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THE SHOTS ARE STILL HEARD

Criticism of the Warren Commission's report on the assassination of PRESIDENT KENNEDY confronts PRESIDENT JOHNSON with a very delicate dilemma. Two books just published have clearly succeeded in undermining the faith of many people in the methods and conclusions of the commission. One, by MR. EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN, reveals flaws in the commission's procedures and suggests that there may have been another assassin besides OSWALD. The other, by MR. MARK LANE, questions whether OSWALD was guilty at all and hints strongly at a conspiracy involving the Dallas police.

When he set up the Warren Commission the PRESIDENT instructed it to "satisfy itself that the truth is known as far as it can be discovered". Implicit in these instructions was the need to satisfy others. It has not done so with sufficient conviction to dispel all doubts and all fears of plots and conspiracies.

Three main courses of action are open to the PRESIDENT. He can ignore the criticism and merely state his confidence in the commission. This would have the advantage of bolstering the commission's verdict, which also happens to be the most convenient politically. It can be argued that there is no need to invite complications. Nothing can undo the assassination. Seventy-five years from now the secret evidence will be released and historians will be able to have another go at the problem.

At the other extreme, the PRESIDENT could set up a new commission with instructions to start again at the beginning and take as much time as it needed. This would be a devastating gesture of no confidence in the CHIEF JUSTICE of the United States and all the other distinguished members of the commission. It would create a long period of extreme uncertainty and speculation.

A third possibility is to reconvene the Warren Commission with instructions to answer its critics and if necessary to re-examine some of the evidence. One danger of this would be that the commission might then be suspected of seek-

ing vindication rather than truth, but this could be partly averted by co-opting some new members. Another danger is that the critics would embroil the commission in a long and acrimonious argument. But it would cope with that.

A good deal depends on how far the critics have made their case. In particular, is there any evidence to suggest that the commission reached the wrong answer in saying that OSWALD was the sole assassin? Neither MR. LANE nor MR. EPSTEIN produces anything conclusive. MR. LANE raises some very interesting points, particularly about RUBY's relationship with the Dallas police, and the reliability of OSWALD's weapon. On the central point of the assassination, however, much of his work is extremely selective and does not survive a close check against the commission's report.

MR. EPSTEIN is more illuminating, for he has made a detailed study of how the commission worked. He has shown how many of the members did not have time to give proper attention to the investigation and how strong was the psychological pressure to reach the most reassuring conclusion. He shows the extent of disagreement among witnesses and investigators on certain crucial matters such as whether one bullet hit both PRESIDENT KENNEDY and GOVERNOR CONNALLY. If there were two bullets there must have been two assassins, for the victims were hit almost simultaneously. By sending the reader back to the report he also makes him aware how often the word "probably" occurs.

All things considered the Warren Commission did a remarkable job of work at a most difficult time under extreme pressure. It was confronted with enormous quantities of conflicting, unreliable, and often grotesque evidence. Though it admitted that on many points the whole truth could not be established, its main verdict has not been overturned. Nevertheless, it is now clear that it did cut some corners. There would be nothing shameful about going back to work and producing a supplementary report on the questions that have now been raised.

INQUEST ON THE WORLD'S MONEY

During the past year the International Monetary Fund and the Club of Ten rich countries have pursued their separate study of the world money problem. This week's annual meetings in Washington of the I.M.F. and World Bank should find these studies harnessed together. With luck, the months ahead will see produced a scheme which will satisfy both the special claims made by the rich, who will have to underwrite monetary reform, and those made by all countries who assert, quite fairly, that world money is the concern of every nation.

The American speech at the I.M.F. meeting may largely determine the ease with which the linked negotiations are undertaken. Within the recent Club of Ten discussions, the United States attitude has apparently been disappointingly

doing her best to further the cause of development aid. Finally the CHANCELLOR had to show that Britain is playing its proper part as leader of the sterling area.

None of these tasks can have been easy. Australia is one country that thinks it ought to be included in any caucus on monetary reform. As the World Bank part of this week's Washington meetings will demonstrate, development aid has become more expensive without becoming any greater in quantity. And this year Britain created an unwelcome precedent by including the sterling area within the scope of the voluntary controls on private investment abroad.

