

## THE WARREN COMMISSION: AN EDITORIAL

As this is being written in early December, the Warren Commission, appointed by President Johnson to investigate the assassination of President Kennedy and to "satisfy itself that the truth is known as far as it can be discovered," has just held its first meeting. According to the New York Times, the meeting "dealt mainly with organization and the establishment of procedures." The Times also reported that "Much of the commission's work may consist in sifting and analyzing a report by the Federal Bureau of Investigation on the assassination and the events surrounding it." Precisely what form this "sifting and analyzing" will take we have not yet been told, but so far there has been no indication that the commission is planning to launch a really extensive investigation of its own. Is the FBI then to act, in effect, as the commission's staff? Are no public hearings to be held? Will no effort be made to evaluate the job that was done by the Secret Service, the Dallas Police, and the FBI itself? Is the possibility of a treasonous political conspiracy to be ruled out?

Not the least fantastic aspect of this whole fantastic nightmare is the ease with which respectable opinion in America has arrived at the conclusion that such a possibility is absurd; in most other countries, what is regarded as absurd is the idea that the assassination could have been anything but a political murder. The suspicions that are being openly voiced all over the world--and that are being whispered, only whispered, all over the United States--may never be settled, but as President Johnson implicitly acknowledged in making the decision to appoint the Warren commission, it is absolutely necessary that they at least be confronted. And the way to confront them is not by a simple review of what the FBI has to say about the case; it is by an independent investigation of the most scrupulous and painstaking kind that culminates in a lengthy report in which every question involved in the assassination is examined with microscopic thoroughness and according to the highest standards of judicial impartiality. The Warren commission ought to know that anything less would only reinforce the ugly suspicions circulating through the air, and would only compound the shame and disgust that all of us should be feeling---still.

---N.P.

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