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James Steen Jnr.
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5 March 1976

Dear James,

I have got to disappoint you by saying that Harold Weisberg's Post Mortem does not seem to me to be a book that has a good chance over here. There is still, I would judge, a great deal of interest and curiosity about the murder of JFK but Weisberg says at the outset that that is not his subject. He does not pretend to know or say what really happened. He is concerned - and very rightly too from his angle - with what happened afterwards, with how the aftermath was handled; and he produces an immense amount of very disturbing stuff tending to show that the main object of the Warren inquiry was not to get at the truth but to plaster over some very ugly cracks. This therefore is a book about the behaviour and the values of the establishment and an indictment of it.

Weisberg has of course been at this for a long time and has accumulated material as well as passion. A great deal of what he writes is amazing. But from a publishing point of view there is far too much of it: the technique is that of the steamroller and not the rapier.

Moreover - a separate point - this audience is not too interested in the behaviour of the US establishment. Interested in what happened, yes; in the aftermath, hardly. There is a section of opinion here which welcomes anything that discredits the US government but that is a prejudging, ideological segment and not anything like the same as the audience which knows there is a mystery and would like to have a good pacey inquiry into it, leading to a convincing solution.

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So I am sorry to say that I do not see a large enough market for the book here. I could of course be wrong. Publishers are wrong a lot of the time, though I don't think I am wrong about this one. We are remote from the clean-up American crusade. We are observers, not greatly involved. This generation of English people is luxuriating in not having to take moral attitudes about the rest of the world - for the first time for quite a long time.

I have made a note of your address near Philadelphia and I hope that, there or here, we may meet again before too long. Thank you for sending me the book. It was a good thought which I appreciate, and I am sorry that my response could not be what you wished.

Yours ever,



Peter Calvocoressi

PJAC/jms