

APPENDIX D

Foreign Conspiracy Chapter Draft<sup>4</sup>

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FOREIGN CONSPIRACY

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7/15/64

It is perhaps inevitable that the violent death of the President of the United States should prompt the question whether the assassination was in any manner directed or encouraged by the government of a foreign nation. When it became evident after the assassination of President Kennedy that Lee Harvey Oswald was the prime suspect, the question of foreign involvement was presented with special force. Oswald was committed to Communist ideology, had defected to the Soviet Union in 1959, lived there for approximately two and one-half years, and returned to the United States with a Russian wife in 1962. He strongly favored the rule of Fidel Castro in Cuba, openly pamphleteered in his behalf, and visited the Cuban Consulate in Mexico City only seven weeks before the assassination. Immediately after the assassination, therefore, the worldwide intelligence resources of the United States were mobilized in an effort to obtain all evidence suggesting the implication of any foreign government in the assassination of President Kennedy.

The inherent difficulties in negating the existence of any conspiracy are compounded when the subversive activities of a foreign power become the target of inquiry. Witnesses and evidence located in another country are not subject to subpoena, as they would be if

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they were located in this country. Evidence which derives from a foreign nation or from private individuals residing abroad must necessarily be appraised more skeptically than if it were derived from a domestic source. The Commission has given the closest scrutiny to any piece of evidence available when it relates, or might relate, to a foreign nation, and has tried to test all such evidence against the possibility that it might have been fabricated to mislead the Commission. In approaching the question of foreign involvement, the Commission has placed great reliance on the services and expertise of the Department of State, the Central Intelligence Agency, and other federal agencies with special competence in this field.

After investigation of all rumors and allegations, the Commission has found no credible evidence indicating that the Soviet Union, Cuba or any other foreign nation was involved in the assassination of President Kennedy. All the facts on Lee Harvey Oswald's life, literally from his birth to his death, have been examined for evidence of subversive foreign connections. All the materials found among Lee Harvey Oswald's effects or which belonged to Marina Oswald which might have been used for code or other espionage purposes have been examined by either the Federal Bureau of Investigation or the National Security Agency or both such agencies. No evidence that any of the materials were used for such purposes was discovered. The Commission's findings on the question of foreign involvement are fully set forth

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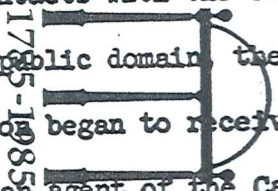
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in this section of the report. The evidence underlying these conclusions is discussed without limitation except where complete detail might jeopardize particularly sensitive sources of foreign intelligence.

POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT OF CUBA

Evidence obtained within hours of the assassination compelled a thorough investigation by the Commission of all contacts between Lee Harvey Oswald and the Government of Cuba. Oswald had publicly identified himself with the Fair Play for Cuba Committee and was an avowed admirer of the Castro government, having propagandized in its behalf during the summer of 1963 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Between September 26 and October 3, 1963, he traveled to Mexico City and there made several contacts with the Cuban Consulate. As these facts became part of the public domain, the federal investigative agencies and the Commission began to receive specific allegations charging that Oswald was an agent of the Castro government hired to assassinate President Kennedy. When evaluated in light of the strained relations between Cuba and the United States during the past few years, it was clear that these facts and allegations had to be pursued as matters of the highest priority.



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Fair Play for Cuba Activities

Investigation of Oswald's Fair Play for Cuba Committee activities reveals very limited contacts with the national headquarters and demonstrates that Oswald's "organization" of a chapter of the Committee in New Orleans was entirely fictitious.

The little correspondence between Oswald and the headquarters of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee in New York City, headed by Vincent Lee, discloses that Oswald applied for membership and was welcomed. Oswald later informed Lee that he intended to create an active organization in New Orleans and asked for advice. When Lee replied with cautious encouragement, pointing out the difficulties, Oswald wrote saying that he was going ahead anyway. Other letters between Oswald and the national office were unsolicited and often false reports by Oswald of his activities in New Orleans. We have no evidence that any money ever went from New York or anywhere else to Oswald for his use in these activities nor was any representative of the national headquarters ever sent down to guide him. He was not given a charter by the national headquarters authorizing him to establish a local chapter.

No other member of the alleged "New Orleans Chapter" of the Committee has ever been found. There is only one occasion in which anyone other than Oswald himself was ever observed taking part in these activities. This was on August 9, 1963, when Oswald and two other men passed out leaflets urging "Hands Off Cuba!" on the streets

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of New Orleans. One of the other two men was identified and questioned. He was only \_\_\_\_\_ years old at the time and testified that Oswald approached him at the Louisiana State Employment Commission and offered him \$2.00 for about an hour's work. The young man accepted the offer but later became frightened when he noticed that television cameras were being focused on him. He thereupon told Oswald he was quitting, threw the few pamphlets he had not passed out in a trash can and left. He had never seen Oswald before and never saw him again. The second individual has never been located but, according to the testimony of the younger man, he too was someone not previously connected with Oswald who had been hired for the occasion.

All of the other evidence supports the conclusion that there were no members other than Oswald in this "organization". Oswald's membership card in the "New Orleans chapter" of the committee carried the signature of "A. J. Hidell," purportedly the president of the chapter.

No such man as "A. J. Hidell" has been located nor is there any evidence that he exists. The evidence is conclusive that the name was only an alias which Oswald used as a technique of deception.

Marina testified that the name was chosen by her husband because it rhymed with that of his hero, "Fidel" (Castro). Marina herself wrote "Hidell" on the membership card at her husband's insistence.

Marina testified that Oswald's Fair Play for Cuba Committee activities were performed primarily in order to prove to

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the Cuban government that Oswald was "a friend of Cuba," in the belief that he would thereby further his chances of reaching that country and being accepted by it.

Trip to Mexico

Oswald was in Mexico from September 26, 1963 until October 3, 1963, and made several visits to the Cuban and Soviet Consulates in that city. He was very concerned that both the trip itself and his purpose in going be kept strictly secret and cautioned his wife accordingly. Marina Oswald never admitted she had prior knowledge of the trip until almost three months after the assassination, when she testified that Oswald told her that the purpose of the trip was to try to reach Cuba by way of Mexico, thereby evading the American legal prohibitions against such travel. Witnesses who spoke with Oswald while he was on a bus going to Mexico City confirm that Oswald's intent was to evade the travel ban by reaching Cuba by way of Mexico.

Oswald departed New Orleans probably about noon on September 26, but perhaps a day earlier, and crossed the Mexican border at Nuevo Laredo on September 26. After arriving in Mexico City at about 10:00 a.m. on September 27, Oswald embarked on a

\* The details of the trip are set out on pages \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ of Appendix \_\_\_\_\_.

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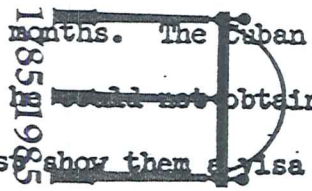
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series of visits to the Soviet and Cuban Consulates in that city, spending almost the first two days of his visit at one or another of these two places or in making arrangements to visit them. During these visits Oswald represented that his destination was the Soviet Union, not Cuba, and that he only wanted an "in-transit" visa for Cuba in order that he might visit that country on his way to the Soviet Union. He carried with him newspaper clippings, letters and various documents (some forged by himself) purporting to show that he was a "friend of Cuba." With these papers and his record of previous residence in the Soviet Union and marriage to a Soviet national, he tried to curry favor with both Consulates.

