

Dec. 1, 1966- Boston Mass.- Notes prepared from 8:20 A.M. to about 9:10 A.M.

Yesterday, when I got to the Ritz Carlton, I was surprised that a suite was reserved for Jacob Cohen and me. I asked the desk clerk why Mr. Cohen and I were booked for the same suite. I asked who arranged it. The desk clerk advised that it was arranged by someone at Harvard University.

Cohen came into the suite about 5 P.M. I arrived at about 3:30 P.M. I remained on the telephone checking reservations, etc. Cohen knocked about 5:15 P.M. We then went down together with Henry Hampton's secretary (Hampton invited us on behalf of the forum). Mr. and Mrs. Penn Jones and Cohen had a drink. I don't drink.

We had dinner with members of the Unitarian Universalist Forum Committee. Then we went to Charles Street Meeting House for the forum.

After the forum, at about midnight, Mr. and Mrs. Jones and I went to the Ritz. The door to my suite was open when I got there. I locked the door to my room and tried to sleep. When I was almost asleep at about 1 A.M. Cohen knocked. He asked, "Vince, are you asleep?" I said that I wasn't but was undressed and would have to put clothes on. I put on shorts and trousers and lay on the bed while we conversed.

Cohen appeared very agitated. He said that he felt horrible. "I feel like a crumb." He then added, "Debating the assassination is horrible." I told him he shouldn't feel like a crumb. His case was impossible to argue, and he couldn't defend it. I said, "Jerry, you are brilliant. You know what happened in the assassination. Why do you do it? Why do you defend the Commission?"

Why don't you continue your academic career? You are going to ruin it with this stupid case."

He said, "I am not an academic anymore. I can't stand professors. I like people too much." He seemed sincere. He seemed to be telling me that he liked me. I think that he genuinely does like me. I admit to feeling his is basically a decent sort of person. He then asked, "Why is it that Sylvia (Sylvia Meagher) can't stand me?"

I explained, "Fred J. Cook suggested you may be a C.I.A. agent." I added, "But I don't believe it." Although I looked for some reaction or answer, there was none that I could detect. I said, "The case has broken, Jerry. It's all over in Europe, you know." He agreed by saying he heard about the European press treatment.

He expressed surprise that I wasn't taking expense money for this appearance. I said that I didn't want anything from the case other than that it should break so that we could begin the business of reexamining ourselves and benefit from it. I expressed hope that the conservatives in the United States would do it. I said that the left, liberals and Democrats were hopeless on the case. Cohen said, "The conservatives may break it because they have the character." But, he added that the Birchites knew about it, and they are revolutionaries, and they will use it. "They know the case cannot be digested by the society and the society remain the same."

I told Cohen that the breaking of the case could make us a better society. He said, "We can't digest it." I said that we could, and all we would have to do is become more American and not less. That is, we should stop trying to act like a police state and go back to some of the humble, earlier American virtues such as skepticism with respect to government and power and authority. I said, "I couldn't stand to live in a police state- any police state, whether Russian, Cuban or American."

He said, "It is not a question of whether you want or could live in a police state. You will have to be killed."

I said, "I agree. I'm prepared for that. You know I'm not afraid of that."

I said that I wasn't interested in having the conspirators punished. I said, "The society is too violent as it is. All I want is the truth and the reexamination and no punishment."

He said, "That's impossible. The society isn't as compassionate as you. It will want retribution." He said, "That the problem. Why we are struggling so hard is that the society will demand retribution of the killers if it learns what happened. The people who did it are worried about this, and that is why they struggle so hard." He then referred back to a statement I made in the forum in answer to a question of why if the government wasn't involved governmental officials weren't breaking. I said that the people in the government who broke the Dreyfus case were sent to Devil's Island. He said, "They weren't sent to Devil's Island; they committed suicide." (N.B. The head of the C.I.A. plans division during the assassination has committed suicide.)

