Leo Sauvage, French Newsman; Wrote Book on Kennedy Probe

NEW YORK (UPI)—French newsman and arts critic Leo Sauvage, a former Le Figaro New York correspondent whose book "The Oswald Affair" savaged the Warren Commission Report on President John F. Kennedy's assassination, died Oct. 30.

The 75-year-old journalist died of a heart attack at his Manhattan apartment, Myron Kolatch, executive editor of the New Leader, said Friday. Sauvage was the biweekly's chief drama critic since 1980.

Born in Nancy, Sauvage came to the United States in 1948 as a reporter for the French wire service Agence France Presse and became a correspondent for the Paris daily Le Figaro two years later, an assignment that would last a quarter century.

He was the first European correspondent to cover the fall of Cuba's Batista dictatorship in 1959. "Che Guevara: Failure of a Revolutionary," one of the first of Sauvage's eight books, earned him wide respect as an authority on Cuban and Latin American politics.

Sauvage traveled to Dallas just days after President Kennedy's Nov. 22, 1963, assassination and became skeptical of local police handling of the investigation. Sauvage led Le Figaro's questioning of the Warren Commission's inquiry and won acclaim in Europe for his 1966 book "The Oswald Affair," which criticized the panel's report.

A lifelong theater lover and critic, Sauvage was a founder of a theater company in wartime Marseille that mocked the collaborationist Vichy regime and eventually shut down.

Among his other books were the French best-seller "The Americans" and "The Lumiere Affair: From Myth to History," a nostalgic study of the invention of motion pictures.

He is survived by his wife of nearly 50 years, Barbara, three children and three grandchildren.

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