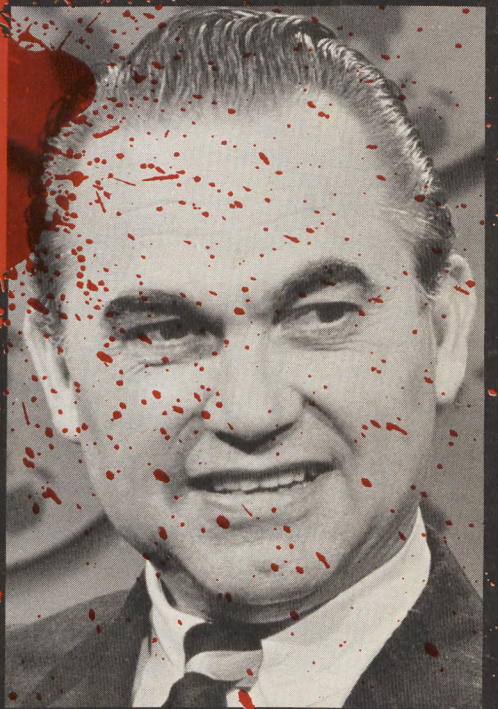
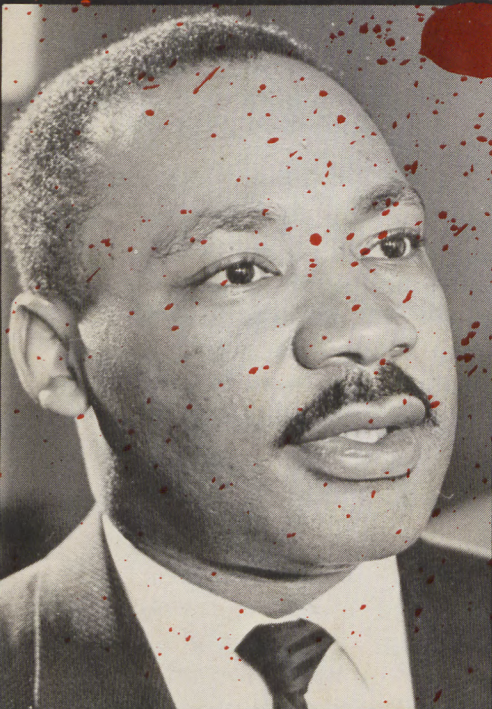
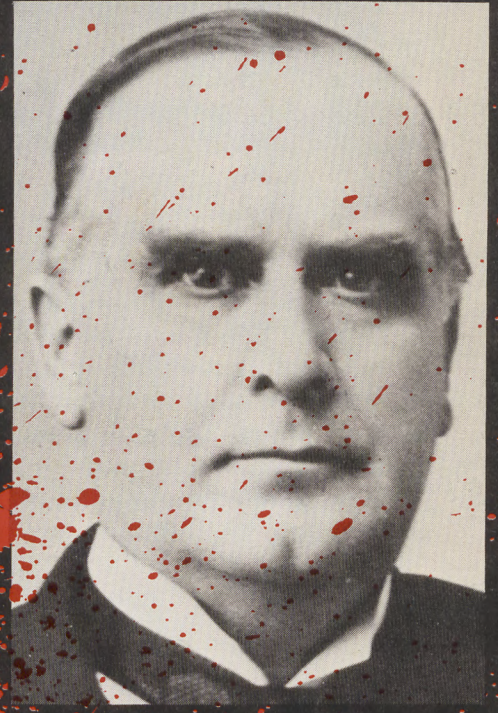
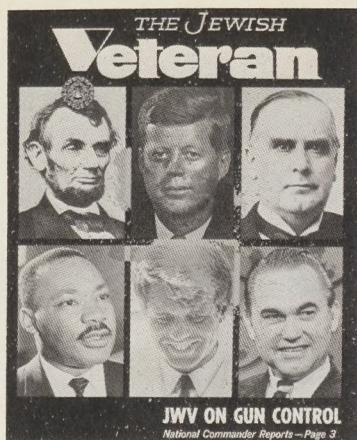


THE JEWISH Veteran



JWV ON GUN CONTROL
National Commander Reports — Page 3



You are certain to recognize the pictures on the front cover. They represent famous American assassination victims. It is impossible to psychoanalyze a society that can produce such victims, but National Commander Cohen presents some insight into what kind of gun control legislation might help to eliminate the problem.