By sometime on Saturday, September 28, 1962, Oswald seems to have failed at both places. The Soviets had told him firmly that although his application for a visa was being processed, he could not expect an answer for at least four months. The Cuban Consulate had even more firmly informed him that he could not obtain an "in-transit" visa to Cuba unless he could first show them a visa to visit the USSR. Oswald made himself especially unwelcome at the Cuban Consulate by persisting in his demands that as a "friend of Cuba" he ought to be given a visa. This resulted in a sharp argument with the Consul, Eusebio Asque. Oswald was left with few alternatives at this point except to recontact the Soviet Consulate occasionally, in the faint hope that they might



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APPENDIX F

APPENDIX F





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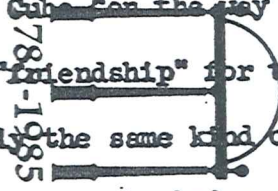
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have received an early answer on his request for a visa. From Sunday through Wednesday morning, October 2, when he left Mexico City on a bus bound for the United States, Oswald was generally involved in making his travel arrangements, sight-seeing, and checking a few more times with the Soviet Consulate to find out if something had happened on his visa application. Marina testified that when she first saw him after his return to the United States he was discouraged and convinced that he would never reach Cuba.

When questioned on the discrepancy between his telling her that he wanted to get to Cuba and his telling the Cuban and Russian Consulates that his ultimate destination was Russia, Marina answered that his statements to the Consulate representatives were deceptions, and she added that he had told her after he returned about his attempt to fool the officials in Mexico City. Apparently, his plan was

that if he could reach Cuba for the way to Russia he would simply stop there, prove his "friendship" for the Castro regime and then go through substantially the same kind of defection and shift of allegiance to a foreign power he had performed in Moscow in 1959.

Marina's testimony on this point, however, is not clear. The rough outlines of Oswald's activities in Mexico, particularly the nature and extent of his contacts at the Cuban Consulate, became apparent very early in the investigation. The most important source of information relating to his business at



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the Cuban Consulate is Silvia Tirada de Duran, a Mexican national employed in the visa section at the Consulate, who was questioned intensively by Mexican authorities on two occasions soon after the assassination. The information she gave has been set forth elsewhere in this report, on pages \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ of Appendix \_\_\_\_\_. The records of the Mexican Immigration Service were immediately searched for data on Oswald's entry and departure. With this basic information as a starting point, the Government of Mexico immediately initiated a thorough investigation to uncover as much information on Oswald's trip as possible. Representatives of United States agencies worked in close liaison with the Mexican law-enforcement authorities. Every conceivable contact Oswald may have made in Mexico--ranging from the passengers on the buses he took going and coming to subversive groups operating in that country--was investigated.

The end result of this investigative effort has been to corroborate the statements of Senora Duran and to document the essentials of Oswald's activities in Mexico as outlined above. Senora Duran is about 25 years of age, apparently well educated and a native Mexico City. She has been married to Senor Horacio Duran Navarro, a forty year old industrial designer, since 1958 and has a young child. Both Durans have been active in far left-wing political affairs in Mexico, believe in Marxist ideology, and sympathize with the government of Fidel Castro. Both Durans deny

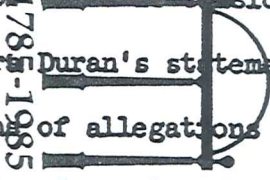
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being members of the Communist Party or otherwise connected with it, but there have been allegations that both are members nevertheless. Despite her place of employment and her identification with an ideology that is opposed to the interests of the United States, the Commission has concluded that her statements to the Mexican authorities were complete and accurate to the best of her knowledge. The Commission has evidence that Senora Duran did not dislike President Kennedy and was genuinely upset at the news of his assassination. The Cuban government has asked to document and confirm the essentials of Silvia Duran's testimony, and its response has been included in its entirety in this Report. The information supplied concerning Oswald's date of birth, American passport number, and activities and statements at the Consulate is consistent with other information available to the Commission. Most importantly, confidential sources available to the United States, the reliability of which is considered extremely high, have confirmed the truth of Senora Duran's statements.

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Literally dozens of allegations of a conspiratorial contact between Lee Harvey Oswald and agents of the Cuban government have been investigated by the Commission. Among the claims made were allegations that Oswald had made a previous trip to Mexico City in early September to receive money and orders for the assassination, that he had been flown to a secret airfield somewhere in or near the Yucatan Peninsula, that he had made a secret flight from Mexico City to Havana, that he had made contact with an American Communist in Mexico City who had something



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to do with the assassination, and that Oswald assassinated the President at the direction of a particular Cuban agent who made contact with him in the United States and paid him \$70,000. 145

A source in diplomatic circles claimed that the Chinese Communists had been involved. 146 Some information was obtained linking the assassination to anti-Castro groups who allegedly were engaged in obtaining illicit firearms in the United States, one such claim being that these groups killed the President as part of a bargain with some right-wing organizations who would then supply them with firearms as payment. 151 Other information placed Oswald in Miami, Florida, at various times, allegedly in pro-Cuban activities there. 152

Another man living in Mexico claimed to have known Oswald and a third person and to have been a participant in their joint plot to kill the President. 153 Oswald was also alleged to have met with the Cuban Ambassador in a Mexico City restaurant, driven off with him in his car for a private talk, and there been paid money. 155 Without exception, the rumors and allegations of a direct conspiratorial contact were shown to be the product of mistaken identification or otherwise without any factual basis.

Illustrative of the attention given to the most serious allegations is the case of "A", a young South American secret agent seeking to penetrate the Castro forces in Cuba, who approached United States authorities in Mexico shortly after the assassination and

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declared that he saw Lee Harvey Oswald receiving \$6,500 to kill the President. Among other details, "A" said that at about noon on September 10, waiting to conduct some business at the Consulate, he saw a group of three persons conversing in a patio a few feet away. One was a tall, thin Negro with reddish hair, obviously dyed, who spoke rapidly in both Spanish and English, and another was a man he said was Lee Harvey Oswald. A tall Cuban joined the group momentarily and passed some currency to the Negro. The Negro then allegedly said to Oswald in English, "I want to kill the man." Oswald replied, "You're not man enough, I can do it." The Negro then said in Spanish, "I can't go with you, I have a lot to do." Oswald replied, "People are waiting for me back there." The Negro then gave Oswald \$6,500 in large-denomination American bills, saying, "This isn't much." "A" said that he telephoned the American Embassy in Mexico City several times prior to the assassination in an attempt to report his belief that someone important in the United States was to be killed, but was finally told by someone at the Embassy to stop wasting his time.

"A" and his allegations were immediately subjected to intensive investigation. His employment as an agent for a South American country was confirmed, although his superiors had no knowledge of his presence in Mexico or any assignment to penetrate the Cuban

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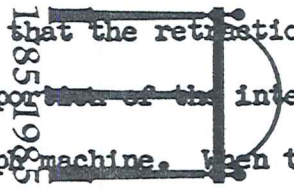
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Government. Four days after "A" first appeared our government was informed by the Mexican authorities that "A" had admitted in writing that his whole narrative about Oswald was false. He said that he had never seen Oswald any place, and that he had not seen anybody paid money in the Cuban Embassy. He also admitted that he never tried to telephone the American Embassy in September and that his first contact was after the assassination. "A" said that his motive in telling the fabrication was to help get himself admitted to the United States so that he could there participate in a station against Fidel Castro. He said he hated Castro and hoped that the story he made up would be believed and would cause the United States to "take action" against Castro.