Britain has been slow to adjust her foreign policy to the practical limitations of the present day. She is taking even longer to think out the proper role for

Letters to the Editor

TASK OF B.B.C. OVERSEAS SERVICE

From Mr. António de Figueiredo

Sir.—The announcement of possible cuts in the B.B.C.'s foreign services' budget seems to run so much against logic and the current trend in international broadcasting, that one feels it could only be the culmination of a long process of neglect.

As it is known, the B.B.C., which was once the leading service in international broadcasting, has been superseded by the "Voice of America", Radio Moscow and Radio Peking; in terms of broadcasting time, Radio Cairo and others are now about to surpass the B.B.C.

Such foreign efforts are no doubt based on the realization that most of the underdeveloped world, which contains some 70 per cent of mankind, is now entering the transistor age. Leaving aside the giants, eagles and dragons of ideological broadcasting, one finds that even smaller nations, namely Sweden and Switzerland, are now expanding their foreign services, in European and other languages.

Foreigners often wonder why, faced with such competition, the Commonwealth countries, through the newly created Secretariat, do not pool financial and technical resources to make of the B.B.C. a world wide voice of the Commonwealth. Though many people in the Commonwealth may not be aware of this, the B.B.C. is already providing a good public and cultural relations service on their behalf.

But so challenging is the variety of their culture, music and achievements, that no doubt throughout Europe one would like to hear more of the somewhat remote countries like Canada, India, Australia, New Zealand, Ceylon, Nigeria, Zambia and other African nations. London is ideally placed for a combined task on this scale; conversely, the Commonwealth countries would be in a position to cooperate in a relaying system covering most of the world.

If, instead of facing up to the problems of expansion, one hears that the B.B.C. is contracting its services, one feels like asking those responsible to make a thorough examination of a challenging and complex problem, before reaching any decision.

Yours faithfully,

ANTÓNIO DE FIGUEIREDO,
19 Kempsford Gardens, S.W.5.

Pirate waves

From Mr. R. Selby

Sir,—I believe that one of the reasons given for the proposed closure of the radio pirates is that they operate outside the frequencies which were allotted to various European countries at the Geneva Convention. This is because these frequencies are full.

On September 20 the Government announced they will provide alternative "pop" music stations. May I ask how they intend to do this without themselves contravening the Geneva Convention?

Yours faithfully,

R. SELBY,
Zodiac House, Porthcurno, Penzance,
Cornwall, Sept. 22.

WAR IN VIETNAM

From Mr. Peter Kemp

Sir.—As one who spent a large part of my summer in South Vietnam, covering both the political situation and military operations all over the country, may I please ask Lord Russell (September 21) whether his War Crimes investigation commission intends to investigate the following incidents:—

First, the murderous Vietcong attack, using "Claymore" mines, on the Floating Restaurant in Saigon last June, and numerous other bomb attacks in that and other cities, in all of which they killed—and must have known they would kill—many more innocent Vietnamese men, women, and children than U.S. or South Vietnamese servicemen; secondly, the many occasions on which the Vietcong have disembowelled, bestially tortured, or buried alive Vietnamese men and women in the villages for "non-cooperation"?

I am sure the U.S. and South Vietnamese

did it with at least one part of the her to circumvent supposedly entitled rights.

Both in South states two arguments moral justification (1) that the commission the duress of accepted indemnity granted; (2) that of persons have successors in power. Any suppose constitution by be nullified by African states of the government device of retros dating of acts time they were was, I think, firm in South Africa not blacks.

There is only progress toward which is that if power with regiments shall be reached: which saying that it granted until if the refusal of give this simple, guarantee has picions in the r only of African Ye

Department of Medicine, Univ. Lumpur, Malay

MEDICAL THE

From Professor

Sir,—I am a member of the Medical Association of the Government has been salaries of clinical junior by the university as that of those in Service, and, like into financial overdrafts been increases.

In my wards National Health Service provides house physician registrars and se doctors paid duties are added and research at participation in hospital, such as coronary care university teach clinical department was delayed for they might be by doctors working by the N.H.S., that has been un

The position 1967, my lecture than N.H.S. do other faculties in pre-clinical department of immediate hospital doctors that which may amount, is particularly when B.Sc. degrees, as tions. If they and worked in or a science would have been and if they had and worked in the same hospital January, 1967. work of both groups neither.

In this time of hope that not in the obvious way

Yours faithfully,
RON
Department of
of Edinburgh

DUN

From Dr. Roger