A British Scholar Pooh-Poohs Idea of Dallas Conspiracy

In a long, detailed analysis of the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, one of Britain's most prominent scholars pooh-poohs the idea of a conspiracy.

The scholar is John Sparrow, an official of All Souls College, Oxford. In an article in the Times Literary Supplement, Mr. Sparrow closely examined the arguments put forth by critics of the Warren Report on the assassination. Mr. Sparrow said that he did not agree wholly with the report in all its findings, but did agree with its determination that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone in the assassination of the President Nov. 22, 1963, in Dallas. Critics of the report, he said, have acted foolishly and recklessly.

Some of those critical of the Warren Report say that other assassins shot the President from a grassy knoll while Oswald was firing from a building. "If it is hard to believe that Oswald hit his target in two out of three quick shots," says Mr. Sparrow, "it is harder still to suppose that two men, more than 100 yards apart and unable to see or communicate with each other, could have synchronized their fire so perfectly. And it is hardest of all to imagine that conspirators would have allowed the success of their plan to depend on such a feat of synchronization."

Mr. Sparrow says it is "really impossible" to believe that conspirators would have placed a gunman in the grassy knoll "in total ignorance of how many lookers-on, when the procession passed, would be standing nearby or perhaps actually occupying the place selected as his firing point." The British scholar says he does not believe the Warren Report critics have taken part in any "concerted plan of action" nor does he mean to "impute sinister motives" to them. "To do so," Mr. Sparrow says, "would be to fall into their own besetting error."