Jones, former editor of the *Midlothian Mirror* in Texas, has attracted considerable attention among

assassination researchers for his work documenting the growing number of witnesses and investigators into the JFK assassination who have met sudden deaths, often under mysterious circumstances.

Robert Cutler, a Massachusetts architect, typifies the large number of researchers who have devoted their free time to this work in addition to pursuing their own careers in other fields. Cutler has privately published two studies of the Dallas assassination, and his latest work has focused on the unanswered questions surrounding the Chappaquidick incident. Some researchers have become highly specialized — Robert Groden, for example, is a professional photographer who has concentrated almost exclusively on an analysis of the photographic evidence of the JFK assassination, and his work on a "bootleg" copy of the Zapruder film has proved particularly important.

With such a diverse group of participants, it is a tribute to the organizers at the AIB that the conference proved highly successful in managing to avoid much of the factionalism that had hampered previous gatherings in this field. The weekend began on an auspicious note: an overflowing audience estimated at between 800-1,000 crowded into the Boston University auditorium where the opening session was held. Bob Katz of the AIB opened the session with a brief presentation outlining the history of the organization and the objectives of the conference in politicizing the assassination issue.

Katz then introduced Mark Lane, who provided the audience with a moving account of the difficulties confronting the early researchers into the JFK assassination. When the audience broke out into laughter following Lane's description of the unbelievable path which the Warren Commission solemnly insisted one of the bullets allegedly fired by Oswald had followed, Lane reminded the audience: "the difference between then and now is that no one laughed then." Lane particularly emphasized the role of Jerry Ford as a member of the Warren Commission and he charged that "Ford is guilty as an accessory after the fact in the murder of John F. Kennedy."

Lane also described the harassment experienced by Jim Garrison, the New Orleans District Attorney who had undertaken the first attempt to submit to a jury the evidence suggesting that a conspiracy had been responsible for Kennedy's assassination. He reminded the audience that the jury had found beyond a reasonable doubt that Oswald had not acted alone and was involved in a conspiracy, but that Garrison had been unable to convince the jury that Clay Shaw was involved in the conspiracy. The fatal flaw in Garrison's case had been his inability to prove that Shaw was a member of the CIA as he had charged. Now, almost six years after Shaw's original indictment and less than a year after Shaw's death (under mysterious circumstances), Victor Marchetti, a former official of the CIA and co-author of the bestselling *The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, has revealed that Clay Shaw was a high-level CIA operative in New Orleans and had been involved along with David W. Ferrie, E. Howard Hunt, Frank Sturgis, and Bernard Barker in preparations for the CIA's Bay of Pigs venture.

After summarizing the growing body of evidence which had accumulated to undermine the credibility of the conclusions of the Warren Commission report, Lane interrupted his talk for a showing of a collage of films that had been assembled to provide a comprehensive photographic record of the events of Dealey Plaza. Using slow motion and blow-ups of particular frames and pinpointing specific details in the film, the narrator methodically challenged the underlying contention of the Warren Commission report: that all the bullets were fired in a period of 5.6 seconds from the sixth floor of the Book Depository above and behind President Kennedy. The audience was visibly affected by the graphic detail of a segment of the Zapruder film which showed the impact of a bullet hitting the right half of the top of Kennedy's head and clearly hurling him backward into the seat, strongly suggesting that the bullet was fired from the front rather than from behind.

Even more fascinating were the segments of another film which had been enlarged and which revealed the blurred figure of a man who seemed to be crouched in a classic military sniping position behind a barricade on the grassy knoll in front of the motorcade. Shortly after the shots were fired, another filmed view of this area reveals that this man had disappeared. The most dramatic moment in the film, however, involved the presentation of several computer-assisted blow-ups of frame No. 413 of the Zapruder film. During the enlargement process, the figures necessarily tend to become blurred, but these blow-ups reveal with sufficient detail the figure of a man hidden in a clump of bushes on the

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grassy knoll and pointing a rifle in the direction of the presidential limousine. This frame in the film occurs shortly after the fatal shots had been fired and it therefore had not been subjected to a detailed scrutiny until a few months ago. The photographic evidence of the presence of additional assassins provides strong corroboration to ballistics evidence and to the reports of a large number of witnesses who were convinced that they had heard shots from the grassy knoll area in front of the presidential limousine.

