

EUROPE SUSPICIOUS

Ruby Verdict Fails To Convince Skeptics

By CROSBY S. NOYES

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PARIS, Mar. 17.—The one absolute certainty about the conviction of Jack Ruby in Dallas is that it will do nothing to lessen the galloping suspicion in Europe over the assassination of President Kennedy.

This skepticism has now reached the stage of detailed reconstructions, all tending to prove that Lee Harvey Oswald was not, in fact, the President's assassin. Nothing that came out in the course of the Ruby trial is likely to shake the almost universal belief in a sinister plot to hide the real culprits.

Not Anti-American

Indeed, the reporting of the Ruby trial in Europe has served to strengthen these suspicions. In almost every story there were hints that the real motive behind the killing of Oswald was being deliberately concealed by both sides. The two main objections to the death sentence handed down by the Dallas jury is that Ruby's ex-

ecution would prevent the truth from ever being revealed.

It is possible, of course, to shrug off this European reaction as the result of a natural affinity for conspiratorial explanations. In some cases, perhaps, there is political motivation in trying to disprove the guilt of a man with admitted Communist connections.

On the other hand, there is not much anti-Americanism, as such, behind European doubts. If the same sequence of events had happened in France, it is safe to say that everyone would have assumed the existence of a political motive for the crimes and resisted just as firmly an official explanation of two unrelated personal acts.

There is some question, in fact, whether the skepticism of Europe or lack of it in the United States is the more remarkable phenomenon. Some of the questions raised by reconstructions published here of the President's assassination are disturbing enough to demand clearer answers than have been provided so far.

Finds Case Contradictory

Among the most recent of these is an article published by the London Spectator compiled by Mordecai Brienberg, a former Canadian Rhodes scholar and a lecturer in sociology at Berkeley, Calif. Reviewing the whole body of public evidence against Oswald from the time of the President's assassination until his own death in the Dallas police station, the author finds it inconsistent and contradictory on every vital point.

Pointing out discrepancies between statements by Dallas police and subsequent findings of the FBI, Mr. Brienberg argues that there is no evidence proving that Oswald fired the murder weapon. Doctors who examined the President's wound at Parkland Memorial Hospital were at first convinced that he had been struck by a bullet which entered his throat, indicating that it had been fired,

not from the warehouse where Oswald was stationed, but from railroad bridge ahead of the President's car. There are reports of a mysterious bullet hole seen in the windshield of the car after the shooting and a total of five bullets or bullet fragments recovered, against the official version of three shots fired by Oswald.

Oswald's escape and subsequent capture are subjected to the same skeptical scrutiny. The official version of the sequence of events, the author suggests, could hardly have taken place in the allotted time. And why, he asks, has no evidence been produced to back up the allegedly "water-tight case" of Oswald's killing of Officer Tippit?

Agent for FBI or CIA

Like many other skeptics, Mr. Brienberg suggests that Oswald may have been working for the FBI or CIA, citing the ease with which he obtained passport and travel funds for his trip to Mexico. The fact that he was not under surveillance, in spite of being a known Communist sympathizer, is considered significant. Mr. Brienberg concludes:

"It might be agreed in defense of the investigating agencies that in the atmosphere of excitement that followed Mr. Kennedy's assassination contradictions and imprecisions were due to 'honest' confusion. Granted that confusion existed, why, then, should the officials be continuously certain of one thing: 'Oswald's guilt! Why is Oswald's presumed guilt the constant in this sea of incomplete and conflicting evidence?' "Now, supposedly, the confusions have been clarified into a single, consistent and convincing account. But if the case is convincing and consistent, why should the witnesses refuse to comment to the press after they have been questioned by the FBI?"

Ingenious Theory

Mr. Brienberg's questions and conclusions, it must be emphasized, are relatively conservative in comparison to those of some other European-based analysts of the Oswald affair. The prize for boldness and ingenuity undoubtedly goes to the Paris liberal weekly "L'Express," which for the last five weeks has run a highly dramatic series on "The Real Report on the Assassination," written by Thomas Buchanan, a former American newspaperman.

- Tolson
Belmont
Mohr
Casper
Callahan
Conrad
DeLoach
Evans
Gale
Rosen
Sullivan
Tavel
Trotter
Tele Room
Holmes
Gandy

Express," which for the last five weeks has run a highly dramatic series on "The Real Report on the Assassination," written by Thomas Buchanan, a former American newspaperman. Mr. Buchanan, who now works in Paris as an electronics expert, has fashioned an elaborate reconstruction, charging that the real assassins were members of the Dallas Police

- The Washington Post and Times Herald
The Washington Daily News
The Evening Star
New York Herald Tribune
New York Journal-American
New York Mirror
New York Daily News
New York Post
The New York Times
The Worker
The New Leader

- The Wall Street Journal
The National Observer
People's World

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who made use of Oswald as an accomplice and convenient fall guy for the crime. He also raises the possibility that Oswald may have been acting as a double agent, pointing out the improbability of a known former Communist being employed by the city administration of Dallas. In this matter, Mr. Buchanan speaks with considerable authority, since he was himself a member of the American Communist Party between 1948 and 1956.

#### Editor's View

When the fact was brought to the attention of Jean Jacques Servan Schreiber, editor of the Express, by this reporter, he replied as follows:

"The fact that Thomas Buchanan may or may not have been a member of the Communist Party interests me only slightly. Either what he says is true or else certain elements of his presentation are false. This is all that concerns me.

"What interests us in all of this is obviously the truth. America has nothing to fear from the truth which, on the contrary, is its quality and its strength. As long as the assassination of Kennedy remains surrounded by mystery, many people in the world will draw painful conclusions and will continue to believe that there are complicities which one dares not expose. The truth, therefore, must be established beyond doubt.

"I fail to understand why so many ordinarily very lucid Americans considered as an attack on the prestige of the United States the slightest incredulity in regard to the official thesis on the assassination when this thesis, at least in our present state of knowledge, is improbable."

Since the Express is a determinedly liberal publication and since there are many perfectly respectable former Communists in France, this reaction is not surprising. Whatever validity various "reconstructions" may have, there are clearly many questions that remain to be answered. The conclusion of the Ruby trial though it does not resolve them, would seem to remove any further justification for official secrecy.