THE WORK OF RAY MARCUS: EXCERPTS FROM *Addendum B*

by Ray Marcus
(Excerpts selected by Schotz)

I.F. Stone

I.F. Stone, author of numerous books, including *The Hidden History of the Korean War*, was most famous for a weekly he began publishing in 1953 with 5,300 subscribers and which grew to a circulation of 70,000. Although most of his important work was done in Washington, he was not viewed as part of the political or journalistic establishment. Instead of cozying up to important insiders, he based his work primarily on the study of newspapers and comments, employing his exceptionally keen and probing intellect to slice through the fog of official positions on national and international affairs so as to expose the underlying truth to his readers with characteristic brevity and clarity.

Stone was an independent leftist. Although...in earlier years he tended to minimize Moscow's misdeeds while maximizing Washington's...he was no friend of Communist dictators. He bitterly denounced the Soviet bloc after his trip to the Soviet Union in 1956 and wrote, "The worker is more exploited than in Western welfare states. This is not a good society, and it is not led by honest men."

I was a charter subscriber to the *Weekly*. Having earlier subscribed to George Seldes' *In Fact*, I found Stone's newsletter a worthy successor and looked forward to each issue. The *Weekly* undoubtedly reached a readership far more influential than its small circulation would indicate.

In the months following the assassination I eagerly awaited Stone's critical analysis. With his long demonstrated ability to demolish official falsehoods, I had little reason to doubt he would make mincemeat of the just released Warren Report, whose no-conspiracy conclusions had been leaked to the press and public for many months, and whose questionable veracity in many crucial instances had already been amply demonstrated.

Then came *I.F. Stone's Weekly* of October 5, 1964, headed "The Left and the Warren Report." It was a paean of praise for the Warren Commission and its conclusions. He said, "the Commission has done a first rate job on the level that does our country proud and is worthy of so tragic an event." He regarded the case against Lee Harvey Oswald as the lone killer as "conclusive."

[Of the Commission members, he was full of praise and said that although he had] criticized Allen W. Dulles constantly over the years...I would not impute to him or any other member of the Commission conduct so evil as to conspire with the secret services to protect the killers of a President." Of Chief Justice Earl Warren he said, "This is also to assume this man, whom the right hates for his decisions protecting Negroes and radicals, would be a party to a conspiracy to protect a cabal of rightist assassins. He said those who, by rejecting the official conclusions could believe otherwise, "belong in the booby hatch."

...I was shocked. I wrote a lengthy letter to Stone listing fifteen highly improbable separate sets of circumstances surrounding the case, *all* of which would nevertheless have to be true for the official conclusions to be true. I urged him to study the questions and reconsider his position. I received no response to my letter.

In September 1966, I was planning a trip to the east coast. From L.A. I phoned Stone at his home in Washington. I told him I had previously written to him about his position on the case and requested a meeting with him so that I could present to him some important evidence, primarily photographic. His answer was immediate, loud (very loud), and clear: *"I don't care about that asshole case!,"* he bellowed and then hung up. The thought occurred to me that had he written in his *Weekly*, instead of the actual contents of his October 5, 1964 issue, that he didn't care about the case (with or without the expletive deleted), it would at least have had the virtue of being honest, and incapable of misleading his readers, despite being an uncharacteristic position for I.F. Stone to take on so vital a matter of national interest.

Three years later, in his March 24, 1969 issue, Stone expressed his belief that the killing of Martin Luther King was the result of a conspiracy. He said, "J. Edgar Hoover, who hated and once insulted King, should be challenged to explain on what basis he announced within 24 hours of the killing that there was no conspiracy. How could he possibly have known so quickly?" He called for pressure on the White House for a complete investigation "independent of the FBI and its Chief," adding that "The only virtue of the Memphis deal (Attorney Percy Foreman's arrangement in which he persuaded James Earl Ray to plead guilty, ostensibly in order to avoid the death penalty) was that it keeps Ray alive someday to tell the full story."

I again wrote to Stone, and suggested that Hoover (and Attorney General Ramsey Clark) knew within 24 hours that there was no conspiracy just as the federal establishment "knew" within five hours following JFK's murder that Oswald was the lone assassin. I again asked him to reconsider his position on the JFK case....Again Stone did not deign to respond.