Following the film presentation, Lane shifted from a review of the progress of assassination research in recent years to focus on several themes which were to underlie many of the discussions during the following two days. First, he stressed the political importance of the assassination issue, since it involved not only an unsolved crime but also because it suggested the existence of a well-coordinated campaign to suppress the evidence of a conspiracy to assassinate Kennedy — a campaign which involved both Kennedy's successor as president and the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Also, the assassination signalled the first stage of a virtual *coup d'état* within the top levels of the executive branch, one which immediately preceded the sustained escalation of the war in Southeast Asia.

Secondly, Mark Lane argued that research into the Kennedy assassination had reached an impasse marking the culmination of an initial stage. Researchers had systematically probed the available evidence and demonstrated the inadequacy of the "lone assassin" theory. While speculative theories could be fashioned from the existing evidence to suggest the possible dimensions of the conspiracy responsible for the assassination, the ultimate truth would not be available without unrestricted access to government documents which have thus far remained confidential. Thus, efforts to uncover the conspiracy would have to shift from independent research work to a second stage of political organizing around the demand to re-open the official investigation of the Kennedy assassination and to de-classify all relevant government documents.

Lane pointed out that the Watergate episode had served an invaluable function in increasing the "credibility gap" between the government and the public and that, in a growing atmosphere of distrust, people were now far more willing to question "official" explanations of events than they had been a decade ago. Particularly now that there is a much more sophisticated awareness of the extent of the CIA's role, both domestically and abroad, the public should prove more receptive to the suggestion of CIA involvement in a conspiracy to assassinate Kennedy. While characterizing the challenge to the Warren Commission report as "an idea whose time has come," Lane warned the audience that it would not prevail by itself.

Lambasting the liberals for their failure of political will in challenging the Warren Commission whitewash, Lane called for mass organizing efforts which would be necessary to mobilize public opinion behind a demand for a new investigation. Without a sustained and broad-based movement to back up such a demand, politicians in Congress could not be relied upon to act on such a demand. Lane received a standing ovation as he finished his presentation with the exhortation that "they must hear from us, and hear from us until finally they act for us."

Following the dramatic opening of the conference on Friday evening, the conference participants settled down on Saturday to attend the various workshops devoted to a more detailed examination of the status of current research efforts. However, the most interesting workshop, and certainly one of the highlights of the entire conference, was devoted to Carl Oglesby's presentation of his Yankee/Cowboy model. Speaking to a standing room only crowd of 300, Oglesby devoted more than two hours to an eloquent extemporaneous presentation of his model, tracing the historical evolution of an underlying tension within the American political elite from the transformation of the traditional North-South rivalries subsequent to the Civil War to the emergence of a well-defined Yankee-Cowboy split in the second half of the twentieth century. As he proceeded to set forth the outline of this evolution, Oglesby occasionally expressed the fear that perhaps he shouldn't linger on such areas which were only tangentially related to the Kennedy assassination and, each time, he was met with cries from the appreciative audience: "Linger! Linger!"

While it is impossible to summarize adequately the elaborate detail

supporting Oglesby's model, it essentially contends that, within the political consensus that unites the members of the American political elite and that establishes the parameters of political decision-making, there is also a continuing tension stemming from two distinct and competing world-views which have deep economic and cultural roots. On the one hand, there are the Yankee members of the political and economic elite who are primarily concentrated in the old, established families of the Northeast and whose power is derived from their control of Wall Street financial firms and vast, multinational corporations. These are the people who direct the affairs of the vast network of interlocking institutions that comprise the "Eastern establishment". Strongly Anglophile, the Yankees perceive the North Atlantic industrial community as the focus of their economic, political and cultural interests. The Rockefellers, Morgans, Harrimans and Dillons are some examples of Yankee families.