He then said that my informant was also wrong with respect to the X-rays and photographs. I read from a statement of an informant advising that the X-rays and photographs were unavailable to non-governmental persons. He said, "They are available. I have reason to think that I will see them."

I said, "That is unfortunate because they will have to be forged documents and would be shown to be forgeries." I explained how governments always seem to do this kind of thing. "The Russians were experts at it, and they failed," I reminded him.

He just said, "Yes, the purge trials."

He then expressed contempt for Epstein. "He came to me like a little boy, fawning. He was so eager to show me he was on my side. How weak he is!"

I asked whether a weak boy like that could have undertaken brazen and courageous research on his own. He said, "There is nothing brave about cribbing from Salandria."

I insisted there was, and it was clear whose man he was. Cohen said, "His professor put him up to it." I said it was more complicated than Andrew Hacker, but that I wouldn't tell him how I know.

I told him, "I know who sent him to me and why he was sent. It was to make a politically packageable deal for the assassination and to stack the deck so that the X-Rays and photographs became the aces."

He merely said, "Kennedy."

I told him he couldn't write his book, and that the articles he wrote could be demolished with no trouble. He said, "I didn't say there weren't four guns. I merely said it was a case of one gun or four guns."

I thanks Cohen for cutting the argument down to the bone and getting it off the silly one assassin or two assassin polemic. I said, "Jerry, you have done the job of putting the debate at the proper level, that is, one assassin or the C.I.A.-military group." He said nothing in response to this. Then I said, "You and I know what happened in the assassination, Jerry." He did not comment.

Cohen then expressed disgust at James Doyle, the Boston Globe's Washington Bureau's man, who had introduced the problem of "What do you mean by an assassination possibly involving policy-making aspects of the United States Government?" This was Doyle's effort to make me look silly. When I began to document a policy shift, Cohen broke up the discussion by attacking Doyle for treating me rudely. He told Doyle that I was a pioneer in the research and articles I wrote two years ago were just now emerging in the press. I had told Jerry/Cohen that there was no need to apologize for Doyle, that Mr. Doyle had been very useful to me. Whereupon, despite my insistence that he not apologize, Doyle did so. When I tried to resume the answer to Doyle's question, Cohen then said that I was giving as my hypothesis that the C.I.A. and military had committed the crime, and a short answer was possible. Well, Cohen, said of Doyle's performance earlier at the forum, "He did a lot of your work for you."

I said, "Yeah, he was great." Cohen then made a disparaging remark about how Doyle had stupidly helped my case. Cohen then discussed Arlen Specter. I asked him whether he realized what he had said at the forum when he described the Commission's counsel as "Young men on the make." He said, "I said so adviseably."

He then said, "I saw Specter on TV last week. He looked horrible and beaten."

I agreed and said, "I keep seeming to get in his way. I am not at all interested in him."

Cohen said, "Lawyers from Philadelphia~~xi~~ had called him last week and asked what they should do about my request for^a Phila. Bar Association referendum on a new Commission to examine into the assassination. Cohen said he advised, "Join him. Give him (Salandria) what he wants!"

I said, "Gaeton Fonzi has Specter on a long tape in which Specter destroyed himself. He collapsed. I keep telling Gaeton he has a historically important tape."

Cohen just listened. Then he commented that Specter doesn't know what to do at this point. I asked why Liebler was unwilling to debate me. He said that the Commission leaks before the Report was issued came from Liebler. The Commission met and was going to fire him but had second thoughts and decided it would be a bad idea because it would ~~not~~ indicate to the public dissension in the Commission ranks. Cohen expressed again that the debating of the assassination was horrible and made him feel like a crumb. I then said that I was looking forward to finishing the case. I expressed my dislike for performing on this subject. I said that when the truth outed, I was eager to return to my good life and family and to keep fucking. I said we both agreed on what happened in the assassination. He still seemed rattled by the evening. We bid goodnight to one another. I detect he likes me. I feel sorry for him and like him some.