

**Warren's Verdict?**  
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Oxford historian Hugh Trevor-Roper never shuns controversy. In fact, he often creates them. Well known for his excellent study, "The Last Days of Hitler," he is equally well known for his tangles with, among others, fellow historian A.J.P. Taylor for his book on the origins of World War I. Last week, the 47-year-old controversialist, who has been three months away from his post as Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford to do a sabbatical at UCLA, was again on the attack.

In a 3,500-word article that filled the last page of *Newsweek's* Sunday Times Weekly Review, Trevor-Roper claims that "nothing in the Warren report can be taken on trust." He rehearsed some of the arguments already leveled against the commission by numerous lightweight critics, both in the U.S. and abroad. And he insisted that "the best that can be said of the Warren commission is that it has given publicity to the prosecutor's case. The case for the defense has not been heard and until it is heard, no valid judgment can be given."

But it was as a critic of the press that Trevor-Roper added a new ingredient to the controversy. "Why has the report been so unthinkingly hailed by the press of America and even of Britain?" he asked. "I find this a disturbing fact: it suggests a failure of the critical spirit of journalism. In part this is explicable by mere technical necessity. A work like the Warren report... appears to be well documented. It is issued under respectable public names. It is long and read—and its authors, recognizing this fact, obligingly serve up to busy journalists a 'summary' and conclusions in which the chain of reasoning is condensed. Then he added: "To the press, it seems, the report is a sacred text, not far removed from the Bible."



Trevor-Roper: Enough homework?