The Yankees captured control for the first time over the national executive in the struggle culminating in the Civil War and the Reconstruction period. In the following century, the traditional Southern planter aristocracy which had provided the core of Southern leadership prior to 1860, rapidly receded in importance as a consequence of the country's westward expansion. In its place, a new political and economic configuration began to emerge along the entire "Southern rim" of the U. S., encompassing Miami, New Orleans, Dallas, Houston, Phoenix, Las Vegas and Los Angeles.

Originally based in independent oil companies, textile enterprises and the growth of agri-business, this constellation of Cowboy economic interests was decisively strengthened by the consolidation of a vast military-industrial complex throughout the South and West. Another, often overlooked, factor in the rise of the Cowboy faction was the cartelization of organized crime during the Prohibition era as individual "families" were progressively integrated into an institutional framework, and as the massive financial revenues generated through the production and distribution of illegal liquor were channeled into "legitimate" business. The result is a complex intertwining of "legitimate" and syndicate interests within the Cowboy axis. The Cowboy members of the political elite share a common cultural heritage, which is largely derived from the frontier heritage of the West and sharply distinguishes them from their Yankee associates. Unlike the Yankees, the Cowboys perceive the Pacific basin as the focus for their essential interests and tend to be far more doctrinairely anti-Communist.

Within this framework, Oglesby argues that the Kennedy assassination in 1963 represented a *coup d'état* within the political elite, transferring leadership from the Yankee elements to the Cowboy elements represented by Johnson and Nixon. However, as the Yankee elements in the political elite became increasingly concerned over the profound domestic economic and political instability precipitated by American involvement in Southeast Asia and the growing domestic repression, they moved to reassert their control within the political elite. The Watergate investigation, carefully orchestrated by Yankee representatives to remove Nixon without revealing the full extent of covert activities by government agencies, is characterized by Oglesby as a second *coup d'état* which neutralized three leading Cowboy challengers (Nixon, Agnew and Connally) while placing Nelson Rockefeller and his protege, Henry Kissinger, in virtual control of the executive branch. Oglesby finished his *tour de force* by quoting from Bernard Bailyn's *Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* and urging the audience to perceive power as our revolutionary forefathers did, as an "act of trespassing", "grasping and tenacious, like a cancer."

The Sunday session, featuring an open discussion of organizing strategy, unfortunately proved to be the most disappointing part of the conference. The AIB sponsors had decided that the creation of a national membership organization at this point would be premature, and they had scheduled the Sunday session simply to provide an opportunity to generate ideas for programs that the participants might begin to implement on a local level. The participants, on the other hand, seemed to have anticipated that a more detailed program of action would be presented, and several members of the audience expressed frustration over the lack of focus in the discussion. In fact, all the contradictions and tensions which characterize the assassination field seemed to surface during the "open mike" session.

Perhaps the most fundamental, and unresolved, tension which pervaded the entire conference involved the differing perspectives of the

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Assassination Revisionism Once More

Alan Fairgate's article in this issue points up the growing importance of the Kennedy Assassination question in American politics. Indeed, since the AIB conference in early February, indeed in the last two weeks, assassination revisionism has finally burst through on television, for the first time in many years. Photographer Robert Groden's careful analysis of the famous Zapruder film has hit the public consciousness; remarkably, the Warren Commission never even bothered viewing the film itself, contenting itself with viewing slides of fuzzy third-generation copies.