Still later, under reinterrogation by American authorities "A" claimed that he had been pressured into retracting his statement by the Mexican police and that the retraction, rather than his first statement, was false. A portion of the interrogation was carried on with the use of a polygraph machine. When told that the machine indicated that he was probably lying, "A" said words to the effect that "I know such machines are accurate, and, therefore, I suppose I must be mistaken." Investigation in the meantime had disclosed that the Embassy extension number "A" said he had called would not have given him the person he said he spoke to, and that no one at

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by an unauthorized person or officer--had any recollection of his call. In addition, it became evident as the investigation continued that Oswald spoke little, if any, Spanish. That he could have carried on the alleged conversation with the redheaded Negro in the Cuban Embassy, therefore, was doubtful. "A" now said that he was uncertain as to the date when he saw "someone who looked like Oswald" at the Cuban Embassy, and upon re-thinking the matter, he now thought it was on a Tuesday, September 17, rather than September 18. On September 17, however, Oswald appeared at the Louisiana State Unemployment Commission in New Orleans and also cashed a check from the Texas Employment Commission at the Winn-Dixie Store No. 1425 in New Orleans. On the basis of the polygraph results and the retractions made by "A" when he saw the results, and on the basis of discrepancies which appeared in his story, it was concluded that "A" was lying.

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the Embassy-clerks, secretaries, or officers--had any recollection of his call. In addition, it became evident as the investigation continued that Oswald spoke little, if any, Spanish. That he could have carried on the alleged conversation with the redheaded Negro in the Cuban Embassy, therefore, was doubtful. "A" now said that he was uncertain as to the date when he saw "someone who looked like Oswald" at the Cuban Embassy, and upon re-thinking the matter, he now thought it was on a Tuesday, September 17, rather than September 18. On September 17, however, Oswald appeared at the Louisiana State Unemployment Commission in New Orleans and also cashed a check from the Texas Employment Commission at the Winn-Dixie Store No. 1425 in New Orleans. On the basis of the polygraph results and the retractions made by "A" when he saw the results, and on the basis of discrepancies which appeared in his story, it was concluded that "A" was lying.

After investigating all specific allegations of a conspiratorial liaison between Oswald and the Government of Cuba during Oswald's visit to Mexico City, the Commission has discovered no evidence indicating that Oswald was an agent of the Cuban Government. The evidence as to what Oswald did in Mexico which has been obtained from customary sources is significant, although of course it cannot be considered conclusive. The picture that emerges from this evidence is that Oswald was almost always alone when he was in Mexico City and

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in his travels to and from the United States, that he traveled and lived quite frugally, spoke no Spanish, lived and ate at legitimate establishments with no reputation as meeting places for Cubans or for subversive persons, and had only one purpose in mind--to somehow convince the Cuban Consul that he should be permitted to travel to Cuba. Oswald had more than enough cash from known sources to account for all the expenses connected with the Mexican trip.\*

The most significant evidence relied on by the Commission is, of course, the information obtained from highly secret and reliable sources which corroborates the statements of Senora Duran. According to these sources, the Cuban Government had nothing to do with Lee Harvey Oswald and had never heard of him until he appeared at its Embassy in Mexico City. The Commission has some confirming information, whose reliability cannot be accurately assessed, to the effect that Premier Castro after the assassination called in two high Cuban officials who had been on diplomatic duty in Russia during Oswald's residence there and asked them to give him any information they had on Oswald.

All this evidence tends to support the testimony of Secretary of State Rusk that after the assassination "there was very considerable concern in Cuba as to whether they would be held responsible and what the effect of that might be on their own position and their own safety."

\* See Appendix \_\_\_\_\_ at pp. \_\_\_\_\_.



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POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT OF THE SOVIET UNION

Unlike the preceding discussion relating to the possibility of Cuban involvement, there have been no allegations that representatives of the Soviet Union at a specific time and place encouraged or hired Oswald to kill President Kennedy. To the contrary, the rumors and allegations that Oswald was an agent of the Soviets have been predicated entirely on the facts which are part of the public record, particularly his commitment to Marxist ideology, his defection to the Soviet Union in 1959, his residence there until June of 1962, and his eventual return to the United States with a Russian wife. By investigating these matters the Commission does not thereby express the view that the rulers of the Soviet Union may have believed that their political interests would be advanced by the assassination of President Kennedy. On this question the Commission is inclined to defer to the expert opinion of the Secretary of State, who testified as follows before the Commission on June 10, 1964:

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"I have seen no evidence that would indicate to me that the Soviet Union considered that it had an interest in the removal of President Kennedy or that it was in any way involved in the removal of President Kennedy.

\* \* \*

"I have not seen or heard of any scrap of evidence indicating that the Soviet Union had any desire to eliminate President Kennedy nor in any way participated in any such event.

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Now, standing back and trying to look at that question objectively despite the ideological differences between our two great systems, I can't see how it could be to the interest of the Soviet Union to make any such effort.

\* \*

I do think that the Soviet Union, again objectively considered, has an interest in the correctness of state relations. This would be particularly true among the great powers, with which the major interests of the Soviet Union are directly engaged.

\* \*

. . . I think that although there are grave differences between the Communist world and the free world, between the Soviet Union and other major powers, that even from their point of view there needs to be some shape and form of international relations, that it is not in their interest to have this world structure dissolve into complete anarchy, that great states and particularly nuclear powers have to be in a position to deal with each other, to transact business with each other, to try to meet problems with each other, and that requires the maintenance of correct relations and access to the leadership on all sides.

I think also that although there had been grave differences between Chairman Khrushchev and President Kennedy, I think there were evidences of a certain mutual respect that had developed over some of the experiences, both good and bad, through which these two men had lived.

I think both of them were aware of the fact that any chairman of the Soviet Union, and any President of the United States, necessarily bear somewhat special responsibility for the general peace of the world. Indeed without exaggeration, one could almost say the existence of the northern hemisphere in this nuclear age.

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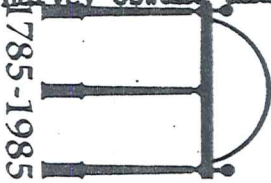
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"that it would be an act of rashness and madness for Soviet leaders to undertake such an action as an action policy. Because everything would have been put in jeopardy or at stake in connection with such an act.

"It has not been our impression that madness has characterized the actions of the Soviet leadership in recent years."

As the Secretary of State emphasized throughout his testimony however, the assignment of this commission is to pursue all the evidence notwithstanding our necessarily imprecise assessment of Soviet intentions or interests. In conducting such an investigation the Commission's inquiry has focused with microscopic detail on the known facts of Oswald's defection, residence in the Soviet Union, and return to the United States. At each step of the way the Commission has sought to determine whether irregularities or other grounds for suspicion exist which might suggest that the public record of the relationship between Lee Harvey Oswald and the Soviet Union is not the complete record.



