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Mr. I. F. Stone  
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Dear Mr. Stone,

I was astonished and sorrowful to read in your October 5th issue your denunciation of Bertrand Russell, Mark Lane, and others who have challenged the official case and who now challenge the Warren Commission's report. It is not the Warren Commission which needs the defense of individuals with a passion for justice. It is Lee Harvey Oswald who <sup>needs</sup> to be defended.

Has the Warren Commission exercised the impartiality to which the accused was entitled in judging the evidence against him? The report itself contains contradictions, misrepresentations, and falsifications which discredit the Commission, as follow (page references refer to the Bantam/NY Times edition):

#### Defects in the Warren Commission Report

1. It is essential to the case against Oswald that he fired no more than three shots and that one missed. To sustain this conclusion, it is essential to demonstrate that one of the bullets wounded both the President and the Governor. Governor Connally himself, as well as his wife, insist that he was struck by a second bullet, after the President was shot in the throat and before he was shot in the head. This is supported by other eyewitnesses, including Secret Service agents in or behind the Presidential car, and by photographs, which confirm that the time span was too great between the shots that struck the President first and then the Governor to be attributed to the same bullet. If the Governor was hit, as he insists, by a second bullet, the assassin either got 3 hits out of 3--which was far beyond his<sup>known</sup> capabilities--or 3 out of 4, when it is impossible to have fired 4 shots in the time span established. Consequently, a crucial point remains unresolved and the subject of dispute. Yet the Commission says (disengenuously, in my opinion) that it is "not necessary to any essential findings of the Commission to determine just which shot hit Governor Connally..." (page 38).
2. The Commission states (page 39) that two eyewitnesses saw the Tippit shooting and that they, together with 7 other witnesses, positively identified Oswald as the man they saw. One eyewitness was Domingo Benavides, truck-driver. The Commission itself (page 156) states that Benavides told police-officers on the same day that he did not think he could identify the man who fired the shots and that as a result he was not taken to the police-station. Therefore, the allegation on page 39 that "These nine eyewitnesses positively identified Lee Harvey Oswald" is false.

Ⓢ Oswald's

3. The Commission states that no transcript was made of the interrogation of Oswald while he was in the custody of the Dallas Police. This is contradicted in Appendix XI (page 568) by the Postal Inspector, H.D. Holmes, who was present at the last interrogation session and quotes Oswald as saying to Captain Fritz, "You took notes, just read them for yourself, if you want to refresh your memory."
4. There is a discrepancy of about 5 inches in the President's wounds and the corresponding holes in his clothing (pages 88-90).
5. The three witnesses who were on the fifth floor during the shooting and heard the cartridges strike the floor overhead reported this to the police within a few minutes (page 80), yet the cartridges were not found until 1:12 p.m. although the police began their search on the sixth floor "for the assassin and the evidence" at about 1 p.m.
6. The reenactment which satisfied the Commission that it was possible to hear the cartridges fall from the floor below (page 80) was conducted by operating the bolt of the rifle but not firing it, and therefore did not reproduce the original circumstances in an essential aspect.
7. The experiment described on page 519 with respect to the results of a paraffin test after shooting a rifle involved a single test by an FBI agent, while the preceding experiments involved groups of 17 and 29 subjects respectively.
8. Not a single doctor at the Parkland Memorial Hospital ever expressed the independent judgment that the wound in the President's neck was an exit wound (page 92-3) but they later accepted this conclusion on the basis of the allegation that all shots had come from the sixth-floor window and on the basis of information which they were told was contained in the autopsy report (which they were not shown). Richard Dudman of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch quoted two of the doctors at Parkland Hospital as making statements to him months later which were very damaging to the exit-wound-thesis but neither Dudman nor the two doctors concerned were called to testify to the Warren Commission on those published reports.

#### Other Indications of Lack of Impartiality

The Warren Commission acknowledged that a photograph of Oswald holding the murder rifle, with the murder gun in his pocket, had been retouched by a number of publications "apparently for the purpose of clarifying the lines of the rifle and other details..." (Page 121). The Commission failed to indicate that both Newsweek and the New York Times had falsified the photograph before publication by eliminating the telescopic sight from the picture, with the intention of strengthening and falsifying the evidence against Oswald in the state of that evidence at the time they published the photograph. These publications were not reprimanded for deliberate falsification of alleged evidence, although the Commission did take the press to task for the more understandable zeal displayed during Oswald's detention in crowding the premises and contributing to the confusion and lack of security when Oswald was murdered. Surely, as a journalist and reporter, you agree that the falsification of evidence against the accused so as to deliberately influence the public as to his guilt is intolerable and must be exposed?

