

Proponents of the Oswald-lone-assassin theory have already rushed into print or to the microphone with full endorsements of the Warren Commission report, which they can scarcely have had time to scrutinize with the care it merits. We now have the firm assurance of such respected personalities as Harrison Salisbury, Louis Nizer, Percy Foreman, I. F. Stone, Herbert Packer and Melvin Belli, among others, that Oswald's sole guilt is proved beyond peradventure. That is what the Dallas police proclaimed with somewhat unseemly haste on 24 November 1963.

A common thread in the reviews of the Warren Commission report is the warning that any further challenge to the prosecution case against Oswald and thus to the Warren Commission is unjustified and perhaps unpatriotic. This view is put forward with varying degrees of tact or irritation but with a common desire, apparently, to throttle further criticism and doubt by discrediting it in advance. Mr. Salisbury has labelled dissenters from the official thesis as "mythmakers." Professor Packer has charged them with "personal or political myopia" and cautioned that the dissent (by "fantasts") which was merely tiresome before the Warren Commission report will now become "mischief" (by "revisionists")—towards whom, one wonders. I.F. Stone has managed to be holier than the Pope, branding dissenters as "demonologists" who are either "unscrupulous or sick," epithets Stone usually reserves for more dangerous men.

Another common thread is that the devotees of the Warren Commission report equate the left-wing with the right-wing as clinging irrationally to the theory of political conspiracy or attempted coup. This is really too facile and quite chicane. There is considerable justification for postulating an ultra-right conspiracy, and little or none for a radical-leftist plot. The left had nothing to gain from Kennedy's removal—on the contrary—and would have placed itself in the direst peril by using a co-conspirator or a fall-guy who is conspicuous for pro-Soviet and pro-Castro activities.

It does not seem to have occurred to these gentlemen that there are many ordinary individuals who are not involved in political movements of any shade who are deeply troubled by a case glaring with implausibilities, misrepresentations, lacunae, and absurdities, and that they are unwilling to become passive accomplices in the further degradation of justice. They have raised legitimate questions about the evidence against Oswald from the beginning and they raise questions now that the Warren Commission report has finally emerged, with the foregone conclusions and new enigmas.

It is no answer to their questions to say that they have failed to produce other suspects. For that, it is either too late or too early. It is hardly reasonable or fair to expect private individuals, lacking the resources and facilities available to official agencies and without their consent or co-operation, to search out new information in hostile territory. The amazing fact is that some of these amateur investigators did bring new evidence to light, in spite of all the odds. See, for example, the article "The Other Witnesses" by George and Pat Nash (New Leader, October 12, 1963).

The defects in the case and in the Warren Commission report exist. They should be confronted specifically and refuted, if they can be refuted.