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commander-at-large

by Jerome Cohen, *National Commander*

Statement of proposed gun control legislation, National Commander Jerome D. Cohen, Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A., Committee on the Judiciary U.S. House of Representatives.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Committee:

My name is Jerome D. Cohen. It is my privilege to serve as National Commander of the nation's oldest active war veterans organization which will be holding its 77th Annual National Convention this coming August. I am a practicing attorney in Brooklyn, New York. Accompanying me today is Mr. Benjamin H. Chasin, Assistant National Executive Director of our organization.

At the outset I wish to extend my profound gratitude for this opportunity to make our views known with regard to legislation pending before your committee concerning the regulation and control of firearms.

I listened to some of the comments before and the comments of Governor Mandel who, by the way, is a past State Commander of Jewish War Veterans. I listened to the statement made by the Chairman in reference to a possible soft retreat.

I am not a candidate for any office and I am not depending upon the electorate to either elect me or defeat me. I am concerned not with staying alive in office but merely with staying alive. If we look back and we see this handgun legislation that we are talking about, "Saturday Night Specials" and everything seems to be designed in that direction and only in that direction because that is the best possible chance to put this kind of legislation through. I would like to start with a stronger position and I do not want soft retreats. I want hard, fast advances and this is the time for those fast advances.

Let me state unequivocally that for many years our organization has advocated stricter regulation and control of the sale, distribution and possession of weapons, more particularly rifles, shotguns, handguns and ammu-



nition.

The assassination of President Kennedy, allegedly by a high powered rifle purchased through the mails; the killing of Robert F. Kennedy by means of a handgun; the murder of Martin Luther King, Jr. and the recent shooting and attempt on the life of Governor George Wallace of Alabama; the University of Texas sniper killings; the Bryant Park slayings; the firing into the Soviet Mission; Cherry Hill slayings, as well as many other tragic events, stimulated and renewed the demand for more adequate control of firearms and ammunition. This is hardly a new subject but it is one which now merits serious consideration.

We are not talking about confiscation. If there are strong lobbying elements in the U.S.—and I will refer to the National Rifle Association—based on the comments made by Governor Mandel and the statements I have heard from people who are members of that organization, it is not the members of the organization. These are the voting people. These are not the ones that we have to be concerned with because they can understand it and they are willing to be investigated and it is merely an inconvenience to register these guns . . . as opposed to the indiscriminate use and

killing that has been taking place with these guns. I think that we should think clearly and have second thoughts about the professionals who represent that organization whether or not they really represent the sound thinking and voting of all members of their organization.

The ease with which firearms can be obtained and the availability of ammunition with which these deadly weapons are fed, seriously hampers the job of law enforcement and the protection of the public from wanton acts of violence. Virtually anyone old enough to walk into a sporting goods store can purchase a shotgun or a rifle as long as he can afford the price, whether it be a child, a felon, a drug addict or an insane person. Under existing Federal law there are few restrictions as to who may do business as a gun dealer or as to whom such weapons may be sold, other than that the purchaser must be at least 16 years of age and must not be an alien. Furthermore, there is no provision in our Federal law for maintaining records that would facilitate the identification of a particular rifle or shotgun with its owner. Similarly, almost any type of ammunition may be purchased and sold without restraint.

Those who take exception to firearms legislation with the argument that such legislation flies in the face of their constitutional right to keep and bear arms is wholly without merit. It has been firmly established by the Constitution and its authorities, that there is allowance for reasonable regulations for the public good in the areas of arms control. As Carl Bakal put the question in his book entitled, *The Right to Bear Arms*, "is the so-called constitutional right to keep and bear arms so absolute that it can infringe on an even more fundamental right of people—the right to life?"

Legally speaking, the constitutional provision dealing with the right to bear arms does not prohibit legislation calling for stricter gun control. The provisions of Article II of the Bill of Rights providing that the right to bear arms shall not be infringed upon relates to the additional provi-