Assassination revisionism had been a tough row to hoe for a long time. It began immediately after the JFK assassination with Mark Lane's penetrating questions to the authorities in the *Guardian*; over the years, it has developed a devoted cadre of semi-professional buffs, who have tracked down innumerable leads, and have battered at the government to release documents and evidence, much of which still remains under lock and key. And if Oswald was only a lone nut, why the sequestering of evidence?

Actually, there is not just one mysterious political assassination or attempted assassination since JFK, but a whole raft of them: of JFK, of Officer J. D. Tippit, of Lee Harvey Oswald himself, of RFK, of George Wallace, of Martin Luther King, of Malcolm X, and possibly of Mary Jo Kopechne at Chappaquiddick. In each case, the culprit was immediately dismissed as a lone nut (in Jack Ruby's case, one lone nut killing another), except for the Malcolm assassination which could not be treated that way, and so was blamed rather conveniently on the Black Muslims — even though the one non-Muslim assassin swears up and down that the Muslims had nothing to do with the slaying. In each case, impressive evidence contradicting the lone nut theory has been almost fiercely swept under the rug by the authorities. Since last year, in addition to the Groden film analysis, ex-Congressman Al Lowenstein has managed to reopen the Bobby Kennedy case (the contention being that other assassins than Sirhan Sirhan fired the fatal shots), and James Earl Ray's attempt to reopen the King case — charging that his first lawyer flummoxed him into a guilty plea — has been denied by the courts.

But the major change in climate for revisionism comes from the post-Watergate climate. It is not simply that we now know that the FBI and the CIA are capable of vile deeds, including assassinations and association with Mafia gangsters — thereby lending credence to strong evidence of their involvement in at least the JFK murder. It is also that we now understand clearly the relationship between deed and "coverup". For one of the anti-revisionist contentions ever since Dallas was the question: what? Are you saying that they're all in on the assassination: Johnson, Warren, Gerry Ford, etc.? We now see that the bigshots in on the coverup don't have to have been parties to the original assassination. It is now easy to visualize an immediate command decision: it's got to be a lone nut, otherwise the public will . . . be panicked, will ask too many embarrassing questions about our secret police, will "endanger national security", etc. And then, that line is fed to all the Establishment patriots, who go along with their seemingly patriotic obligations.

Now that the Congress is launching an investigation of our intelligence arms of government, a demand for opening the books, for unleashing the archives, for asking hard questions — at long last! — of everyone concerned, becomes a politically viable position for the first time in twelve years. The pressure in the media and of the AIB might well accomplish its purpose. There is no need, as Mr. Fairgate points out, for this agitation to be an exclusively leftist affair. Indeed, of all the old New Left, only the relatively libertarian Carl Oglesby is involved in the new drive, both organizationally and with his sparkling concept of the Cowboy-Yankee split among the power elite. Actually, the Marxists have long been hostile to this sort of power-elite muckraking, since they contend that such pinpointing of specific individuals and groups distracts the attention of the public from the "capitalist system" allegedly at fault. (It's also a lot of work). But there is no such thing as an abstract "ruling class", capitalist or otherwise; it does exist, but only as embodied in specific people, and an understanding of who they are, what alliances or

splits they may be undergoing, is vital for anyone's, and especially any libertarian's, understanding of existent political reality. It is not enough to say simply that the State is shafting us: who are they? Which groups? Who's on top now? are also vital questions.

Two excellent articles, presenting the most up-to-date material on JFK Assassination Revisionism, appear in the April 24, 1975 issue of *Rolling Stone*. One is a thorough and careful article by the aforesaid Robert Groden, "A New Look at the Zapruder Film", a detailed analysis of the film, along with supporting pictures, which are impressive even though printed on the fuzzy paper of *Rolling Stone*. In summary, Groden demonstrates that there must have been at least four assassins, firing a total of six shots, plus one or two others firing a blank signal shot just before the assassination, and possibly two or three more (none being Oswald, by the way) at or near the famous window on the sixth floor of the Textbook Depository Building — but that none of the six shots were fired from this officially designated spot. Instead, Groden contends that one person fired two shots from the second floor of the TDB, another fired two shots from the western corner (rather than the official eastern end) of the sixth floor of the TDB, one fired a shot from in front on the grassy knoll, and that the fatal shot was fired by a fourth person from in front of JFK and behind a wall on the grassy knoll.

