

10/29/1967

Dear Sykvia:

Take it easy on the adulation of Arnoni. I admire him for many reasons, and one is that he changes his mind, sometimes not saying so, but intelligently just the same. For example, he now recognizes the strong possibility of a Russo-American military cooperation against China to the point of a "Stalin-Hitler" attack. A year ago, he cut two paragraphs out of an article of mine on just that subject because I suggested the same thing.

I have a feeling that he will change his mind on Garrison too.

Before I forget, thanks so much for the photocopies. Shirley Martin, Teresa and I went to the Washington demonstration last Saturday, and she mentioned this material. (They were three great days for us here, and I hope it gave Shirley and Teresa a lift).

E nos moutons.

It is the sign of a moral prig to judge with an equal measure the sins of lord and peasant, capitalist and striker, Ku Kluxer and poor black, Batista and Castro, judge and bum - for indeed, are not both their souls stained with blood, falsehood and iniquity?

E.g. The A.C.L.U arraigns Garrison for violation of civil liberties of NBC whores and Cady Shaw. Not a mention of the ethical perversions of the Attorney General and NBC, interfering in a judicial process under way at the time.

I know very little of Garrison's evidence and doings. What I do know is that he has attacked the justice Department, the CIA, and the mass media of the country, and that he has been the object of wholesale attack by those agencies.

I don't know about Garrison. But, believe me, I know about the other side very well, and I hate them. If Garrison does not know who murdered President Kennedy, they certainly do. Garrison may be a bigmouthed liar. They are the enemy.

Let us say that Garrison's case is a frame (which I don't believe it is). To go by historical analogy again - I don't endorse the frameup of Lavoisier, but I am 100% on the side of those who framed him.

I hope you haven't left me at this point.

Now let us assume a frameup by Garrison. This would not be exceptional but a typical operation by a district attorney. I never heard of a district attorney (with the possible exception of Homer Cummings in the 1930's) who did not frameup people as a regular duty of his job. They frame everyone, both the innocent and the guilty. District Attorneys have frame-up minds and frame-up systems of operation.

It is in this framework that I see Garrison. If he is pursuing the true murderers on the basis of solid evidence, I would still expect him to operate with cocksure braggadocio, third degree, bribery, and false leads.

Now Garrison has behaved with remarkable moderation for a district attorney. If he had had a frameup in mind with political hoists for his ambition, I don't think he would have arrested a wealthy businessman with very influential connections and involved the CIA and the Cuban exiles. You and I can both very easily imagine the sort of plot that would have gone over big in his Louisiana bailiwick and gone over with relative safety.

As it is, he has accused parties in the conspiracy which must arouse the entire governmental apparatus in Washington against him and the largest part of the money powers against him.

The arguments you raised, about which I have a few minor reservations, are strong. (Except the one about Oswald which seems a bit foolish). That is why I advocate and have always advocated a sceptical attitude to Garrison. Shirley can tell you that I was very upset at the very first news of Garrison, that Mark Lane, Salandria, Weisberg, and others were calling him "incorruptible" and giving him a blank check. Incorruptible? A district attorney? Nonsense.

So where you and I differ is the nature of our scepticism. Were Garrison a fool and a knave a hundred times over, I would not class him with the achievements of an Arlen Specter, who for a conformist craving for patronage and office, made himself the accessory of Kennedy's murder.

My scepticism about Garrison is a benevolent scepticism, to borrow a term from Freud. The worst that can be said about him is that he is not shooting at the right persons. No one can deny that he is shooting in the right direction. And his trial record in this case so far, through several hearings and one trial, indicate that he is after the right persons.

Now please don't say I am advocating something like "revolutionary amoralism". Nothing of the kind. I am putting my views in the most extreme terms only to leave no doubt about my general attitude. I believe in the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. And we critics of the Report have shown many times that we are not afraid of cutting away at our own case in order to reach the truth.

On our own work, we apply the standards of science or try to. When it comes to judging others, the standards need not always be strictly the same. For instance, it reminds me of another paragraph that Menahem once elided from an article of mine, a criticism of Joesten. But it was a friendly criticism, friendly even though I called much of his recent work worthless.

If Arnoni had not used words like "disasters" about comparative trifles, and if he had not issued ultimatums, and if he had not equated Garrison's "fraud" with The Warren Commission's crimes, I would have had no objection. Certainly the questions you raise deserve to be raised in public and clearly too. (Although you wouldn't want to commit yourself to such a total defense of Oswald, would you? I had the wretch down for a government agent from the first, and the Garrison sketch of the plot for me has verisimilitude.)

But the handling of Garrison by Arnoni was like the sentencing of a pickpocket and a general to the gallows. After all, our purpose is to get the truth and destroy our enemies. To emphasize our own moral perfections should be only a secondary goal.

If the Garrison case is a total frameup, how do you explain the postponements and actions of his lawyers?-- who have the full cooperation and access to Federal sources of information and who will certainly find the Federal courts on appeal very amiable.

This isn't all, but enough for a busy day. Thanks again for the papers and the occasion to write to you again.

*Harold*