As indicated above, the Commission failed to question Richard Dudman about his published story undermining the exit wound finding. They also failed to secure his testimony about his published report that he and a fellow-reporter saw a bullet-hole in the windshield while the Presidential car was in front of the emergency entrance to the Parkland Hospital. They failed to obtain testimony also from Mary Woodward, Dallas reporter, who reported in a Dallas paper on November 23 that she and three companions heard four shots which came from the grassy knoll near the underpass. Neither Dudman nor Woodward even appear in the list of witnesses who provided the Commission with affidavits, depositions, or statements.

Of the witnesses who do appear in that list (Appendix V) there are many who gave evidence which is incompatible with the conclusion that Oswald was guilty, acting alone, or with the Commission's reconstruction of his movements on the fatal day, or which is incompatible with the conclusion that Ruby acted alone or with the Commission's reconstruction of his movements and actions on November 22, 23 and 24. It is significant that most if not all those witnesses were not called before the Commission and not subjected to questioning or cross-examination but that their evidence and allegations were judged "not credible" or otherwise rejected while the evidence of witnesses who supported the official thesis, often flimsy, belated, or the subject of revision and/or recantation, was upheld by the Commission.

The witnesses who were not called and whose evidence or allegations challenge the Commission's conclusions include Seth Kantor, Roger Craig, Carlene Roberts, Jean Hill, Bertha Cheek, Arnold ~~Hewland~~, and Larry Crawford—among others—and I will not go into their stories since their names are indexed in the report and you can easily locate their testimony.

Finally, for purposes of this letter which necessarily cannot reflect all the deficiencies in the report without growing almost as long as the report itself—what is one to think of the strange fate of witnesses who in one way or another are involved in the Oswald case? Are we to regard it as mere coincidence that:

1. Warren Reynolds was shot in the head by an unknown person.
2. Darrell Wayne Garner, who was arrested and released, has disappeared
3. Betty Moody Macdonald, who alibied him and who was a stripper, reportedly for Jack Ruby, soon afterwards was arrested and hung herself in a cell in the Dallas jail
4. James Markham, son of eyewitness to Tippit murder, fell out of a window while trying to escape arrest by the Dallas police within days of a visit to his mother by Oswald's mother and two private investigators
5. Carlene Roberts, housekeeper at the rooming-house where Oswald lived, whose sister visited Jack Ruby four days before the assassination, has disappeared
6. Another alumnus of Jack Ruby's club, a stripper named Korton who was arrested in the court while attending Ruby's trial and who said at that time that after what she had learned about Ruby, she wanted to kill him, committed suicide about ten days ago (second or third week of September 1964)

(X) for carrying  
a revolver

I have not gone into two <sup>further</sup> important and shocking aspects of the Warren Commission's report because the necessary documentation has not been included in the report, in one case, and in the second case will only become available in Volumes V and XIV, still to be published. The first case is the Commission's treatment of Officer Seymour Weitzman, who identified the murder rifle as a Mauser. The Commission's account of the circumstances and explanation of the alleged mis-identification is completely at odds with the affidavit sworn by Weitzman on 23 November 1963. Appendix V indicates that the Commission did not obtain testimony from Weitzman, nor will his affidavit be published; although a deposition from him is to be included in Volume VII.

The second case in point is the interrogation of Jack Ruby, the transcript of which is to appear later. The transcript as leaked to Dorothy Kilgallen and published in three installments in the NY Journal-American, which has not been repudiated by the Commission and is presumably accurate, contains the sorry dialogue between Warren and Ruby in which Warren attempts to dispose of the allegation that Ruby, Bernard Weissman and Tippit met together shortly before the assassination--by saying that Ruby has answered a question which he has not answered, by either confirming nor denying that meeting--and has to be told by this televised murderer not to treat the matter so lightly and not, as Warren intended, to leave the matter as it is.

Incidentally, with reference to the box on page 1 "They Finally Listed Rightists" in your issue of October 5th, I cannot rejoice with you since the Warren Commission report indicates (page 439) that from the initiation of the new listing until mid-June 1964, some 9,000 reports on members of the Communist Party have been transmitted to the Secret Service by the FBI. No statistics are given on Birchers and their ilk, presumably because none of these were transmitted.

Mr. Stone,

If you can demolish any or all of the criticisms and charges in this letter on a factual basis, I will retract and withdraw them. But I will never accept the Warren Commission report on the basis of the integrity of the authors, and I don't think you should either. It is the evidence--its validity and unshakeability--on which guilt or innocence should be judged, even if the accused has already been executed and cannot defend himself. The "flimsy slap-together of surmise, half-fact and whole untruth" has been applied to the wrong book: your editorial on the Warren Report aligns you against those who are your friends and allies in every other context and with those who are members of the "establishment" the evil nature of which your whole career as a writer has testified to. I can only hope that you will reconsider carefully the Warren Commission's report and that as a consequence you will reformulate your judgment.

Yours most sincerely,

Sylvia Meagher