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The Circumstances of Oswald's Entry into the Soviet Union

1. Possible Soviet Contacts Prior to Defection

Oswald left New Orleans, Louisiana, for Europe on September 20, 1959, having been honorably discharged from the Marine Corps on September 11, 1959. Instead of going to Switzerland to attend the Albert Schweitzer College, to which he had applied on March 19, 1959, while in the Marines, he went directly to Helsinki, Finland, by way of LeHavre, France, and London, England, arriving at Helsinki on October 10, 1959. Four days later, on October 14, 1959, he was issued Soviet Tourist Visa No. 403339, good for one six-day visit in the Soviet Union. Oswald entered the Soviet Union at the Vainikkala crossing point enroute to Moscow by train on October 15, 1959.

Although the evidence is inconclusive as to the factors which motivated Oswald to defect, there is no indication that he was prompted to do so by agents of the Soviet Union. The only means of dating his intention to defect any earlier than March 19, 1959, are his own statements after he arrived in Moscow, which were that he had been planning his defection for two years. This suggests that the decision was made in 1957 or 1958, when he was stationed abroad in the Philippines, Japan and Formosa. George deMohrenschildt, an acquaintance of Oswald's,

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has testified that Oswald once told him that he had first got the idea of defecting when he was in Japan. Oswald's words, as remembered by DeMehrenschildt, were, "I met some Communists in Japan and they got me excited and interested and that was one of my inducements in going to Soviet Russia, to see what goes on there." DeMehrenschildt's evidence on this point is at variance with Oswald's statements to other people in the United States and, in particular, to two American newspaper reporters in Moscow shortly after his defection in 1959. With both of these reporters he insisted that he had "never met a Communist" and that the intent to defect was his own and derived entirely from his reading and thinking. There is no way of knowing which of Oswald's statements represented the true state of affairs.

There is no evidence that Oswald received outside assistance in financing his trip to the Soviet Union. After he arrived in Moscow Oswald told newspaper correspondent, Aline Mosby, that he had saved \$1500 out of his Marine Corps salary to finance his defection. His mother in the Spring of 1960 told a representative of the Federal Bureau of Investigation that he had saved about \$1600. Mrs. Oswald testified before the Commission, however, that she has no independent recollection of \$1600 or any other specific figure. As a private first class Oswald could never have earned more than about \$100 per month for the two years and ten months he served in the Corps, and

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he received slightly more than \$130 mustering-out pay. Oswald's claim that he had saved \$1500 may have contained a large element of "puffing". The ticket on the ship he took from New Orleans to LeHavre, France, cost \$220.75, he probably purchased no more than about \$180 worth of Russian "tourist vouchers" in Helsinki, Finland, and he apparently did not pay his hotel bill in Moscow after the first few days of his stay. Certainly he could have made the entire trip on substantially less than \$1000. Whether the proper figure is \$600 or something less, the fact remains that it could have been accumulated by Oswald from his known pay as a Marine. Evidence of Oswald's living habits and attitudes towards money which has been obtained since the assassination indicates that he could be extraordinarily frugal when he had a reason to be. Moreover, it is clear that he was strongly motivated to go to the Soviet Union.

There is no evidence indicating that Oswald must have taken lessons from a language expert while he was overseas with the Marines, or that he in any other manner received language instruction before he went to Russia. While in Atsugi, Japan, Oswald studied the Russian language, occasionally with some help from an officer in his unit who was interested in Russian and used to "talk about it" with Oswald occasionally. He took the Army "S.A.T." test in Russian in January 1959 and rated "Poor." By the

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time he reached the Soviet Union in October of the same year he could barely speak the language, probably just well enough to get along in restaurants and similar places. During the long period in Moscow while he was awaiting the decision of the Soviet Government on whether to accept him, his Diary records that he forced himself to practice his Russian eight hours a day. After he was sent to Minsk in early January 1960 he took lessons from an interpreter assigned to him for the purpose by the government. Marina Oswald says that by the time she met him in March 1961 he spoke the language well enough that she at first thought he was from one of the Baltic areas of her country, because of his accent. She says that his only defects were that his grammar was sometimes incorrect and that his writing was never good.

The possibility that Oswald might have been recruited by Soviet agents in Japan with a view toward defection and eventual return to the United States must be considered as quite unlikely in light of the circumstances of Oswald's "hardship" discharge from the Marine Corps. The facts of Oswald's "hardship" discharge are these:

In December 1958 his mother, who was a widow and self-supporting, had an accident at work, which she claimed incapacitated her for gainful employment. The insurance company physicians concluded, however, that her incapacitating symptoms had not been

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caused by the accident, and her insurance benefits were therefore immediately terminated. This left her with no means of support and some high medical bills to pay. She turned to her son for help. He first worked through his commanding officer and the Red Cross and soon got her a monthly allotment, paid for partly out of his own salary, of about \$130. Despite her protests that the monthly allotment she was receiving would be sufficient, Oswald applied for a "hardship" discharge on the grounds that he ought to return home to take care of her. The Marine Corps granted him his discharge on September 11, 1959, about four weeks after he applied for it, and he thereby got out of the service about three months before his enlistment would have terminated. Once the Marines released him, he went directly home, left \$100 with his mother, told her he was going to become a merchant seaman or get into the import and export business in New Orleans and send her money, and then deserted her to depart for the Soviet Union.

Under the circumstances, Oswald undoubtedly obtained the discharge fraudulently. If the Soviets were in fact coaching him surreptitiously at this time for some ulterior purpose, it is most improbable that they would have advised him to obtain a discharge under such circumstances merely in order to gain three months' time which could not have been particularly valuable to anyone. The fraudulent discharge not only got Oswald in deep trouble with the

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Marine Corps--he eventually received a dishonorable discharge from the Reserve --but what was also obviously morally offensive and potentially very unpopular was that he deserted his own mother when she was sick, unemployed and badly in need of financial help. Both actions could only detract from whatever usefulness he might have for the Soviets after his defection, either as a propagandist or as a potential secret agent.

2. Oswald's Obtaining a Visa in Helsinki

Oswald arrived in Helsinki on October 10, 1959, probably too late in the evening to have applied for a visa at the Russian Consulate in that city. The rapidity with which he made connections throughout his entire trip shows that he wasted no time in reaching his goal, Moscow, and he therefore probably applied for a visa as early as possible on Monday October 12. His visa was issued on October 14, good for one six-day visit in the USSR. He left Helsinki on a train bound for Moscow on the 15th.

The Department of State has advised the Commission that in 1959 it usually took American tourists in Helsinki a week or two to obtain a visa. Other information supplied by the Department indicates that the normal waiting period for the past five years has been a week or less and that it has always varied frequently

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and widely, with one reliably confirmed instance in 1963 of a visa being routinely issued in less than 24 hours. The Central Intelligence Agency has informed the Commission . . .

The information obtained from the Department of State and the Central Intelligence Agency suggests that Oswald's two-day wait for a visa was shorter than usual but not beyond the range of normality. It is impossible to do more than speculate about the significance of this fact. If the prompt issuance of Oswald's visa was not merely the result of a chance variation in the normal procedures, it might mean only that Oswald was unusually urgent in his demands or requests that his visa be issued promptly. Or Oswald might have made known to the Soviet Embassy in Helsinki his strong sympathy with the Communist cause and his intention to defect, which most probably would have expedited his application.