A.L. Wirin and the Liberal Establishment

Late in November 1964 a number of critics and other interested parties gathered for a few days at the home of Maggie Field in Beverly Hills. Largely as a result of Mark Lane's powerful defense brief for Lee Oswald published a year earlier in the *National Guardian*, a left-wing weekly, Maggie Field, who was already working on the case by the evening of November 22, 1963, and who in the coming months and years was to acquire an encyclopedic knowledge of the twenty-six volumes, had written to Lane, as had I. I had arranged a number of speaking dates for him in Southern California, primarily on university campuses, for late November and early December. These lectures were very well attended by large and receptive audiences. The highlight of his scheduled appearances was to be a debate with Joseph Ball, senior counsel for the Warren Commission, to be held December 4, 1964. This was to be the first time a senior WC staffer had agreed to publicly debate Lane. We all realized the importance of this event. The meetings at Maggie Field's house were for the purpose of poring over the volumes, which had just been published, in order to assist Lane in preparation for his confrontation with Ball. I had arranged for this event with a community organization, Discussions Unlimited, which regularly sponsored lectures and debates on matters of public interest and whose left-wing orientation did not prevent it from featuring prominent speakers of widely ranging viewpoints.

Although Lane and those of us working with him would have preferred to have a one-on-one debate, at almost the last minute the sponsor acceded to Ball's demand that the format be enlarged by inviting two additional prominent participants, Herman Selvin, past president of the L.A. County Bar Association, and A. L. Wirin, chief

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counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union in Los Angeles....

Tape recordings of the entire two-and-one-half-hour proceedings exist, and constitute a small but significant part of the history of this case.

On the night of December 4, the auditorium was filled early to its 2000-seat capacity, with an estimated 1000 people turned away. Lane made a clear and forceful opening against the Warren Report. Ball, in response, attempted to uphold the validity of the WC's physical and circumstantial case against Oswald. Selvin accused Lane of engaging in an old courtroom strategy: when neither the facts nor the law are on your side, attack the opposing lawyer. He then made a few remarks about physical evidence in general which clearly indicated he knew virtually nothing about the actual evidence in the case under discussion. But next to Lane's presentation, it was the statement of A.L. Wirin to which many in the audience were looking forward.

Wirin quickly indicated he was not himself conversant with the facts of the case, but that he was relying on others whom he trusted; and since they accepted the Warren Report's conclusions, so did he.

Abraham Lincoln Wirin was a highly respected—even revered—figure among liberal and progressive circles in California. His record as a strong and effective advocate for civil liberties and civil rights had gained him a national reputation. The record of the ACLU in connection with the assassination had until then been less than exemplary. On the evening of November 22, 1963, representatives of the Dallas chapter appeared at the police building to determine whether Oswald was being deprived of counsel. They were told by police officials that he had been informed of his rights and was free to seek an attorney. The ACLU representatives were discouraged from seeking to consult with Oswald himself, and failed to insist on doing so. Gregory Lee Olds, the president of the Dallas chapter, later reproached himself for not having insisted on seeing Oswald, and for so readily accepting official assurances.

Nevertheless, it was my hope and that of a significant part of the audience that A.L. Wirin by now had taken a careful look at the circumstances of the case, and was prepared to subject official behavior and the WC's conclusions to sharp scrutiny. Disillusion was not long in coming. Wirin quickly indicated he was not himself conversant with the facts of the case, but that he was relying on others whom he trusted; and since they accepted the Warren Report's conclusions, so did he.

Because his statement is an extremely important example of the kind of thinking then prevalent in left/liberal circles, I will present extensive excerpts as they appeared in the *LA Free Press*, December 11, 1964:

> I have learned that in many instances I too have had to rely upon the integrity and the good judgment of others. Now I consider Carey McWilliams and *The Nation* as an individual and a newspaper, respectively, whose judgment I respect. I do not consider Mr. McWilliams or *The Nation* a person or a newspaper which would participate in a fraud or which would condone it. Mr. McWilliams in *The Nation* expressed a view which has great weight with me.

And *The Nation* said, "...in our view, the Commission did its work well, the report is an admirable document, and the Chief Justice, his associates, and the staff merit the praise they have received." Now that carries a lot of weight with me....

