

The imperial angle in Zach Taylor's murder

Dr. George Nichols, Kentucky's Chief Medical Examiner, has told an investigative reporter for *EIR* that he expects private medical labs to return results by early July, to decide whether arsenic poison is present in the remains of U.S. President Zachary Taylor (1784-1850).

Dr. Nichols said that, having been a history major during his college days, he is personally interested in the identity of whoever might have murdered President Taylor, but that "it is up to you people [i.e., outside investigators] to find out *who* killed Taylor. It's my job first to prove whether he was killed or not."

Staff members assisting Dr. Nichols said, "We are all pretty excited by what we are doing on this."

Wide publicity has been given to the decision of Kentucky authorities to exhume Taylor's bones. It is now generally stated in the U.S. press that if Taylor was assassinated, the motive was Taylor's stand against the spread of black chattel slavery, and the probable perpetrators were "Southerners."

But the media have neglected to use information readily available in American archives and libraries, which would shed light on President Taylor's final struggle—and on our own times.

Zachary Taylor, elected in 1848, was the second, and last, U.S. President from the Whig Party, led by Henry Clay. Lately, news accounts of the Taylor exhumation have slandered Clay, who favored compromise with Southern secessionists, as a possible assassin of Taylor, who spoke of "hanging" the secessionists!

More to the point, Clay's Whig Party advocated nationalistic projects such as a national bank to compete against the usury of private bankers and against the British Empire. The only other Whig President, William Henry Harrison, had died "unexpectedly" in 1841, after only a month in office.

Evidence points to Quitman

All accounts of the last days of Zachary Taylor point to one John Quitman as a likely suspect in the design of his murder.

When Taylor died on July 9, 1850, Mississippi Gov. John A. Quitman was the acknowledged leader of the movement for secession of the slaveholding South from the American republic. Quitman, a native New Yorker and a national leader of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, was also an ardent advocate of the imperial conquest of Latin America.

Quitman had been the military governor of Mexico City



President
Zachary Taylor

during the 1846-48 U.S.-Mexican War. At war's end, he proposed the subjugation and annexation of all Mexico. But Taylor, then the U.S. military commander, engineered a compromise, taking somewhat less: California and what is now the U.S. Southwest.

On June 3, 1850, representatives from nine Southern states met in Nashville, as proposed by Quitman, to advocate the breakup of the United States.

Governor Quitman was just then arranging and financing the organization of several private armies. President Taylor moved forcefully against Quitman. Sometime in June 1850, a federal grand jury in New Orleans indicted Quitman for planning and organizing the invasion of Cuba, in violation of the U.S. neutrality laws. Quitman's mercenaries, based in New York, were to seize that island from Spain, to "prevent Spain from freeing the slaves."

On July 3, Governor Quitman cabled his friends in Washington that he would be leading an anti-federal army of several thousand troops westward from Texas, to spread the law of slaveholders into neighboring New Mexico.

President Taylor told visitors that day that he would hang the Quitman clique if they were "taken in rebellion against the Union."

At the next day's Independence celebration in Washington, President Taylor told his audience he would defend the Union. Then he fell ill, vomiting blackish material, and died five days later.

John Quitman continued his work for the invasion of Cuba and other Latin American targets, in conjunction with the family of future President Theodore Roosevelt. This "filibustering" project, as it was then called, formed the core of the secession movement which finally launched the U.S. Civil War in 1861. The aims of Quitman's project, and certain features of its organization, live on in our time.

(For the Taylor case, consult the book by Anton Chaitkin, *Treason in America: From Aaron Burr to Averell Harriman*, pages 207-210.)