Oswald himself claimed that he said nothing out of the ordinary to the Russian Consulate in Helsinki; he told the officials at the American Embassy in Moscow on October 31, when he appeared there in an attempt to renounce his citizenship, that he had said nothing to the Russians about defecting until he arrived in Moscow. In the absence of any more probative evidence, the Commission finds nothing in the circumstances of Oswald's entry into the Soviet Union which indicates that he was at the time, and continued to be, an agent of the USSR.

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Circumstances of Oswald's Defection and Admission to Residence in the USSR

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Almost three months elapsed from the time when Lee Harvey Oswald arrived in Moscow until he left that city to take up residence in Minsk. The Commission has attempted to reconstruct the events of those months, but much confusion exists. Oswald's Historic Diary, even assuming that he intended it to be a basically truthful record, is not a good guide to the details of what occurred. Most of the Diary entries for this period must have been filled in at a later time, possibly much later, and Oswald seems not to have worried about the accuracy of dates and even names. The most reliable information comes from the records of the American Embassy in Moscow, the testimony of some of the officials there, and the notes of two newspaper reporters, Miss Aline Cosby and Miss Priscilla Johnson, who interviewed Oswald during this period. Oswald's brother and mother, who at this time were both residing in Texas, were also relied upon for some relatively minor information. Other information has been provided by the Soviet Union, but in no instance does the Commission rest its conclusion solely on such material or any of Oswald's writing.

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33 All such material, of course, might have been fabricated to mislead the Commission. At the present time, espionage, counter-espionage, and most other highly secret activities for the Soviet Union are handled by the Committee for State Security, better known by its initials, "KGB".

(Continued)

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Some light on what was probably happening behind the scenes has been shed by the Central Intelligence Agency's data on the normal practices and procedures of the Russian authorities in handling American defectors.

The following is a capsule outline of the major events as the Commission believes they occurred:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Event</u>
October 16, 1959	Oswald arrived in Moscow from Helsinki. On this same day he told his tourist guide, Rima Shirokova, that he wanted to become a Russian citizen. He did not notify the American Embassy in Moscow of his arrival.
October 22, 1959	When told by the Soviet officials that he could not become a citizen and must leave Moscow within two hours, Oswald slashed his wrist in an attempt to commit suicide.

33 (Continued) The KGB was formerly a part of the Ministry for Internal Affairs (MVD), which during the Stalin era and shortly thereafter was directed by Levrenti Beria. After the death of Stalin, Beria tried to make himself the new dictator of the Soviet State but was thwarted in the attempt and finally put to death. Probably in reaction to his attempt to use the MVD and the KGB as a means to seize total power, the two organizations were separated and reorganized. The MVD since 1960 has been eliminated, at least technically, as a national agency, and its functions divided among the republics of the Soviet Union. These functions are generally the administration of Soviet industry and other internal affairs. The KGB was removed from the jurisdiction of any single individual and placed under the direction of a committee made up of men serving in the Presidium, the highest legislative and governing group in the Soviet State. Throughout this section of the report the Soviet secret police and Soviet espionage and counter-espionage forces will be referred to as the "KGB." Oswald himself used the term "MVD" when he meant the secret police. This reference will therefore be used occasionally in the report with the meaning Oswald gave it, when we are quoting him. Finally, the Commission itself will make a few references to the MVD in its correct sense, that is, as the ministry responsible for internal administration of the Soviet Union.

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Date

October 22-29, 1959

Oswald was confined to the Botkinskaya Hospital in Moscow and treated for a self-inflicted wound on the left wrist.

October 31, 1959

Oswald appeared at the American Embassy in Moscow and announced that he wanted to give up his American citizenship and become a citizen of Soviet Russia. He was interviewed and then told to come back later if he wanted to carry out a formal renunciation of citizenship.

November 3, 1959

Oswald never reappeared, but he wrote the Embassy a letter on this date again stating that he wanted to renounce his American citizenship.

November 13, 1959 (or slightly earlier)

Oswald was interviewed by Miss Aline Mosby of United Press International.

November 17, 1959

Oswald was interviewed by Miss Priscilla Johnson of the North American Newspaper Alliance on November 15. She also saw him briefly two days later.

January 4, 1960

Oswald was finally informed by the Soviet authorities that he could live indefinitely in Russia and that he had been assigned to Minsk. He was also told that his application for citizenship had not been granted but that it might be sometime in the future.

After examination of these events the Commission has concluded that there is no evidence that Oswald at this time established any relationship with the Soviet Union beyond what is apparent. The circumstances of the alleged "suicide" attempt indicate that Oswald was in fact discouraged by his reception by the Soviet authorities, and certain tend to refute any suspicions that the "suicide" was

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a "cover" to conceal the fact that he was being indoctrinated by the Soviet prior to his appearance at the American Embassy. Oswald's appearance and representations at the Embassy, when he sought to expatriate himself, are completely consistent with his character and do not reveal any unusual "coaching" by Soviet authorities. Finally, the timing and circumstances of Oswald's admission to residence in the USSR are not unusual in any regard which suggests that Oswald at the time was a secret agent.

1. The "Suicide" Attempt

Although it can never be determined conclusively whether Oswald intended to commit suicide, there is direct evidence which indicates that the attempt was authentic. The autopsy performed on Oswald after his death showed that he in fact did have a scar on his left wrist and that it was of the kind which could have been caused by a suicide attempt. The medical records from the Botkinskaya Hospital in Moscow, furnished by the Soviet Government to the Commission, reveal that he was treated there for a self-inflicted wound on the left wrist. The information contained in these records is completely consistent with the facts disclosed by the autopsy examination of Oswald's wrist.

Oswald's character does not seem inconsistent with a suicide or feigned suicide attempt. Marina Oswald has testified to the Commission that she observed such a scar on her husband and asked him about it.

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question made him "very angry," she says, and he avoided giving her a reply. He never told her that he had attempted suicide. Oswald's brother Robert says that he never observed the star and that his brother never mentioned anything about suicide to him. Lee Oswald at the age of 20 was a tense, overly dramatic, confused person who might think that his entire life was hopeless when his effort to ally himself with the Communist cause was unsuccessful. Oswald's character is also consistent with keeping the suicide attempt secret. Many witnesses who testified to the Commission have observed that he was not "open" or trusting person, had tendencies toward arrogance, and was not the kind of man who would readily admit weaknesses. Once he decided to return to the United States, Oswald had an additional reason to keep the attempt secret, so that no one would realize how naively and totally-committed to the Soviet Union he had once been. In sum, the few independent facts we have about the suicide and the observations of Oswald's character all point towards the fact that it could have been authentic.

It is difficult to fit the facts of the suicide attempt into a coherent pattern of Soviet-inspired conduct, designed to provide "cover" for some sort of brainwashing or indoctrination procedure.

Contrary to popular belief, the Soviet techniques in brainwashing, i.e., manipulation of thought and conduct, are probably not more advanced than those known to American scientists.