> I have known all my life a man by the name of I.F. Stone. I'm sure Mr. Lane has known him. Mr. Stone is an observer in Washington and a reporter of the highest integrity. Politically, he is where I am, left of center, as is *The Nation*....and where I continue to be. And I will differ with my friends who are left of center when they are grossly mistaken in their judgments as is Mr. Lane here tonight. Now Mr. Stone, who has defended the rights of the left, of the communists, and others, to fair treatment and freedom throughout his life, who is no apologist for any rightists, said: "I believe the Commission has done a first-rate job." Very rarely does Mr. Stone ever commend a governmental agency, very rarely. And very rarely do I. But "I believe the Commission has done a first rate job on the level that does our country proud, and is so worthy of so tragic an event," he said this. I don't know if I would go so far as this but he said, "I regard the case against Lee Harvey Oswald as the lone killer of the President as conclusive." Now I am reading this to you merely to say to you this carries a lot of weight with me. Because I respect Mr. Stone and I think Mr. Stone in making that conclusion does it in terms of integrity and high honor....
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> Now let me tell you what someone is reported in the *Los Angeles Times* to have said, and whom I disagree with....I read this without being personal to Mr. Lane, I respect him. I think he's grossly mistaken, but he thinks I am probably more mistaken, so we'll pass that. But in any event let's see...If what I am about to read to you...doesn't sound pretty much like Mr. Lane: "The Warren Commission Report," according to this quote, "on Mr. Kennedy's murder does a remarkable job of crime analysis. But when it comes to telling why and who is responsible, then I feel it does not fulfill its function."
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> Indeed, this is a more conservative criticism of the Warren Commission than we heard from Mr. Lane tonight. This is the criticism of Herbert Philbrick, a stool pigeon and a rightist. And that's what the rightists are saying about the Warren Commission.

When Wirin dropped his punch line about Philbrick, who had been a long-time FBI agent in the Communist Party, there was an audible gasp of astonishment from the audience. For such a man as A.L. Wirin, given the entire history of his public life, to make such a statement at any time, and particularly in the given circumstances, was nothing short of breathtaking....Wirin went on to expound his political analysis of the assassination:

> Now, finally, the Commission says that men on the left, neither the Soviet Union nor Cuba, had anything to do with the assassination of President Kennedy. Now this statement by the Commission, a statement in which the entire Commission, including Mr. Dulles, joined, this statement, saving all of us here who are left-of-center from the venom of the rightists, this statement protects the rights of us all. Now, had the Commission been irresponsible it might have failed to say that which [would have] resulted in an intensification of the cold war, had the Commission not given this clearance, as it were, to many against whom the rightists were pointing the finger, we might have had, following the assassination of President Kennedy, a real unleashing of terror against persons on the left.
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> So, from my point of view, the Commission, instead of perpetrating a fraud upon the American people, has rendered a service of major importance to the American people, particularly by protecting their rights from hysteria and hostility, the rights of Americans who are, as I say, on the left, or left-of-center...

Lane made an eloquent response to Wirin:

> I mean no disrespect to Mr. Selvin when I say that because his reputation did not precede him to the East, I did not know him. Therefore, I can not

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pretend to be surprised at his remarks, associating anyone who dares question the Warren Commission Report with the impeachment of Earl Warren movement.

The same disclaimer can not be made for Mr. Wirin, who is known to us in New York and is known throughout the nation. And I had never thought that the day would come when I would share a platform with Mr. Wirin and hear him read a statement from Herbert Philbrick and say, "If Mr. Philbrick said that and Mr. Lane said that, what does that make Mr. Lane?"

...Now I know that it is only because of the extreme pressure of this establishment which Mr. Wirin so well emphasized in quoting Carey McWilliams, or I.F. Stone, that this unusual statement was made by Mr. Wirin. I know that he would not make it ordinarily and I know that it does not reflect his thinking generally. I have too much respect for Mr. Wirin, for the organization with which he is associated, to believe that it represents his thinking. And I know that the day will come in America, as it came in France, 12 years after the conviction of Dreyfus. The whole liberal establishment said, guilty, guilty, guilty, for 12 years. Dreyfus was not guilty when the Minister of Justice said it. Dreyfus was not guilty when the liberals in the Parliament of France said it any more than he was guilty 12 years later when the French government had the courage and the honor to reverse its position.

And Oswald is not guilty now—any more guilty than he will be when the U.S. government has the courage and the honor to state that it was wrong.

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.

In the fall of 1967, I received a call in Los Angeles from a local TV talk show host, Stan Bohrman. I had met with him several times and he had become convinced that there had been a conspiracy. He told me that Arthur Schlesinger, the noted historian and Kennedy intimate, was to be a guest on his show that afternoon, and Bohrman wanted me to meet with him. He suggested that I bring my photo materials and that he would introduce us following the program. When I arrived I was ushered into a waiting area, and there I spread out some of the Zapruder and Moorman photos [photos which reveal a gunman on the grassy knoll] on the table. Bohrman came in to say that Schlesinger was having makeup removed and would be in shortly. He was, and Bohrman introduced us, telling Schlesinger of my purpose. Schlesinger glanced at the photos and immediately paled, turned away and said, "I can't look and I won't look." That was the end of our meeting.