In the same issue of the magazine, Robert Blair Kaiser, in "The JFK Assassination: Why Congress Should Reopen the Investigation", provides

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AIB Conference —

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liberal and radical participants. Among a broad range of participants, an important motivating factor seems to have been a deep nostalgia for the liberal idealism which they believed Kennedy epitomized, and a sense of anger over the assassination. The natural response of this group tended to focus on traditional liberal reformist solutions: lobbying in Washington and seeking media coverage. There seemed to be relatively few hardcore radical veterans of the New Left present, but those who were there, and most notably Oglesby himself, persistently sought to discuss the assassination issue in terms of its role in radical social analysis, and viewed strategy in terms of mass-based organizing efforts to create the basis for a new radical movement. Even Oglesby, however, seemed at times to demonstrate a pronounced favoritism towards the Kennedy administration and the "liberal wing" of the Yankees generally.

This vague ambivalence among the participants assumed a more explicit form in the periodic debates addressing the relative role of facts and theory within the assassination research movement. While the more radical participants expressed profound appreciation for the patient investigative work of the assassination researchers, they criticized the tendency of many researchers to adopt the role of "sleuths", focusing exclusively on the collection and collating of facts without engaging in the equally important task of synthesizing and integrating these facts within a systematic framework of social analysis.

Another division which threatened at times to disrupt the fragile unity among the conference participants paradoxically joined both liberals and radicals in an effort to keep the "crazies" under control. Both Lane and Oglesby stressed the need to distinguish carefully between hard forensic evidence of a conspiracy, and speculative, educated guesses which might be made on the basis of such evidence. In a blistering attack on the "ludicrous statements" and "irresponsible charges" of Mae Brussel and Sherman Skolnick, Lane cautioned that "to make statements which most reasonable Americans cannot accept will set back the movement so many years that it will be the twenty-first century before we find out the truth" and warned that "it must be (the Warren Commission's) credibility that is in question, not ours."

The AIB sponsors of the conference are aware of the unresolved

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Arts And Movies

By Mr. First Nighter

The Oscars. From the beginning, it was clear that the Oscar race for best picture of 1974 was between two films: "Godfather, Part II" and "Chinatown." As pointed out in these pages, (Lib. Forum, March, 1975), "Godfather", a marvellous film, clearly deserved the award. In contrast, the morbid, cynical "Chinatown" (neatly skewered in *Libertarian Review* by Barbara Branden) was the darling of the *avant-garde* intellectuals, serving as it did as an "anti-hero" reversal of the great detective films of the 1940's.

Part of the excitement of Oscar night is to watch the race between the top pictures build up as the minor awards are allocated. From the beginning of the night, it became clear that "Chinatown" was losing out, as it was defeated in one minor award after another. Unfortunately, this meant that the cool, subtle, and nuanced performance of the beautiful Faye Dunaway in "Chinatown" lost out to Ellen Burstyn's hammy, tearful performance in "Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore" as Best Actress, but the consolation was the clear meaning that "Chinatown" had had it. Sure enough, "Godfather, Part II" swept the boards, gaining its deserved triumph as Best Picture, and the directorial award for Francis Ford Coppola.