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The "fact" that Oswald attempted to commit suicide was not disclosed until four years later, when the Historic Diary was found among his effects after the assassination. If the KGB made up the incident in order to divert suspicion from their intensive coaching of Oswald, it would seem that he would have been instructed to give at least some hint to the Embassy officials on October 31 that he had been confined in a hospital for a week or in some manner to let them know that the sixteen days since he had come to Moscow had been spent doing something other than talking with Soviet officials. There is no point in making up an alibi and then not using it. But the officials at the Embassy who saw Oswald received not the slightest hint that he had ever been given medical treatment of any kind. Moreover, if the KGB intended to use the alleged suicide attempt to explain why Oswald took so long to appear at the American Embassy, it would have instructed Oswald to "confide" in his brother or some other close relation, in order to create more "evidence" that the suicide attempt was real, and to increase the chances that it would ultimately become known to American counter-intelligence.

2. Oswald's Conduct at the American Embassy

Oswald appeared at the American Embassy on October 31, after his release from the Botkinska Hospital. This was the first indication that the American Government had that Oswald was in Russia. He had no

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reported to the Consulate in Moscow when he arrived as a tourist ordinarily would.

Upon his arrival he was taken to the office of Richard E. Snyder, then Second Secretary of the Embassy. He handed his passport to Snyder and said that he wanted to renounce his American citizenship. The passport had black ink smeared over the lines which should have carried his home address in the United States, rendering this portion of the document unreadable. He also gave Snyder a handwritten statement that declared that he wished to "dissolve" his American citizenship and affirm his allegiance to the Soviet Union. The FBI has confirmed that this statement is in Oswald's handwriting, and Snyder has testified that the letter's phrases are consistent with the way Oswald talked and conducted himself during the October 31 interview and in 1961, when Snyder dealt with him again. Oswald informed Snyder that

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he had been a radar operator in the Marine Corps and that he had informed a Soviet official that he would tell the Soviets any information concerning the Marine Corps and his specialty which he possessed. He intimated that he might know something of special interest. Before the interview was over, Snyder had persuaded Oswald to disclose his home address in Fort Worth, Texas, and the name of his mother there, despite the fact that the black ink on the passport hid these facts, by telling him that he could not effect an expatriation unless he gave this information. Oswald was told that he would have to file a formal

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renunciation if he wanted to give up his citizenship. This he never did, although in a letter dated November 3, 1959 which he subsequently wrote to the Embassy he again requested that his American citizenship be revoked and protested Snyder's refusal to accept his attempt to renounce on October 10.

In light of Oswald's superficial conversance with the usual Communist ideological arguments and attitudes, Snyder, another Embassy official, John A. McVickar, and Priscilla Johnson, newspaper reporter, all speculated at the time that Oswald might have received some ideological instruction from Soviet authorities. Oswald's strong ideological motivation and his familiarity with the "Communist line" arguments and attitudes, however, are perhaps as easily explainable as the result of his avid and long-practiced reading habits. Oswald's manner of arguing Communist logic, moreover, is more consistent with his having read Communist writings on his own than with his having been coached. Oswald's arguments were full of stereotypes and sounded, in general, more like someone with limited formal education who read Communist literature without guidance or discrimination than a man who was carefully instructed on what he should say. A teacher from the KGB would probably have tried to instill a more coherent and persuasive set of statements into his pupil.

\* Further details of Oswald's effort to expatriate himself are on pages \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ of Appendix \_\_\_\_\_.

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Oswald's knowledge of the rules of renunciation of citizenship, observed by both Embassy officials, could readily have been derived from his own reading and study. Some indication that this was the case is suggested by comparing the formal note Oswald handed Snyder and his letter of November 3 with the provisions of Section 39(a) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, the statute which sets out the procedures for giving up one's citizenship. The phrases Oswald chose both in the letter and the note read like an uneducated person's version of what the statute provided. Oswald seemed to be trying to use three out of the four ways set out in the statute to surrender his citizenship. As it turned out, he was not successful with any of them.

The most persuasive evidence that Oswald's conduct was not carefully coached by Soviet agents are some of his statements to American representatives. The single statement which probably caused him the most future trouble was his declaration that he had already volunteered to a Soviet official that he would, if asked, tell the Soviet Government all that he knew about his job in radar as a Marine. If the Russians wanted Oswald to be careful not to expatriate himself, so that he could eventually return to the United States as an agent, certainly they would not have advised him to make statement like this. Even if it did not block his

\* The comparison has been carried out in detail on pages \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_ of Appendix \_\_\_\_\_.

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reentry into America, it would certainly never after be used against him to lessen his effectiveness as a pro-Communist agitator or espionage agent.

In addition, the hypothesis that Oswald may have been coached in detail by Soviet agents fails to explain why he would ever have been instructed to come so dangerously close to the expatriation line.

Richard Snyder, who interviewed Oswald on October 31 testified that he had every reason to believe that Oswald, if he had let him would have carried through a formal--and therefore effective--renunciation of his American citizenship immediately. If Snyder's

assessment of Oswald's intentions is accurate, it completely refutes the suggestion that Oswald was being coached not to renounce his citizenship. Certainly, as a defector Oswald could have considerable propaganda value without necessity of nearly expatriating himself.

In fact, Oswald's "on again, off again" actions in regard to renouncing his citizenship may have detracted from his propaganda impact. His vacillation on this issue was so obvious that it was observed by one of the reporters, Priscilla Johnson.

### 3. Oswald's Acceptance for Residence by the Soviet Union

The Commission has carefully considered the possibility that Oswald might have been accepted for permanent residence in the Soviet Union and sent to Minsk unduly soon after he arrived, either because

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he had long been expected and his acceptance was a foregone conclusion or because the KGB considered it unwise to risk leaving him too long in Moscow where he might redefect or otherwise reveal its secret procedures. According to Oswald's Historic Diary and the documents furnished to the Commission by the Soviet Government, Oswald was not told that he had been accepted as a resident of the Soviet Union until about January 4, 1960. A close examination of all the available evidence leads to the conclusion that the Russians handled Oswald no differently than they handled other American defectors.

The agency with primary responsibility for examining all defectors arriving in Russia is the KGB, and Oswald was presumably brought to its attention as soon as he made known his intention to defect. In 1959, at least, virtually all Intourist guides were KGB agents or informants, and we can assume that this was the case with Oswald's guide, Rima Shirikova. As Oswald's Historic Diary notes, she informed her superiors of his desire to defect and helped him draft his letter to the Supreme Soviet on October 13 asking for Soviet citizenship. The KGB likely made use of the time provided by Oswald's waiting in Moscow to learn as much as they could about him through his guide and through virtually everyone else at the Hotel Berlin where he was staying, in an attempt to assess his possible usefulness to the Soviet Union as a defector.

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is certain that Oswald was still in Moscow at least until November 17, when he was seen for the last time by Priscilla Johnson. He had told her two days earlier that he had been advised by a Soviet official that a decision had already been made that he could remain indefinitely in the Soviet Union. Oswald had told Aline Mosby the same thing when she interviewed him about a week earlier. However, his own Diary entry for this period relates that he had been informed that he could remain in the Soviet Union "until some solution is found with what to do with me." The "solution" of course, could have been to reject him and send him back to the United States, and Oswald himself must have realized that his promise that he could stay which was qualified in this manner was really no promise at all. Oswald always liked to appear important and successful, so it seems more consistent with his character to believe the more pessimistic assessment in his Diary rather than his public statements to the reporters. In letters written to his mother and brother apparently from Moscow as late as the latter part of December, Oswald said that he was then--more than a month after he saw Johnson and Mosby--about to be accepted and would be leaving Moscow soon. These letters have been examined and give every indication of being authentic, but the Commission cannot quite prove that they are, and the late December date must be regarded only as "probable."

