

Schweiker Joins Attack on the Warren Report

By MARTIN WALDRON

Senator Richard S. Schweiker said in Harrisburg, Pa., last week that the Warren Commission report on the assassination of President Kennedy is "like a house of cards; it's going to collapse."

Thus the mild-mannered Republican Senator joined a curious mixture of Americans who no longer believe that the public was told the truth 12 years ago about the death of a President, and are now demanding an entirely new investigation.

These millions include respected public officials as well as the irrational, the confused and the mischievous.

Receptive Listeners

The Warren Commission report has been under almost constant attack from its release in the fall of 1964, but demands for a new investigation—coming from a small group of popular writers and lecturers—have become increasingly numerous since President Nixon was forced out of office last year by the Watergate scandals. These demands seem to be falling on receptive ears.

Two Congressional subcom-



Associated Press

Senator Richard Schweiker

mittees are taking a tentative look into how the assassination was investigated, with particular emphasis on whether the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation withheld evidence.

One inquiry is that of Senator Schweiker and Senator Gary Hart, Democrat of Colorado. The other is under the direction of Representative Don Edwards, Democrat of California.

The attack on the Warren Commission's finding that Lee Harvey Oswald was a lone assassin on Nov. 22, 1963, when rifle bullets ended President Kennedy's life in Dallas, is said to be the hottest topic on the college lecture circuit.

The theme also dominates many radio talk shows where phone-in listeners tell each other about Government cabals that make political policy in the United States "out of the

barrel of a gun."

Only one of the top officials of the Warren Commission has been active in trying to shore up its findings. He is David Belin of Des Moines, one of the commission attorneys who headed the investigation into Lee Harvey Oswald.

A Flood of Rhetoric

Mr. Belin's painstaking efforts to point out that many, if not most, of the allegations being made are untrue or are sheer speculation have been almost lost in a flood of rhetoric from the other side.

Mr. Belin has now begun to snap back at the critics, saying that most of them are irrational, foolish or motivated by money.

The rising tide of doubts about who killed President Kennedy and why has begun to attract the attention of psychologists interested in mass behavior.

A teacher in the department of American studies at Brandeis University, Jacob Cohen, made an attempt in the current issue of the magazine Commentary to explain what he calls "conspiracy fever."

"How can one explain the extraordinary degree of political distrust, and beyond that, the pervasive taste for mystery and conspiracy which is everywhere so conspicuous in America today?" he asked.

There are widely held theories that flying saucers are real and that the Atlantic Ocean contains an area that is deadly to airplanes and ships, in addition to the Kennedy conspiracy theories, Mr. Cohen said.

"The customary explanation is that recent revelations concerning Watergate, Vietnam, the C.I.A., and F.B.I., et al.,

have caused and perhaps justify the present mood of distrust, and that truthfulness and rectitude on high will someday dispel it.

"However, close examination of the cultural scene reveals that this is only part of the explanation and perhaps not the most important part.

"I believe we are dealing with habits of mind in the very center of our life and times, which positively revel in mystification, which do not wish to know the truth, and perhaps could not recognize it if they saw it."

Many of the leaders of the current movement are "conscious liars," Mr. Cohen said.

The Atlanta-based writers, George and Priscilla Macmillan, a husband and wife team who have written on the assassinations of Mr. Kennedy and of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said in a book review in The New York Times that "the extraordinary vitality of the rumors about the Dallas assassination is one of the astonishing phenomena of American life in the past decade."

An Irrational Enclave

The various theories about the Kennedy murder "have become a permanent enclave of irrationality in our national consciousness," the Macmillans wrote.

In addition to college lectures and radio "debates," leaders of the anti-Warren Commission movement have kept their viewpoint alive in scores of books, in counterculture magazines and, recently, at regional and national seminars.

One such meeting was held on Oct. 10, 11 and 12 in the

MONDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1975

as Clamor for a New Inquiry Mounts

gymnasium at the University of Hartford.

Attendance over the three days ranged from 300 to 2,000, even though it poured rain throughout the week-end.

Presiding at the convention was Mark Lane, a former member of the New York State Assembly who was the first and has been the most consistent critic of the Warren Commission.

Audience of Students

In his remarks, Mr. Lane told the audience, most of whom were college students, that the "national press has a lot to answer for" in its "blind acceptance" of the Warren Commission report.

Any competent investigative reporter could quickly demolish the commission's findings, he said.

The Hartford convention drew such diverse participants as Jim Garrison, the former District Attorney of New Orleans, who tried to prove that the C.I.A. killed Mr. Kennedy, and Cedric Y. Von Rolleston, a mural painter who says he met with Lee Harvey Oswald before the Kennedy murder.

While Mr. Garrison was telling the hundreds of cheering college students that the C.I.A., with the help of the F.B.I., plotted and carried out the assassination, Mr. Von Rolleston was wandering about the floor of the gymnasium trying to find Russian spies and C.I.A. agents.

Mr. Von Rolleston was wearing a large red button in his lapel with the legend: "I believe in elves."

"Elves send me messages," he said.

One frowning young woman who saw a newsman talking to

the muralist intervened, saying that Mr. Von Rolleston "makes things up."

"He gives us a bad name," she said, adding that the muralist has never studied the Warren Commission report and is "not typical of the 150 million Americans" who don't believe that Mr. Oswald was a lone assassin.

Mr. Garrison's attendance at the Hartford meeting was his first venture back into the realm of Kennedy conspiracy theory since 1969 when he prosecuted a New Orleans businessman, Clay L. Shaw, on a charge of conspiring to murder President Kennedy.

Mr. Shaw, who is now dead, was acquitted.

Mr. Garrison was the first public official to say that the C.I.A. and the F.B.I. conspired to kill the President.

The purpose of the assassination, Mr. Garrison told the Hartford convention, was to prevent the United States from drifting into an economic depression.

Defense contractors became alarmed that they could not sell arms if President Kennedy followed through on his decision,

saying to withdraw United States troops from Vietnam, and the C.I.A. and F.B.I. agreed to arrange the murder, Mr. Garrison said.

A Standing Ovation

The former New Orleans prosecutor got a standing ovation.

Senator Schweiker's prediction this week that the Warren Commission report is about "to collapse" was predicated, the Senator said, on "very significant leads."

Mr. Schweiker said that he and Senator Hart were investigating the following possibilities:

"That Mr. Kennedy had been killed through a Communist plot originating in Cuba or in the Soviet Union.

"That the assassination had been prompted by a right-wing political conspiracy in the United States.

"That anti-Castro Cubans were responsible.

Senator Schweiker did not say which, if any, of the possibilities he believed.

"The only thing I'm certain about is that we don't know the truth about the Kennedy assassination," he said.



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