While justice triumphed splendidly in the Best Picture and Best Director awards, the splendid Al Pacino unfortunately lost out in the race for Best Actor: so too did the intellectuals, who were rooting for Jack Nicholson's anti-hero detective in "Chinatown". Instead, the old Hollywood penchant for boozy sentimentality won out, with old favorite Art Carney winning the award for the piece of fluff, *Harry and Tonto*. Fortunately, however, the expected sentimentality did not triumph for the Best Supporting Actor award. Fred Astaire, who has always been a poor actor, was particularly weak and even grotesque in a minor role in *The Towering Inferno*; but the scuttlebutt had it that he would win anyway, in an orgy of collective Hollywood guilt for not having given him an Oscar in the 1930's for his glorious dancing in the famous Astaire movies of that era. However, justice again triumphed, as the award went to one of the finest young actors in recent years, Robert DeNiro's "proto-Brando" young godfather in "Godfather, Part II." Sentimentality did triumph in the award to Ingrid Bergman for Best Supporting Actress in "Murder on the Orient Express", in expiation of Hollywood's collective guilt for casting Miss Bergman into outer darkness thirty years ago for an act of personal "immorality" which would now be considered positively square and old-fashioned. However, in Miss Bergman's case, there was no harm done, since hers was probably the best performance out of a rather poor lot.

And so, the classical aesthetic has won out over its *avant-garde* enemies for the third straight year: in the awards to "Godfather" in 1973, in "The Sting" exorcising "The Exorcist" last year, and now in the victory of "Part II." With luck, maybe we can enter the lists with a "Part III" for 1977.

Shampoo, dir. by Harold Ashby, produced and co-written by Warren Beatty. With Warren Beatty, Julie Christie, Goldie Hawn, and Jack Warden. This picture has been absurdly over-praised by the critics. It is in no sense a "profound" statement about our time. It is, instead, a modern (or "mod") version of the old bedroom farce (*Restoration-Moliere*), with predatory males and females, and people hopping in and out of bed and closets (here replaced by bathrooms).

Since it is almost impossible to ruin a bedroom farce completely, on one level it is possible to flow with the action and get some enjoyment out of *Shampoo*. But oh the differences from the old farces! In the first place, of course, *Shampoo* is far more explicit than the *Restoration* playwrights, in keeping with our 1970's culture. There is, I suppose, some shock value in the glorious Julie Christie bellowing out four-letter words on film. But there are much more profound differences as well. For one thing, the wit is gone; the dialogue generally gravitates between the banal and the inchoate. For another — and on a deeper level — the characters in *Moliere* and the other dramatists may have been caught in bewildering situations: but they at all times knew what they were doing. They were real people, with understandable purposes and motivations, even if they were busy juggling incompatible goals. The Beatty-Ashby characters are nothing if not machines out of a B.F. Skinner dream (or nightmare): they

are mere stimulus-response mechanisms, with hardly a thought or a motive lasting more than fifteen minutes. They are scarcely people at all, but only flotsam and jetsam tossed around by the circumstance of the moment. Why does Warren Beatty pine for Goldie Hawn at one moment, and ten minutes later — and, apparently, with equal sincerity — propose to Julie Christie, whom he had only re-connected with the night before? Why does Jack Warden, with some justice, dismiss Miss Christie as a "whore", only to marry her the next day? Who knows? And, more important, who cares? For it is impossible for the viewer to empathize with, or care about, any of these cretins. Who can give a darn about a stimulus-response machine?

The major interest is in Miss Christie, but for reasons that have little to do with the movie itself. It is not simply that she is a marvellous actress, and worth seeing even in a turkey. For the movie, because of Miss Christie, cannot help but evoke that outstanding herald of the mod age, *Darling*. That film of the early 60's was both a portrayal of the new phenomenon of "swinging London", and a harbinger of the new Western culture then being born. While its values were decadent, *Darling* was a superb evocation of what the mod world was coming to be, and Julie Christie was both its new star and its quintessence. In a sense, *Shampoo* is Miss Christie a decade later; older, coarser, jaded, dissipated, the swinging London chick has now landed in a millionaire's pad in Hollywood. It is, indeed, a logical progression. I hope that some young director of the 1980's doesn't decide to show us the next step.