Five Professors

By early 1969, I felt I had completed my own research in the specific areas in which I had chosen to concentrate. I had from the beginning attempted to bring the results of my work, as well as that of others I respected, to the attention of influential individuals in media and government with the hope of getting them actively involved. At that time I was in Boston on an extended business trip, and found myself with spare time over a period of weeks between negotiations. I had believed for some time that what the movement for a reopening of the Kennedy assassination lacked was serious participation by prominent figures of the New Left (although my own overall political orientation by that time was moving gradually away from the left). I knew that a number of such individuals were teaching at Boston area universities, and I decided to try to reach them.

I contacted Noam Chomsky of MIT, Howard Zinn of Boston University, Gar Alperovitz of Harvard, and a second Harvard pro-

fessor whom I shall here call "Harold Seltzer." [Seltzer is Martin Peretz, owner of *The New Republic*. - *Probe* Eds.] In each case I requested a meeting of no more than one hour. For such occasions, I had assembled a portfolio of evidence, primarily photographic, that I could present briefly but adequately in 30-60 minutes. I believed this evidence carried sufficient conviction to impress most intelligent and open-minded people; and that should it fail to do so, I was satisfied that I had given the effort my best shot. Each of the four agreed to meet with me at his university office.

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Chomsky showed great interest in the material. We mutually agreed to a follow-up session later in the week. Then I met with Gar Alperovitz. At the end of our one-hour meeting, he said he would take an active part in the effort if Chomsky would lead it. Next was Howard Zinn. Afterwards he told me he had learned more in one hour than he had known previously about the case, but that he was concentrating his energy in the anti-war movement, and would probably not participate actively. The meeting with "Harold Seltzer" was the briefest. After 10-15 minutes, he said, "I don't give a shit who killed him—I hated the son-of-a-bitch."

When I phoned Chomsky to set up our second meeting, he asked if a colleague of his could also attend—Selwyn Bromberger, a professor of philosophy at MIT, whom Chomsky said had previously met me, and indeed he had. Eighteen months earlier, in July or August of 1967, while I was in Boston on a previous business trip, Bromberger came to the door of our rented house to solicit active support of "Vietnam Summer," the largest nationwide drive against the war yet mounted. (Martin Luther King had just a few months earlier openly joined the anti-war movement, and had promptly become the most prominent leader of the Vietnam Summer drive).

When I opened the door to Bromberger, he noticed the Kennedy photographic material with which I was working spread out on the dining room table. Curious, he asked me about it, which immediately led to a 1½-hour interruption of his door-to-door solicitation.

I welcomed Bromberger's attendance at the second Chomsky meeting, which again lasted much of an afternoon. The discussion ranged beyond evidentiary items to other aspects of the case. I told Chomsky of Alperovitz' offer to assist him if he decided to lead an effort to reopen. Chomsky indicated he was very interested, but would not decide before giving the matter much careful consideration. After the meeting, as they drove me back to my apartment, Bromberger expressed the view that, "If they are strong enough to kill the President, and strong enough to cover it up, then they are too strong to confront directly...if they feel sufficiently threatened, they may move to open totalitarian rule" ("they" was not further defined).

As we have seen from previous reactions by I.F. Stone, A.L. Wirin, and Carey McWilliams, this was similar to the fears expressed or implied by many leftist intellectuals among those who nevertheless professed faith in the Warren Report. From Bromberger, I was hearing it for the first time from someone who believed the report to be false.

I phoned Vince Salandria, of whom I had spoken to Chomsky, and asked him to send Chomsky his research and thinking. Salandria told me he was skeptical that Chomsky would actually get involved, based on his previous experiences with such left-oriented people. He reasoned that had they entertained any such intentions, they would have acted on them long before this. Nevertheless, he agree to send the material.

Upon returning to Los Angeles, I wrote a lengthy letter to Chomsky summing up my overview of the case to that time, and stating as cogently as I could the arguments for his active involvement.

He responded on April 18, 1969:

> Just a quick note. I got your long letter, and some material from Salandria. I'll read both carefully. But I won't be able to decide anything until I return from England, in mid-June. Right now things are simply too rushed, and I'm too harassed to give serious thought to anything. I'll be in touch with you then. I don't know what the odds are. I'm still open-minded (and I hope will remain so).

From the context of our previous meetings it was clear that what Chomsky "won't be able to decide" until he returned from England was not the question of whether or not there was a conspiracy—that he had given every indication of having already decided in the affirmative—but whether or not he wished to participate actively, even to assume a leading role, in the movement to reopen the case.

I never heard from him again, and Chomsky did not join such a movement. On the contrary, in recent years he has on a number of occasion gone on record attacking the critics' position and supporting the Warren Report. ⌖