

JW, JL, PH, #U

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8/21/71

Editor, Aurora
Leningrad, USSR.

Dear Sir,

Because you first and in full form published Mr. Mikhail Sagatelyan's interesting article reprinted in the July edition of Sputnik, I address you, hoping you will communicate with the author and other editors.

By way of establishing my own credentials, I am the author of the first book analyzing and disproving the Warren Report (WHITEWASH), most of the books on this subject, with perhaps a million words published and as much yet to be written, and, I think it is no exaggeration to say, the best-informed person on the subject and the only one to have devoted himself to it exclusively since before that Report was published. My personal investigations are very large, as is my file of unpublished Warren Commission materials and official materials actually withheld from that Commission.

To the best of my limited knowledge, yours is the first serious treatment of this subject in your country. My own efforts to inspire such interest were brusquely frustrated years ago. Dilia, which looked with favor on my work, was unable to find any publishing interest among those it serves. Therefore, yours is important publishing. The July article, the only one I have seen to date, is long yet a condensation, and it says there is more. From this I wonder if a book is in view. This is one of the several reasons for which I write.

There is no doubt about the author's qualifications or serious intent, nor can I quarrel with his doctrine. His writing is flawed, however, by the use of undependable sources he was without means of evaluating and by an imperfect understanding of some of the local situations, among other things.

It is not possible, on any subject, to find sources more completely without credibility than Manchester of Joesten, both of whom, it seems apparent, sustained serious emotional disturbances as a consequence of this work, in Joesten's case, progressing dangerously still. He has, whether or not from illness, degenerated into an unscrupulous literary jackal, a man of unequalled irresponsibility, which is quite separate from whatever his intentions may be. His and Buchanan's earliest writings cannot be regarded as irresponsible although grossly inaccurate simply because officialdom permitted no alternative and both did raise vital and substantial questions. Most of their reporting, however, is fiction.

In an effort to make my point simple and comprehensible to you, let me address a few of the minor errors. The author asks (p. 109), with Johnson already dumped, "what was the point of going to Texas?" Among the obvious answers are the position of the party within the State, money-raising and its possible influence on the Congressional composition. There was legitimate reason for the trip and the President, personally, persisted in making it even after the most eloquent efforts to dissuade him.

More serious is the misunderstanding that leads to serious misinterpretation (p. 111) about the Texas investigation: "Lyndon Johnson decided that the investigating commission that had to be formed should be composed solely of Texans!" The only law violated was Texas law, a Texas investigation was immediately announced, and the real accomplishment of the White House and the Warren Commission was in frustrating the Texas Court of Inquiry. I have and ultimately plan to publish a fair amount of the correspondence between the two commissions showing this. However, a Texas commission was required under Texas law, and the author confuses between the two Commissions.

From page 111 also, "According to Manchester, the Deputy Attorney General, Nicholas Katzenbach, who in the days following the assassination fulfilled the duties of the Attorney General as Robert was tied up with 'clan' affairs..." Although I am not a partisan of Robert Kennedy, this is an unkind formulation and its end result is to diminish the understanding of both the role of the Deputy and that which in particular Katzenbach played in this matter. The suffering of the brother was not a "clan" affair, nor is it unique to him among humans. And Katzenbach from the first, proper in his position and more proper considering the personal involvement of the Attorney General as brother of the victim, officially represented the Department of Justice to the Commission, appeared before it, etc.

Perhaps the most basic reason for the belief (p. 113) that no member of the Supreme Court should serve on such bodies comes from history, the Pearl Harbor investigation. And another obvious one is the impropriety of any Justice filling such a role with a defendant, Ruby, with a case certain to come to that court without Ruby's death. While Warren did make the statement about withholding evidence here attributed to him and in my own writing I have given it similar (not identical) interpretation, there is a reason misunderstood by the author as by most people here because of irresponsible error among careless critics. Neither Warren nor Johnson directed that everything be withheld for 75 years and there is no such order of any kind as it relates to the files of this Commission. This is a standing regulation the purpose of which is to protect the innocent from defamation in their expectable lifetime. The fact is that both Robert Kennedy and Earl Warren, whether or not reluctantly, did direct that everything possible be made available for research and I have an enormous duplication of this material, as do several young scholars who also do serious work. I have thousands and thousands of pages of FBI and Secret Service reports, for example. And at least hundred of copies of internal staff papers, both kinds of documents reflecting considerable official culpability and egregious error. There is suppression, and I have gone to court (with some success) to overcome it, but it is not as the author explains.

Johnson (p. 114) neither attempted to nor failed in the "attempt to set up an all-Texan investigation." It was set up, cooperation between it and the Warren Commission was announced from the White House, and the truth is worse and even more conspiratorial. Aside from the frustration of the Texas investigation, as some of my present writing will prove, for I have the proof and have written that exact part, that Texas investigation, controlled by Johnson's minion Connally, was under serious CIA influence, through its member Jaworski, who actually ran it and served on the board of a foundation "front". Jaworski has just become President of the American Bar Association.

Oswald did not depart Europe for the United States by plane (p. 117) but by ship, and the law requires the advancing of fare to all citizens. There is a major point here the author missed, and it supports his thesis.

At the time of Manchester's work, Marina Oswald was not "protected" by the FBI (p. 118), never had been, and refused interviews without pay. She was mercenary and waxed wealthy. Here again the point is understated by the author through error, for she was both bribed and blackmailed, but by the Government.

That the author did not make more errors (he did, of course) is the wonder, not that he made any. This is an inevitable consequence of limited understanding of the most complicated material (made so to prevent responsible disproof) and the impossibility of his having made what would have had to have been an exhausting and fulltime personal inquiry. However, if any further publication is intended, I would strongly encourage whoever does it to undertake to check the accuracy, and not among those cited as authorities, none of whom really is. I think it important that what is told the world about this crime, the full consequences of which are still not understood, be as accurate as humanly possible, and that neither now nor in the future will proper and correct criticism or exposure be discredited or downgraded because of factual error.

My best wishes to the author willing to undertake this writing. Sincerely, Harold Weisberg