Jack Warden and Lee Grant are excellent as the older predators (Lee Grant, I am happy to say, is growing old quite disgracefully). I hope to see no more of Miss Hawn: *Shampoo* confirms my conviction that Miss Hawn comes over as a nitwit even when she is not trying (*pace Cactus Flower*). Young Carrie Fisher (offspring of the famous Fisher-Debbie Reynolds match) makes her debut in this film, and I hope it is also her farewell appearance. Warren Beatty is Warren Beatty. □

Assassination Revisionism —

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an excellent overall summary of the latest findings and lacunae, focussing among other points on newly discovered peccadilloes of the Warren Commission. Kaiser also reveals that a former staff member of the Warren Commission has now called for reopening the case — Burt W. Griffin, now a state judge in Cleveland. Judge Griffin states: "I don't think some agencies were candid with us. I never thought the Dallas Police were telling us the entire truth. Neither was the FBI . . . We accepted the (FBI) answers we got, even though they were inadequate and didn't carry the battle any further. To do so, we'd have had to challenge the integrity of the FBI and the CIA. Back in 1964, that was something we didn't do."

In the search for the truth, and for credibility in that search, it is important to be careful and scholarly. Hence, the importance, as Mr. Fairgate indicates, of repudiating the "crazies", such as Mae Brussel and Sherman Skolnick, whose confidently asserted theories have run light years ahead of the facts. In his article, Robert Kaiser, for example, performs a service by shooting down Dick Gregory's photo hypothesis of two members of the Watergate conspiracy team — E. Howard Hunt and Frank Sturgis — being the same as the famous "tramps" who were mysteriously arrested by the Dallas police just after the assassination, and released supposedly without finding out who they were. It remains true, however, that a lot of people happened, by odd coincidence, to be in Dallas on November 22, 1963. Frank Sturgis was one; so was James W. McCord; and so too was private citizen Richard M. Nixon, addressing a business group.

At any rate, libertarians do not have to commit themselves to any assassination theory to raise the cry of the importance of the public finding out the facts, of the closed archives and evidence being opened, and of hard and persistent questioning being directed to the government authorities. □

AIB Conference —

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contradictions which shaped much of the discussion at the conference, but they express the hope that a basic consensus is evolving which will prove strong enough to overcome any tendencies toward factionalism which might threaten the movement. For the moment, the AIB perceives its role as facilitating discussion within the movement to strengthen the existing consensus and to precipitate a sustained debate over the organizational forms which might be appropriate or necessary for the movement. There seems to be a pronounced reluctance to impose a formal organizational structure on the movement at this point, and instead the AIB prefers to serve as a "foco" for local organizing efforts.

This movement offers enormous potential for libertarian involvement. It has remained remarkably free from the rigid Marxist rhetoric and categories of analysis that marked the decline of the New Left, and the issues which it raises are naturally compatible with a libertarian perspective. It pinpoints a series of criminal conspiracies spawned within specific agencies of the state apparatus, conspiracies which have utilized murder as an instrument of political competition beneath the democratic facade of elections and which have been protected from exposure by the veil of secrecy which shrouds government operations. The exposure of these conspiracies would prove extremely valuable in de-legitimizing the state and focusing public attention on its underlying criminal character.

Furthermore, as several conference participants noted, the widespread public disillusionment with the government which has emerged as a consequence of the publicity surrounding the Watergate investigations, has created a particularly ripe opportunity for focusing attention once again on the Kennedy assassination. People who were once hostile to the anti-war and anti-draft movements and who scoffed at charges of domestic repression are now proving increasingly receptive to conspiracy theories and to attacks on the credibility of the government. A demand for re-opening the investigation into the Kennedy assassination that avoids Marxist rhetoric would also provide a potentially valuable organizing tool for reaching an increasingly alienated middle class constituency.

