

13 December 1971

Mr Rodger Hayne  
75 School Street  
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Dear Mr. Hayne,

You will forgive me but I did not realize that when you asked my opinion of Salandria's speech you wanted to receive an echo of your own view. I note that in your letter of the 16th, while you reject my evaluation of the speech, you do not address yourself to the specific points on which I took issue with Salandria.

I have the impression that you are a relative newcomer to the literature on the JFK assassination. If you were acquainted with my published work on the case, I rather doubt that you would consider it necessary to give me a lecture on the monumental deception committed by the Government nor on its abominable immoral war policy. I have not been reticent on that subject in print and in broadcasts and other public discussions over the last seven years or more.

But I do insist that those of us who have been in the forefront in denouncing official fraud, manipulation, and injustice have a solemn responsibility to be absolutely scrupulous in the presentation of fact and evidence, to present our case in a responsible and judicious manner, and steadfastly to disavow resort to the very indignities to truth and logic which have impelled us to challenge the Government's false and cynical performance.

Now that I have the full text of Salandria's speech, for which I thank you, I find in it the interesting sub-hypothesis that the Soviet and American intelligence services cooperated in the assassination of President Kennedy—a new and imaginative element, I must admit, in an otherwise generally familiar Salandria reconstruction of the events of 11/22/63. He asks if his suggestion is irrational. I can only reply that I am prepared to consider any hypothesis, including this one, provided that it is accompanied by substantial arguments and evidence and not merely flimsy and fanciful assumptions.

The full text is illuminating also for what it omits. Specifically, Salandria's very close association with the so-called Garrison "investigation", the main achievement of which was to cast disrepute on all criticism of the Warren Report and to reverse what was, in the second half of 1966, a growing tide of opinion that the Warren Report was suspect if not wholly discredited and that the whole case should be reopened. Were I to adopt Salandria's own criteria, I might well point to his repeated efforts to discredit as clandestine Government agents persons such as Ellsberg, J. D. Thompson, William Turner and others too numerous to mention, all of whom were engaged

in efforts to expose Government lies and duplicity. I might point to the fact that when Judge Charles Halleck, Jr., had ruled that the Government should produce the JFK autopsy photographs and X-rays for examination by Dr. Cyril H. Wecht, a forensic pathologist of high standing who has courageously stood with the critics and consistently campaigned against the official fictions surrounding Oswald, Sirhan and James Earl Ray, it was Vince Salandria acting as the grey eminence to Garrison who caused him to telegraph the Court that he no longer wanted to have those photographs and X-rays released. I might point to Salandria's constant attempts to exonerate the Secret Service and the FBI, and to still other positions and actions on his part, as sinister in the extreme.

But I do not accept Salandria's criteria and I am therefore convinced that he has no clandestine links with Government agencies and no diabolical purposes. Rather, I believe that he has displayed extremely poor judgment and has often reached conclusions of the most dubious nature on the basis of slender evidence and questionable reasoning.

I can understand the mesmerizing effect of Salandria's rhetoric but I do not feel obliged to be mesmerized by it myself since rather a long history of his mistaken facts and mistaken judgments is at my disposal. That is not to say that his thesis may not have considerable compatibility with reality. I suggested in my book, in 1967, that the CIA in complicity with certain other dissident groups might have engineered the assassination, and I continue to regard that hypothesis as serious.

I agree with you that to be silent about the outrages perpetrated by the Government is to invite bondage. I have neither been silent nor have I tried to impose silence on any of my fellow-critics of the Warren Report, however much I disagreed with them on particular points. Strangely enough, the only one who has ever tried to silence me was Vince Salandria.

Yours sincerely,

Sylvia Meagher  
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