

The Warren Report Controversy

Sir: The U.S. press, we are told, is the freest in the world. This may or may not be true. Whether it is the most honest in the world is something else again. I have always been grateful to such as Oswald Garrison Villard, A. J. Liebling, George Seldes, Lincoln Steffens, I. F. Stone, Carey McWilliams, Fred Cook, Jr., Lyle Stuart, Cedric Belfrage, M. S. Arnoni and, yes, Phil Kerby for trying so valiantly to keep it honest.

From that unforgettable Friday (Nov. 22, 1963) when I was patching the roof on my house with a transistor at my side until this past week when I received the current issue of *Frontier*, I have (1) read (and listened to) everything coming my way relative to the assassination and (2) am aghast at the countless questions left unanswered (in addition to the many new ones raised) by a so-called blue-ribbon investigating body charged with getting the answers.

As a free American, as a concerned citizen, as a fairly intelligent individual, I frequently come to conclusions based on what I hear and see and read. It is only natural that I sometimes disagree with the conclusions reached by others, say, for example, I. F. Stone or Carey McWilliams, Fred Cook, Jr., or even Phil Kerby.

Imagine my chagrin when just such an occasion came to pass—when the Warren Commission made its report public—I. F. Stone (who does such a wonderful job, by and large) stated that I was “unscrupulous”

“sick,” “wacky,” that I belonged in the “booby-hatch” and, finally, that I had “gone off the deep end.” I had merely disagreed with him (and the Warren Commission).

Imagine my chagrin—two years later—to be called part of the “hopped-up New Left” and a victim of “jumbled emotions and disjointed opinion” for disagreeing with Phil Kerby.

The less reverent often refer to the U.S. press as the commercial press or the kept press or the prostitute press. For that reason, the muckrakers (such as those listed in the first paragraph) are welcomed with respect and honor for the good job they do, for the courage they display, for the

necessary antidote to the “kept” press that they are.

Why Stone and Cook and Kerby pursue a strategy of *pure attack* against their fellow muckrakers (over disagreement) is beyond me. It would seem to me (based on what we know) that Mark Lane (as an example) presents an “extensive, closely reasoned analysis” of the Report while the Report itself and its defenders “display a capacity to live with contradictions.” At this point, we do not know FOR SURE which camp is closest to the truth.

Week in and week out, month in and month out, Stone and Cook and Kerby expose the shenanigans of the establishment (you’ll excuse the expression): the industrial-military complex, the three branches of government, the FBI, the CIA, the Dixie Empire, etc., etc. Suddenly, they ask us to have unquestioned faith in five Republicans and two Dixiecrats who are part and parcel of the establishment they expose continuously. We in California remember Earl Warren, for example, as a District Attorney, Attorney-General and Governor BEFORE the reactionary right took a dislike to him. He was not infallible, believe me.

I may be wrong on this issue. Mark Lane may be wrong. Phil Kerby may be wrong. However, no one (NO ONE) has the right to diminish our right to dissent.

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Ed.—To question the quality of dissent is not to deny the right of dissent.

Sir: After reading the cover paragraph (November), I have one point to proclaim, which reduces this statement of Jacob Cohen to the mutterings of a confused, or possibly deluded simpleton. If these critics have, as Mr. Cohen would have us believe, “displayed a capacity to live with contradictions,” they could well afford to be quiet. It is the fact that they cannot which has given rise to the growing feelings of unrest.

The contradictions, sir, are not found in the minds of the critics, who arrived at the same questions independent of one another, but in the Report itself, and oft-times on the same page. What these critics are asking, Mr. Cohen, is that the Commission, or a new investigative body, reconcile these contradictions so that we can live with fact, pleasant or unpleasant.

I suggest that Mr. Cohen, along with Wesley Liebeler and other so-called defenders

of the Warren Commission Report are confused.

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