

BRITON QUESTIONS WARREN FINDINGS

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Historian Calls the Kennedy Death Report 'Suspect'

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LONDON, Dec. 13—An eminent Oxford historian has added his voice to those challenging the official version of the assassination of President Kennedy.

Hugh Trevor-Roper, regius professor of modern history at Oxford, said that the Warren Commission had reassured the American people by its findings but had not reassured the world by its methods.

Instead of establishing the facts, it had set up a "smoke-screen of often irrelevant material" and had "accepted impermissible axioms, constructed invalid arguments, and failed to ask elementary and essential questions," he charged.

Professor Trevor-Roper, one of the most popular lecturers at Oxford and an authority on Germany and the origins of World War II, advanced these views of what he called "heresy" in a 3,500-word essay in The Sunday Times.

Written in America

The Sunday Times, with a circulation of 1,300,000, said the report had been cabled from America.

The best that could be said for the Warren Commission, the 50-year-old Professor wrote, was that it gave publicity to the case for the prosecution—that Lee Harvey Oswald was the assassin. He went on:

"The case for the defense has not been heard—and until it is heard, no valid judgment can be given."

Dr. Trevor-Roper bemoaned the fact that the press of the United States had accepted the report so uncritically.

In part, he said, this was explained by "mere technical necessity." The report, issued under respectable public names, was too long to read and its auditors "obligingly" served up to busy journalists a summary and conclusions, in which the chain of reasoning was concealed.

Safe Opinion Sought

Journalists "plumped" for a safe orthodox opinion, he said.

At the same time, he said, the report satisfied both the left and the right of American politics, because it revealed the existence of no Communist or

right-wing plots.

Professor Trevor-Roper, a member of a British "Who Killed Kennedy?" committee, said he had been convinced from the outset that the procedure of the Warren Commission was "ill-calculated to produce the truth."

"The purpose of the committee," he said, "was to guard against the danger that dissenting evidence might be silenced between political authority and expediency." But the procedure, he said, did not guarantee a full examination of the evidence.

Lack of Notes Questioned

The professor said the failure of the commission to answer certain questions about the Dallas investigation rendered "the whole report suspect."

The chief of the homicide bureau of the Dallas police had told Oswald after his arrest that he was not compelled to make any statement, the professor wrote, but that any statement that he made could be used in evidence against him.

Oswald was interrogated for 12 hours by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the police, and yet, said Professor Trevor-Roper, the report states that the police kept "no notes and there were no stenographic or tape recordings."

This cannot possibly be true, the professor said. "How could any statement made by Oswald be used against him if his statements were unrecorded?"

"Why also," he asked, "and on whose authority was the original medical report on President Kennedy's death destroyed?" **FND**