

BOOKS

## Tracking the Killers of Dr. King

Shortly after the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in April 1968, Rev. James Bevel urged the Civil Rights movement to demand a fair trial for the man accused of King's murder. Dr. King's successor as president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), Rev. Ralph Abernathy, first supported, and then repudiated Bevel's motion, and publicly censured Bevel.

Now, dramatic new evidence confirming the innocence of James Earl Ray, and identifying the actual killers of Martin Luther King, Jr., has emerged in Dr. William F. Pepper's *Orders to Kill: The Truth Behind the Murder of Martin Luther King*.

In 1977, Reverend Abernathy asked Pepper to interview James Earl Ray. Pepper conducted a lengthy interview with Ray in prison in October 1978. Ray's story centered around the man whom Pepper calls "the shadowy character Raul."

Pepper comments that in the initial interview with Ray, he noted "a vagueness and apprehensive equivocation relating to any connection with persons or places in Louisiana."

Louisiana, and New Orleans in particular, play a crucial role in Ray's story. He had met Raul in Montreal, where Raul recruited him into low-level gun-smuggling operations; subsequently, Ray usually met Raul in New Orleans. Pepper determined that the building where Ray went for meetings in New Orleans was the International Trade Mart, at that time run by Clay Shaw, a central figure in the conspiracy which carried out the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

Although Pepper never references Permindex ("Permanent Industrial Expositions")—the international assassination bureau which actually coordinated the Kennedy assassination, as well as numerous attempts on the life of Charles de Gaulle—the overlap is obvi-

ous. Permindex was established in Montreal in the 1950's by Maj. Louis Mortimer Bloomfield, who was detailed to the FBI's counterintelligence section, Division Five, during World War II. Clay Shaw was a board member of Permindex, and his Trade Mart was part of the Permindex network.

### The 'Commercial Appeal' Articles

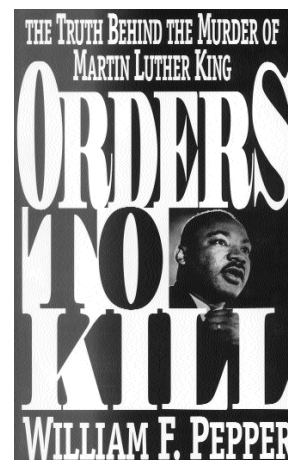
Pepper made his most important discoveries in 1993, after the publication of a series of articles by Stephen Tompkins in the Memphis, Tennessee *Commercial Appeal*. Tompkins showed that Army intelligence units were on the scene in Memphis the day King was killed.

The key protagonist in the *Commercial Appeal* series was Maj. Gen. William P. Yarborough, the U.S. Army Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence (ASCI). Yarborough, one of the U.S. military's top experts in intelligence and counterinsurgency, became convinced in the mid- to late-1960's that the United States was on the verge of revolution.

Tompkins documented that elements of two Army units were involved in Memphis at the time of King's assassination, the southern-based 11th Military Intelligence (MI) Group, which conducted surveillance, and the 20th Special Forces Group (SFG), based in Alabama and Mississippi.

Pepper learned that the Alpha team of the 20th SFG had been specially selected by a top officer of the 902nd MI Group; unlike the geographically based MI groups, the 902nd was deployed directly by General Yarborough, and handled highly secretive, sensitive assignments. The 902nd also worked closely with J. Edgar Hoover and with the head of FBI's Division Five. Hoover had assigned an FBI agent, Patrick Putnam, to work directly on Yarborough's staff.

Pepper says that he obtained a copy of the actual deployment orders for the Alpha team from "Warren," one of the members of the team. While the authen-



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by William F. Pepper  
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ticity of the document is not 100 percent verified, the document is highly interesting.

It is a Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) teletype, dated April 3, 1968, and references the well-known "Garden Plot." It describes the mission of the team as "recon riot site Memphis prior to King, Martin L. arrival," to be further elaborated at a briefing at 0430 hours on April 4.

### The Assassination

The select 20th Special Forces Group Alpha-team members were deployed with orders to kill Martin Luther King and his aide Andrew Young. While "Warren" had Young in his gunsights, the shot rang out which killed King. Warren says he was ordered to disengage, and was never given an explanation as to what had happened.

Pepper's conclusion is that King was shot by Raul, not by the Army team. In his view, the operation had at least three levels: (1) James Earl Ray, the patsy; (2) a contract killer, Raul, deployed and paid for through New Orleans organized crime networks tied to H.L. Hunt and coordinated with J. Edgar Hoover and Army Intelli-

gence; and (3) the Army team, which was on the scene as a backup in case the level-two operation failed.

