



Inez Robb

Anti-Johnson Books Good For LBJ

Job, wise even in the midst of his travail, cried out, "Oh, that mine enemy had written a book."

LBJ's enemies are a lot more obliging, or literary. In publishing circles count that day lost whose low, descending sun sees not at least one book by the Kennedy Mafia hit the newsstands in a feverish effort to tell the public just how crude, rude and awful President Johnson is, was and always will be.

If the President's luck holds and the Mafia's memoirs continue to flow about what a dreadful fellow Mr. Johnson is, LBJ is a shoo-in to win the 1968 election.

The latest volume of "Oh, Migawd, Ain't He Awful" animadversions, called "Facing The Brink, An Intimate Study of Crisis Diplomacy," is by Charles Bartlett, the newspaperman who introduced John F. Kennedy to the former Jacqueline Bouvier, and his collaborator, Edward Weintal.

According to the Messrs. Bartlett and Weintal, President Johnson practices diplomacy with a sledge hammer, and the wonder is that there is a nation left on which we Americans can force our money.

You want to hear a real horror story? Well, brace yourself! According to Mr. Bartlett and Mr. Weintal, the President explained his working relationship with Gen. Charles de Gaulle as "I told everybody in the government to be polite to President de Gaulle. Just tip your hat and say, 'Thank you, General.'"

Imagine that! It is obviously almost more than the authors can bear to relate. Yet these are the kindest words I have heard any American say of General de Gaulle in at least eight years. Or is there a delicacy toward the general in the nation's capital that doesn't exist in other sections of the nation?

The authors are obviously surprised that the general has not challenged the President to a duel in the Bois de Boulogne for these dastardly words.

However, there is much, much worse to come. What LBJ said to Harold Wilson, present Prime Minister of Great Britain, in the days when he was but leader of the British Labor party, are almost too painful for the authors to record.

But, like most of the Kennedy Mafia they are not ones to spare themselves if it's one in the Presidential eye.

In 1964, when Mr. Wilson was aiming at the prime ministership, he wanted to come to Washington. According to the book, Mr. Johnson told him to stay home because "I won't have you electioneering on my doorstep. Every time you get into trouble in Parliament you run over here with your shirttail hanging out."

Now, in Washington, D.C., such plain, unvarnished speaking may sound like an invitation to war. But out in the back country where a lot of Americans live, those two lines could get a man re-elected to the Presidency.

It has not passed public notice in the hustings that a lot of the world's politicians, when seeking higher office, rush to Washington to have their picture taken with any President who happens to be in the White House. It must, occasionally, be a nuisance and take up a lot of time that a Chief Executive could spend at least as profitably in mending his own fences.

There is still a powerful spate of citizens who find plain speaking attractive and who are still suspicious of striped pants. The Democratic National Committee ought to see that the Wilson episode gets real circulation.

Some of the Messrs. Bartlett and Weintal stories about LBJ's "insults" to foreign visitors are surely going to have to be explained to the public. I swear I can't see what's insulting about telling former German Chancellor Ludwig Erhard, when the President turned down some Erhard request, "I have been praying for you every day."

Are personal, Presidential prayers insulting in the diplomatic rule book? Is it rude to pray? Or didn't Herr Erhard think he stood in the need of prayer? This is too deep for me.

Job didn't have any luck with his enemies. Apparently, none of them could write.

But President Johnson—he's in clover, all of 'em four-leaf.

Prayer

Our Father, our hearts
are empty, our lives void
except You fill us with
this spirit. Let us see
that in Thee, ask is have,
seek is find, knock is
an open door. Amen.

W. E. Cook, Pastor
Downtown Baptist Church