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Therefore, the evidence is solid that Oswald waited at least a month (from October 16 to November 17), it is probable that he waited over two months (from October 16 to late December) and he may have waited almost three months (from October 16 until January 4) before being accepted for permanent residence in Russia. Asked to comment upon the length of this period, the Central Intelligence Agency has advised the Commission as follows:

Oswald said that he asked for Soviet citizenship on 16 October 1959. According to his diary, he received word a month later that he could stay in the USSR pending disposition of his request, but it was another month and a half before he was given his stateless passport.

When compared to five other defector cases, this procedure seems unexceptional. Two defectors from US Army intelligence units in West Germany appear to have been given citizenship immediately, but both had prior KGB connections and fled as a result of Army security checks. Of the other three cases, one was accepted after not more than five weeks and given a stateless passport apparently at about the same time. The second was immediately given permission to stay for a while and his subsequent request for citizenship was granted three months later. The third was allowed to stay after he made his citizenship request, but almost two months passed before he was told that he had been accepted. Although the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs soon after told the US Embassy that he was a Soviet citizen, he did not receive his document until five or six months after initial application. We know of only one case in which an American asked for Soviet citizenship but did not take up residence in the USSR. In that instance, the American changed his mind and voluntarily returned to the United States less than three weeks after he requested Soviet citizenship. 49

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The Department of State has commented as follows:

Question 2

The files of the department of State reflect the fact that Oswald first applied for permission to remain in Russia permanently, or at least for a long period, when he arrived in Moscow, and that he obtained permission to remain within one or two months.

A. Is the fact that he obtained permission to stay within this period of time usual?

Answer - Our information indicates that a two months waiting period is not unusual. In the case of Robert Webster the Supreme Soviet decided within two months to give Soviet citizenship and he was thereafter, of course, permitted to stay.

B. Can you tell us what the normal procedures are under similar circumstances?

Answer - It is impossible for us to state any "normal" procedures. The Soviet Government never publicizes the proceedings in these cases or the reasons for its action. Furthermore, it is, of course, extremely unusual for an American citizen to defect.



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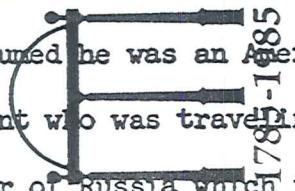


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Oswald's Life in Minsk

The independently verifiable facts of Oswald's life in Minsk are either neutral or tend to discredit any hypothesis that he was being trained as a future agent of the Soviet Union. This is, naturally, the portion of Oswald's life concerning which the least is known. The primary sources of information are Oswald's own writings and the testimony of Marina Oswald.

It is established beyond doubt that Oswald was in fact located in the City of Minsk on at least two, widely separated occasions. By coincidence the Commission has obtained two photographs in which Oswald appears which were taken by American tourists in Minsk in August 1961. They have testified that they did not know who Oswald was at the time except that he spoke English and they therefore assumed he was an American. In addition, Oswald was noticed by a student who was traveling with the university of Michigan band on a tour of Russia which included Minsk, in the Spring of 1960. Oswald frequently telephoned and corresponded with the American Embassy in Moscow from Minsk, wrote letters from Minsk to his family in the United States and, after he returned to the United States, conversed about the city with Russian-born American citizens who were familiar with it. Oswald and his wife have many photographs taken of themselves which show Minsk backgrounds, and



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Marina is familiar with the city. More importantly, American intelligence has been able to independently verify the existence, in Minsk, of many of the acquaintances of Oswald and his wife which they said they knew there. The weight of the evidence therefore, indicates that Oswald lived in Minsk during his residence in the Soviet Union.

Once he was accepted as a resident alien in the Soviet Union, Oswald was given considerable benefits which ordinary Russian citizens in his position in society did not have. The evidence does not indicate, however, that these benefits were granted for the specific purpose of inducing him to serve the Soviet State as some sort of foreign agent. Marina Oswald testified that it is standard practice in the Soviet Union for Americans and other foreign defectors from countries with high standards of living to be "subsidized." The Central Intelligence Agency has confirmed this fact. In other words, it is standard Soviet practice, once the decision has been made that it is in their national interest to admit a foreign defector, to make his life as easy and pleasant as possible so that he will not become disillusioned and return to his native country, at least for materialistic reasons.

It should also be noted that if it were not for Oswald's Diary and other personal writings we would at this time have no knowledge that he had ever received a large initial grant and monthly

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subsidies thereafter from the "Red Cross." The Historic Diary recites that after Oswald was informed that he could remain in the Soviet Union and was being sent to Minsk, he was given 5000 rubles by the Red Cross, ..... for expenses" the equivalent then of about \$500. He used 2200 rubles to pay his hotel bill which by this time had added up to a considerable sum, and another 50 rubles to purchase a train ticket. With the balance of slightly over 2500 rubles, Oswald felt, according to the Diary, like a rich man. The "rent-free apartment" promised Oswald in Minsk by the "Mayor" never materialized but eventually, about a month and a half later, Oswald did receive a very pleasant (by Soviet standards) apartment for which he was required to pay only 60 rubles a month, which Oswald considered "almost rent-free."

Oswald was given a job in the "Belorussian Radio and Television Factory, a large plant manufacturing electronic parts and radio and television sets. After he had returned to the United States he told an FBI representative that he was "metalworker" and that he spent his time reading blueprints and translating their instructions into the finished product. The pay ranged from 700 to 900 rubles a month depending upon the amount of work he personally did; his shop generally turned out (we are not sure which). According to his wife, this rate of pay was very good. Marine Oswald, who had received specialized training and who seems to have held a more responsible job, was

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employed as a pharmacist and received a salary of 50 rubles per month. Moreover, she testified that she knew of medical doctors in the Soviet Union who received less than 700 rubles per month. Marina testified that Oswald did not receive anything more than did others in the factory doing similar work. She explains the relatively high monthly compensation by saying that piecework rates throughout the Soviet Union have generally grown in line with compensation for other jobs, and that certain professional groups are getting considerably less than their training and responsibilities would ordinarily entitle them to.

In addition to his salary Oswald regularly received from the "Red Cross" 700 rubles per month. Oswald's papers recite that the Red Cross subsidy was terminated as soon as the Soviets learned that he was no longer happy in Russia and wanted to return to the United States, i.e., presumably as soon as he wrote the American Embassy in Moscow in February 1961 asking that he be permitted to return. Marina Oswald's testimony confirms this; she says when she knew Oswald he no longer was receiving the monthly grant but still retained some of the savings accumulated in the months when he had been receiving it.

Since she met and married Oswald in March and April of 1961, respectively, her testimony is consistent with his records. The well-paying job, the monthly subsidy, and the "almost rent-free" apartment combined to give Oswald virtually all the money he needed. The only complaint recorded in the Historic Diary is that there was "no place to spend the money."

