

MARK LANE, BACK AFTER TOUR, REPORTS ON REACTION

The Oswald case: All Europe skeptical

Mark Lane, New York lawyer who has been investigating the assassination of President Kennedy, reports in the following article on European reaction to meetings conducted on his recent tour. Citizens Committees of Inquiry have been set up in many U.S. cities.

By Mark Lane

AS NEW FACTUAL information from Dallas began to reach the Citizens' Committee of Inquiry, it became clear that one overwhelming problem confronted the committee. As difficult as it was going to be to obtain factual information regarding the assassination of President Kennedy last Nov. 22, it was plain that the greater difficulty would be presenting the information to the American people.

The almost total press blackout, with the NATIONAL GUARDIAN as almost the only exception, seems to indicate that the 180 million Americans were rapidly becoming the least informed portion of the world population regarding the assassination.

My trip to Europe in April and May received scant coverage in the American press. The meetings at the London School of Economics, at the largest and most important forum in Denmark, and in Rome were not mentioned here. Only my appearance before an international lawyers' association in Budapest was recounted, in the New York Times, in a badly slanted and inaccurate story.

I had toured the U.S. three times and presented to leading newspapers in each city proof that the widely publicized pictures of the slain suspect Lee Oswald with the alleged murder weapon in his hand, which appeared first in Life magazine and then in leading newspapers and magazines, were all doctored photographs in which the rifle, and very likely Oswald's head, had both been airbrushed in. But not a single American paper ran that story until, as a result of my May visit to Europe, European publications conducted a study of the photographs and concluded that they were forgeries. Finally when the story was published, although sporadically, in the American press. The lesson seemed clear: the only way to reach the American people was by going abroad. Therefore, at the end of May, I returned to Europe to speak at Copenhagen and Aarhus, Denmark; Florence; Rome; Paris; London; and Lund, Sweden.

PUBLIC MEETINGS in Europe were well attended and received extensive coverage in European newspapers. U.S. News and World Report and the New York Times both reported that all of Europe, with the exception of West Germany, has grave doubts regarding the official governmental line on the assassination. Said U.S. News and World Report, "75% to 80% of the French people doubted the official version." French radio, television, and press reporters indicated that the 80% figure was low, since none of them knew anyone in France who accepted the official version. Even the West German response was immediate. The leading tele-

vision program of west Germany, Panorama, asked me to fly from Copenhagen to Paris for an interview.

The first meeting at the university in Copenhagen was marked by hostile questions from an American, who declined to give his name but said that he was "an American Fulbright professor." Danish newspapers interviewed him afterward to get his name, but he refused to reveal it. A conservative paper in Copenhagen then tried to learn the name of the "Fulbright professor" from the American Embassy, but was informed that names of American Fulbright professors are secret and cannot be released. As I left Copenhagen, the newspapers featured the story that not only was the Warren Commission inquiry top secret, but evidently the American Fulbright program also had been so labeled. I was informed that the American Embassy in Denmark had expressed great displeasure that the Danish television and radio stations, owned by the government, had let me appear.

A DANISH Citizens' Committee has been formed with Jorgen Jacobsen, Copenhagen lawyer, as chairman. Editors of leading publications, outstanding literary figures, and educators have joined.

The meetings in London, both public and private, were rewarding. The public meeting was well attended and covered accurately by the press. Private meetings with Bertrand Russell, John Freeman, editor of the New Statesman, Professor Arnold Toynbee, and writer Kenneth Tynan indicated the great doubts that exist in England. Russell served as organizer and now is chairman of the British "Who Killed Kennedy Committee." Others on that committee are: John Arden, playwright; Caroline Wedgwood Benn, writer; John Calder, publisher; Professor William Empson of Sheffield University; Michael Foot, Labour M.P. and editor of the Tribune; Sir Compton Mackenzie, author and playwright; Kingsley Martin, former editor of the New Statesman; Lord Boyd Orr, former director-general, UN Food and Agricultural Organization; J. B. Priestley, novelist and playwright; Herbert Read, publisher and author; Tony Richardson, film director; Bishop Arthur Mervin Stockwood and Southwark; and Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper of Oxford University.

BEFORE I left England, Toynbee gave me a message for the American people: "The Mark Lane brief gives strong reasons for thinking that there is something wrong about the way in which the case is being investigated. I am sure that the right reaction to this is the setting up in the U.S. of the Citizens' Committee of Inquiry."

Russell sent this message:

"There is no precedent for Mark Lane's remarkable attempt to investigate the truth regarding the assassination of President Kennedy. When Zola sought to uncover the truth concerning Dreyfus, he had for advantage that Dreyfus was alive. Oswald has been murdered, and

this cause celebre concerns the assassination of a President in the nuclear age.

"Mark Lane's evidence comprises one of the most remarkable documents I have seen and is an unanswerable indictment of the government's attempt to suppress the truth and conceal the circumstances surrounding the death of the President. There has never been a more subversive, conspiratorial, unpatriotic or endangering course for the security of the U.S. and the world than the attempt by the U.S. government to hide the murderers of its recent President."

IN PARIS a meeting for jurists and lawyers was crowded by representatives from French publications and radio stations and from the government press office in Algeria, from India, and many European countries. Jean-Paul Sartre's monthly publication, Les Temps Modernes, will publish a private interview with me this month, and Sartre indicated willingness to serve with the French Citizens' Committee of Inquiry.

Large public meetings in Florence followed the Paris meeting. A message from the Warren Commission requesting my immediate return to the U.S. to testify before it interrupted the tour. Although I have no illusions about the role of the commission—it being my belief that the commission was appointed to suppress factual information, not to obtain it and make it widely known—I returned to the U.S. immediately.

My passport bears twenty-eight entry and exit stamps, including a visa to Hungary. In no country was I greeted with anything other than courtesy and cooperation, until I returned to my own, at the request of Chief Justice Earl Warren. As I presented my passport to the immigration inspector at Kennedy Airport, he opened the so-called "Lookout book" containing the names of those who are being watched by the government because they have committed crimes, smuggled material, or, in the view of the government, are suspicious. As the inspector turned to the "L" page, it became clear that my name appeared on the list. After a series of conversations with the immigration inspector, W. T. McConarty, the officer in charge of the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and with T. A. Espardy, district director of the service, I was told that "your name did not appear on the list" and that "you probably traveled to Cuba, which is why your name appears on the list." (I have not yet visited Cuba). Finally, Espardy said: "I am not going to tell you a damn thing."

When I called J. Lee Rankin, counsel to the Warren Commission, he assured me at first that my name was not on the proscribed list because of my investigation of the assassination. I informed Warren that this seemed to me to constitute further harassment of those seeking to investigate the assassination. Warren indicated that the commission was not interested in that and would make no effort to determine the reasons.