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# Warren Report Correct, Says English Intellectual

## Critics Have No Case, Sparrow Asserts

LONDON (AP) — A leading English intellectual and pundit attempted Thursday to debunk the debunkers with a lengthy, closely argued assertion that the Warren Commission was basically correct in its findings on the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

John Sparrow, warden of All Souls College, Oxford, wrote in the literary supplement of the London Times: "Critics of the report are of two kinds: 'demonologists,' who are ready to sling at authorities any stone and any mud that presents itself, and serious inquirers, who concentrate on a hard core of relevant evidence."

But none, he suggested in the 19,000-word article, has a case to answer.

"They put forward good points and bad alike," he says, "mingle discredited assertions with valid evidence, and make up for weak links in their hypotheses by loud assertion and virulent abuse of the Dallas police, the FBI and the commission."

### CRITICIZES CRITIC

Of Joachim Joesten, who has written six books on the assassination, Sparrow said: "He compelled, in order to supplant the story told by the commission, to treat as perjured the evidence of witness after witness, and to brand as accomplices in the conspiracy one party after another, each less likely than the last, until the structure becomes top heavy and collapses under its own weight."

"Mr. Joesten's story (that there were two conspiracies—one to kill the president, the other to kill Gov. John B. Connally of Texas) is extravagant and incredible. His book is a compound of bad English, bad temper, and bad taste.

"To take an instance: to justi-

fy imputing to (Lee Harvey) Oswald advance knowledge of the route of the (president's) procession, Mr. Joesten actually suggests that the president's assistant Ken O'Donnell . . . was implicated in the plot. Most of his other accusations are essential to any large-scale conspiracy theory; this one is as gratuitous as it is cruel."

### LANE, WEISBERG

Sparrow said two other writers—Mark Lane and Harold Weisberg—adopted "a method of controversy that does not expose them to direct refutation: they offer no connected account of what they think occurred, Mr. Weisberg contenting himself with a ceaseless small-fire of rhetorical questions, Mr. Lane with a steady barrage of innuendo.

"Most of Mr. Weisberg's questions misfire or are misdirected. As for Mr. Lane's innuendos, they mean nothing if they do not imply a conspiracy implicating, among others, Chief Curry, Capt. Fritz and other officers of the Dallas police."

"It is a relief," says Sparrow, "to turn from writing of this kind to Mr. Edward Epstein's 'Inquest' which is short, clear, extremely well-argued . . ."

"But," he added, "his book shows how a clever man can unwillingly allow parti pris (preconceived opinion) to vitiate the building up and presentation of a case, so that a chain of reasoning cogent enough if one adopts certain presumptions is made to lead to a conclusion that is in fact ill-founded. In short, Mr. Epstein has proved about himself what he sought to prove about the commission."

### 'SECOND OSWALD'

Sparrow went on: "Prof. Richard Popkin, chairman of the department of philosophy at the University of California, is an expert on the history of skepticism—a history to which, in his book 'The Second Oswald' he himself made a notable contri-

bution.

"Such intense skepticism as Prof. Popkin's needs a great deal of credulity to support it; in order not to believe in the probable there is so much of the

improbable that he has to believe in."

"What now," Sparrow asked, "of Big Jim Garrison, the 'Jolly Green Giant' of New Orleans?"

"He is a handsome, quick witted, forceful, ambitious man, with an engagingly frank and easy manner, but serious lacking in judgment.

### TRIAL IS PENDING

"The near future will show how much of the Joesten-Garrison conspiracy theory can survive examination in court; at the moment (Clay) Shaw's trial is pending and it is perhaps significant that no coconspirators have yet been added to the indictment."

Sparrow declared: "Through-

out (all attacks on the commission's report) there run two fatal weaknesses. The first (is) an inability to see the wood through obsession with a single tree.

"The other . . . is that the authors have never thought themselves back into the circumstances at the relevant time, and asked whether it is possible to believe that the persons concerned, with the knowledge then available to them, could have decided to do the things they are supposed to have done.

"The last word—if indeed the last word is ever to be spoken—must await the outcome of the trial at New Orleans.

"But no light shed by that trial upon the tragedy can ex-

cuse its aftermath, or efface from the record a stain deeper than the crime itself: that left by the appetite that could swallow scurrilities like 'MacBird' ... by the gullibility of the American public, and by the recklessness with which that gullibility has been exploited, under a law that allows almost unlimited calumny of public officials, at whatever cost to the reputation of the innocent."