

LONDON SUNDAY TELEGRAPH 1/12/66

LETTERS TO
THE EDITOR

The Kennedy

SIR—Under a headline that reads "Where Warren's critics fail: attacks 'malicious or ignorant'", Prof. A. L. Goodhart has presented that which purports to be a review of two books, of which one, *Rush to Judgment*, I have authored.

In just one paragraph Mr. Goodhart says:

Mr. Lane disputes all these conclusions. There is, he says, compelling evidence that the President was struck by two bullets, one fired from the building, which hit him in the back of his head, and another fired from a knoll in the opposite situation 100 yards away, which entered the front of his throat. The official autopsy which said that both bullets entered from the back had been intentionally falsified. The killer in the building was not Oswald, but some unidentified man who had been placed there by unidentified conspirators with the connivance of the Dallas police. The man who shot Tippit was some unidentified man acting for the Dallas police who were afraid that he might disclose some adverse evidence.

Yet, through ignorance or malice, Mr. Goodhart has failed in that paragraph to present a single thought present in my book. His inaccurate summation leads me to believe that he did not even read the book.

1. I do not state that the President was struck by two bullets.]

have presented evidence that one bullet struck him in the throat, another in the head, and that the F.B.I. agents present at the autopsy stated that one bullet struck him in the back as well. The total, without exaggeration, might be thought to be three.

2. I do not state that a bullet hit the President "in the back of his head." I have presented evidence that the bullet that struck the President's head entered from the right-front, and that a portion of the skull was driven back over the limousine and to the left.

3. I do not state that there was "a killer" in the Book Depository building.

4. I do not state that a man in the Book Depository window "had been placed there by unidentified conspirators (sic)," for I have never stated that any man was there. Even if a man was in the window (there were spectators in many of the windows overlooking the motorcade as it entered Dealey Plaza), I would not begin to speculate in the absence of any evidence as to why he might be there or who, if anyone, might have "placed" him there.

5. I do not state that a man in the window was there "with the connivance of the Dallas police."

6. I do not state that a man who shot Tippit "was acting for the Dallas police." I do not know who shot Tippit and I should suggest that only after we locate him

may we, in all likelihood, be able to begin to understand on whose behalf, if anyone's, he was acting.

7. I do not state that Tippit was killed so that he might be prevented from disclosing "adverse evidence." Again, I would suggest that a determination of the murderer's motive await a determination of the murderer.

Most of Mr. Goodhart's other criticisms in his review are of similar calibre and, here again, eschewing speculation, I should be content to allow the reader to determine motive.

MARK LANE.

London, S.W.3.

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I AM afraid that Dr. Goodhart, in his review of the critics of the Warren Report, seems in general to sacrifice fairness to narrow legalism. In particular, he is grossly unjust to Mr. Epstein. On the basis of one phrase by Mr. Epstein, and one remark, which is not even by Mr. Epstein but Mr. Rovere (and which Dr. Goodhart has, anyway, misinterpreted), he dismisses Mr. Epstein's careful and scholarly study as "malicious" and "psychology run mad." He makes no attempt to understand what Mr. Epstein has done.

Mr. Epstein has not argued "that the Chief Justice of the United States and the six members

Controversy Continued

of his Commission would deliberately falsify the records." This is a gross simplification. On the other hand Mr. Epstein does produce concrete evidence that the Commission, by its structure and conditions of work, consistently preferred one interpretation of the material before it. This evidence is factual and can only be refuted on an equally factual level. Dr. Goodhart has not made a single reference to the facts. He has confined himself to trivial generalisation.

Mr. Epstein is far more scrupulous in examining the Commission than Dr. Goodhart has been in examining Mr. Epstein.

H. R. TREVOR-ROPER.

Regius Professor of Modern History, Oxford.

Professor A. L. GOODHART writes:

Mr. Trevor-Roper says that I have sacrificed "fairness to narrow legalism." There is nothing narrow about the legalism with which I was concerned, because if it could be proved that Ruby had taken part in the alleged conspiracy then he would undoubtedly be executed.

The Regius Professor says that it was "a gross simplification" for me to say that Mr. Epstein had argued that "the Commission would deliberately falsify the records." But on page 62 Mr. Epstein states that all the

evidence indicates that "the autopsy report published in the Warren Report is not the original."

This means that on this point, which he says is crucial, the Commission deliberately "altered the facts." Mr. Trevor-Roper says that I have confined myself to "trivial generalisation," but if the alteration of evidence is trivial then the standards of triviality recognised by an historian and a lawyer must differ.

Unfortunately I could not refer in my article to Mr. Epstein's "scholarly study" of "the structure and conditions of work" of the Commission owing to lack of space. This consists in part of quotations from various interviews he had with some of the members of the Commission and their counsel. He does not seem to have submitted these for verification to the persons he interviewed, and I understand that a number of the quotations have been repudiated.

Mr. Lane is careful not to refer to the three "specific tests of confidence" to which I referred—the Chief Justice's statement that the Commission has "every reason to doubt the truthfulness" of Mr. Lane's statement concerning the alleged meeting between Ruby, Tippit and Weissman; Mr. Lane's

chapter entitled "Ruby's Testimony"; and the evidence of Mrs. Perrin Rich.

I cannot deal with all Mr. Lane's seven points here, but two are of special interest. In regard to point three, he did not explicitly state that there was a "killer" in the book depository building, but if he is now arguing that that killer was shooting from somewhere else, then he is introducing for the first time another of his extraordinary "suspicions."

Point five is the most important because he says that he did not state that the killer was there with "the connivance" of the Dallas police. He did not say so explicitly, probably because of fear of the law of libel, but it is perfectly clear—that that is the inevitable conclusion.

If there was no connivance then why should the police have "planted" the rifle in the room? Why should they have placed false palm prints on the rifle? Why should they have planted false evidence at the scene of Tippit's murder? Why, finally, should they have taken part in a series of murders of possible witnesses?

Mr. Lane can always deny that he has made specific statements of fact; he prefers to make allegations that can have only one meaning.

Letters on other subjects—P.18.