One of the greatest dangers confronting the movement that is beginning to emerge around this issue, is that it may repeat the old error of the New Left anti-war movement by becoming isolated within traditional liberal and youth strongholds and failing to establish an authentic grass-roots base. By formulating the options in terms of an either/or choice between two factions of the political elite, Oglesby's Yankee/Cowboy model reveals an uncomfortable bias in favor of Yankee political interests and tends to reinforce the latent liberal sympathies of many participants in the movement. While the Yankee/Cowboy model provides an invaluable

analytical tool in analyzing the dynamics of American political decision-making, this bias within the model must be corrected if the movement ever hopes to transcend the limitations of the earlier New Left organizing strategy. Perhaps an important step in this direction would be to integrate Oglesby's Yankee/Cowboy model, which is largely restricted to a description of the tensions within the political elite, with Leonard Liggio's highly perceptive analysis of the Redskin/Paleface conflict (originally published in *Left and Right*), which more broadly focuses on inter-class relations in the historical evolution of the U.S.

The essential problem that must be overcome in the development of a successful mass-based organizing strategy, is that the vast majority of the American population has been coopted into the Cowboy camp: their political champions are the Cowboy politicians, their heroes are Cowboy heroes and their culture is the Cowboy culture. These people have an instinctive hatred and suspicion of traditional Yankee power centers and politicians, and they will prove hostile to any movement which appears to threaten their Cowboy symbols while reinforcing Yankee hegemony.

Thus, the assassination investigation movement will have to be careful to avoid liberal reformist tendencies. Instead, it should concentrate on mobilizing an initial cadre with the analysis and understanding to perceive that both the Yankee and Cowboy factions are integral components of a national ruling class, a ruling class that must be dismantled, and then concentrate on an elaboration of grass-roots organizing strategies designed to appeal explicitly to the vast middle classes by de-mythologizing Cowboy symbols of authority and stressing that the Cowboy interests, like their Yankee rivals, parasitically rely on the political means to enrich themselves while impoverishing the American population.

The assassination investigation movement is still in its formative stages and, as a result, there is great potential for libertarians to become involved in the movement and to influence its development. Whether or not libertarians prove able to rise to this challenge and to respond constructively to one of the most promising movements to have emerged in recent years will provide a revealing indication of the level of their political consciousness.

(Libertarians who are interested in local organizing activities in this field should contact the AIB directly for information. The AIB address is: Assassination Information Bureau, 63 Inman Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139. The AIB is currently preparing material to assist in organizing local teach-ins and conferences, and it also has teams of speakers available with copies of the Zapruder film to address local groups.)

*Mr. Fairgate is a graduate student in business administration and law at a prominent American university. □

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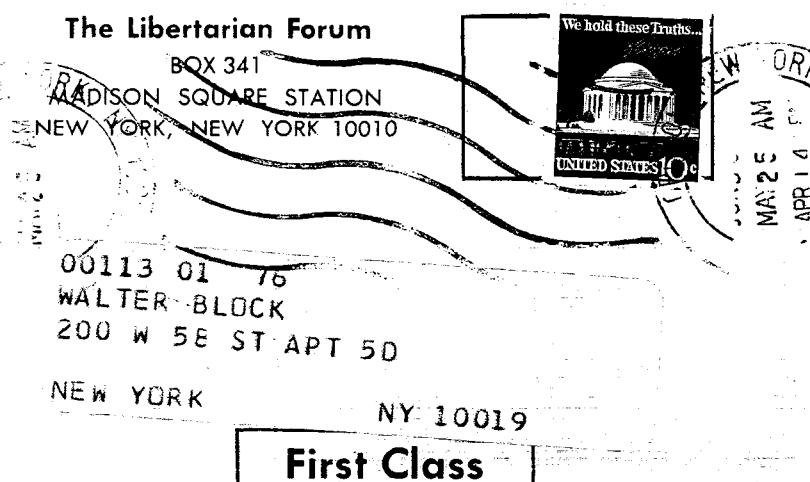
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