Most of the focus of Pepper's investigation has been on the middle level; in December 1993, Lloyd Jowers, who owned Jim's Grill behind the Lorraine Motel where King was shot, confessed

that he had paid the actual assassin. Jowers said that he had been contracted by two others, one from New Orleans.

Unable to get a new trial for James Earl Ray (who pleaded guilty in 1969 to avoid the death sentence), Pepper filed a civil suit against Jowers in August 1994 for conspiracy to deprive Ray of his civil

rights, which resulted in Ray's wrongful imprisonment for twenty-five years. In the spring of 1995, Pepper located the man he believes to be Raul, and on July 5, Raul was served with a summons and made a defendant in the *Ray v. Jowers et al.* civil lawsuit.

—Edward Spannaus

## Missing the Chance To Shape History

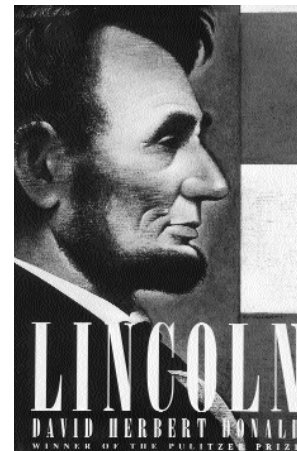
Harvard University historian David Herbert Donald has done a very thorough job of assembling the facts of Abraham Lincoln's life; but, unfortunately, he fails to place Lincoln within the proper context of universal history. Donald serves the useful purpose of documenting that Lincoln—the most famous, and most revered U.S. president in history—actually faced extremely hostile opposition, not just from the Confederacy, or the rival Democratic Party, but also from within his own Republican Party. By focussing too narrowly on the issue of slavery, and the Civil War it precipitated, Donald loses sight of America's historic task of opposing the oligarchical form of social, political, and economic organization. He also fails to provide more than a cursory exploration of Lincoln's economic policies, which ought to be of great interest in our own time, when the world's financial and monetary system is in the advance stages of disintegration.

To properly understand Lincoln, and why he tenaciously fought to preserve the Union, the issue of Nineteenth-century American slavery must be subsumed within the larger conflict of republicanism versus oligarchism. Prior to the formation of the United States of America, human society had been dominated by the oligarchical form of social, political, and economic organization, in which a very small number of aristocratic families ruled. The formation of the United States was a conscious repudiation of this oligarchical tradition. The idea that it was a self-evident truth that "all men are created equal" was revolutionary in 1776—and remains so today. Unfortunately, not all vestiges of oligarchism were swept from the North

American scene at the time the U.S. was formed; the most glaring such detritus was chattel slavery.

Through the first eight decades of this nation's existence, the British oligarchy monitored, with growing fear and alarm, the development of the American polity and economy, and launched countless attempts, overt and covert, to contain or even destroy it. The struggle to preserve "the last best hope of man," as Lincoln called the Union, was not confined to the struggle to determine whether or not slavery had a place in American national life. Rather, it was the most fundamental question of human history: whether a nation "conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal"—in which the government was selected by its citizens, rather than a coterie of oligarchs, be they South Carolina cotton planters or London financiers—"could long endure."

That Donald does not fully grasp the importance inherent in this contest between oligarchism and republicanism, is evident from his omission of one of Lincoln's strongest statements regarding slavery. In explaining why he opposed the Stephen Douglas Kansas-Nebraska Act which allowed the spread of slavery, Lincoln declared at Peoria in October 1854, that he hated slavery "because it deprives our republican example of its just influence in the world; enables the enemies of free institutions with plausibility to taunt us as hypocrites; causes the real friends of freedom to doubt our sincerity; and especially because it forces so many men among ourselves into an open war with the very fundamental principles of civil liberty, criticizing the Declaration of Independence, and insist-



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ing that there is no right principle of action but self-interest."

### Economics Crucial

What most people today fail to understand is, that the Declaration that "all men are created equal" would have been no more than a murmur in the wind of history, had the original thirteen states failed, first, to secure a military victory, and, second, to establish a national union with a durable political and economic system.

The issue of economic development, especially, was no small matter, in the face of the stated oligarchic objective "to stifle in the cradle, those rising manufactures in the United States," as Lord Henry Brougham expressed it after the British lost the War of 1812. Far from recognizing the importance of identifying and explaining the nationalistic policies that were deliberately adopted to foster the creation of technology, the development of agriculture, and the spread of