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Oswald's membership in a hunting club during his life in the Soviet Union has been a matter of special interest to the Commission. At least one Russian Emigré has testified that this is a suspicious circumstance because no one in the Soviet Union, is permitted to own a gun for pleasure. Marina Oswald has testified that she remembers her husband going hunting only on one occasion during the whole time of their marriage. However, Oswald apparently joined the gun club in the summer of 1960 and he did not marry Marina until April 30, 1961, so he could have been more active while he was still a bachelor. Oswald made no secret of his membership in the hunting club. He mentioned it on occasion to friends after he returned to the United States, included it in his correspondence with his brother Robert, discussed it at some length in his book-in-preparation, "The Collective," and kept his membership card, gun permit and hunting license with him until the day he was killed. It also forms one of the points of discussion in his speech to a Jesuit seminary in Alabama the summer he returned to the United States, where he commented that pistols and rifles were forbidden to Soviet civilians but that shotguns were permitted. Experts from the Central Intelligence Agency have examined Oswald's shotgun permit, club membership card and hunting license and given the opinion that they appear to be authentic and consistent with other information we have about the Soviet Union.

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Under normal Soviet techniques for training agents it would be highly untypical for Oswald to have received as little training as would have been the case if all he received was the number of hours he might have spent with his gun club. Normal espionage and sabotage training in the Soviet Union is intensive, full-time and usually carried on for years.

So far as the Commission has been able to discover, Oswald only went hunting on some half-dozen occasions, usually for only a day or two.

Furthermore, if Marina Oswald is telling the truth in saying that Oswald went hunting only one occasion after their marriage, this fact seems inconsistent with these trips being used as a cover for training as a subversive agent. The KGB would more likely have trained Oswald more than once during the entire 13 months before he left Russia for the United States. Moreover, the CIA has informed the Commission that it is in possession of considerable information on the location of secret Soviet training institutions and that it knows of no such institution in or near Minsk during the time Oswald was there.

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Oswald's Departure from the Soviet Union

Of all aspects of Oswald's relationship to the Soviet Union, the circumstances surrounding his departure and return to the United States warrant the most careful attention. Examination by the Commission of the relevant facts reveals that Oswald's contacts with the American Embassy reflect an absence of "coaching" by Soviet authorities. Moreover, the fact that he and his wife were permitted to leave, although

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certainly not a frequent occurrence, does not indicate any extraordinary intervention by the Soviets to facilitate the return to the United States of a Soviet agent.

On February 13, 1961 the American Embassy in Moscow received a letter from Oswald postmarked Minsk, February 1, asking that he be readmitted to the United States. This was the first the Embassy had heard from or about him since November 17, 1959, when he was seen by Priscilla Johnson. The breaking of Oswald's sixteen-month silence came only a few days after the Department of State in Washington had forwarded a request to its Moscow Embassy on February 1, 1961, informing the Embassy that Oswald's mother was worried about him, inquiring as to his whereabouts and asking that he get in touch with her if possible. The simultaneity of the two events is, so far as can be discovered, a simple coincidence. \* Oswald's letter was

\* The Commission has been informed by the Department of State and the Central Intelligence Agency<sup>87</sup> that the request from Marguerite Oswald went from Washington to Moscow by sealed diplomatic pouch and that the seal was intact upon arrival, and thus the Russians could not have intercepted the message en route. The officer of the Department of State who carried the responsibility for such matters has testified that the message was not delivered to the Russians after it arrived in Moscow.<sup>88</sup>

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not designed to ingratiate Oswald to the Embassy officials. It starts out by falsely implying that he had written an earlier letter that was not answered, then says that he will return to the United States only if he can first "come to some agreement on there being no legal charges brought against him, and ends with a reminder to the officials at the Embassy that they have a responsibility to do everything they can to help him since he is an American citizen.

The Embassy's response to this letter was to invite Oswald to come personally to Moscow to discuss the matter, pointing out that some rather complex questions were involved and that his presence would be required to iron them out. Oswald objected to the invitation stating that it was against Soviet law for him to travel from Minsk to Moscow without first obtaining permission from the "authorities" and that he had been informed that such permission, if granted, would be "a long drawn out affair" which local officials were hesitant even to start. He also was loathe to undertake the expense of the trip.

From Oswald's first letter until late in June, he and the Department of State were at loggerheads on whether he should travel to Moscow or not. While the Department of State was clarifying its position on this matter, Oswald appeared in Moscow on Saturday, July 8, 1961.

Oswald's travel to Moscow without permission does not appear to signify special treatment by the Soviet Union. The Commission

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D. Even if such travel did not have to be authorized, do you have any information or observations regarding the practicality of such travel by Soviet citizens or persons in Oswald's status?

ANSWER - It is impossible to generalize in this area. We understand from interrogations of former residents in the Soviet Union who were considered "stateless" by Soviet authorities that they were not permitted to leave the town where they resided without permission of the police. In requesting such permission they were required to fill out a questionnaire giving the reason for travel, length of stay, addresses of individuals to be visited, etc.

Notwithstanding these requirements, we know that at least one "stateless" person often traveled without permission of the authorities and stated that police stationed at railroad stations usually spotchecked the identification papers of every tenth traveler, but that it was an easy matter to avoid such checks. Finally, she stated that persons who were caught evading the registration requirements were returned to their home towns by the police and sentenced to short jail terms and fined. These sentences were more severe for repeated violations.

The answer of the CIA to the same question is as follows:

OSWALD'S travel from Minsk to Moscow and return in July 1961 would normally have required prior authorization. Bearers of a Soviet "passport for foreigners" (vid na zhitelstvo v SSSR dlya innostrantsa) are required to obtain travel authorization from the Visa and Registration Department (OVIR) (or Passport Registration Department (PRD) in smaller towns) if they desire to leave the city (or oblast) where they are domiciled. This same requirement is believed to apply to persons, such as OSWALD, holding Soviet "stateless passports" (vid na zhitelstvo v SSR dlya bez grazhdanstva).

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The practicality of even "unauthorized" travel was demonstrated by events related by Bruce DAVIS, a United States citizen who departed from his US Army unit in Germany on 1 August 1960, and subsequently was sent to Kiev to study. After his repatriation in 1963, DAVIS told US authorities that he had made a total of seven unauthorized trips from Kiev during the 1961-1963 period. One of these trips was a flight to Moscow on 1 May 1961, only two months before OSWALD'S flight. DAVIS was apprehended on two of his seven trips and was returned to Kiev each time, the second time under escort. On both occasions he was merely reprimanded by the deputy chief of the institute at which he was studying. Since Marina had a Soviet citizen's internal passport, there would have been no restrictions against her making the trip to Moscow.

When Oswald arrived at the Embassy in Moscow, he contacted Richard E. Snyder, the same man whom he had faced on October 31, 1959, and told Snyder that he had come for the conference which the letters from the Embassy had said was necessary. Snyder asked Oswald to return on the following Monday, and apparently suggested to Oswald that he bring his wife with him, although Snyder has testified that he has no independent recollection of making this suggestion. Marina Oswald therefore flew to Moscow from Minsk on Sunday, and Oswald returned to the Embassy for a conference with Snyder on Monday, July 10, in accord with Snyder's invitation. Primarily on the basis of the Monday interview, the American Embassy concluded that Oswald had not expatriated himself.\* On the basis of this tentative decision,

\* The factual and legal basis of this decision is set forth and evaluated in Appendix \_\_\_\_\_ at pp. \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

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Oswald was given back his American passport. The document was due to expire in September 1961 and Oswald was informed that its renewal would depend upon the ultimate decision on his expatriation. The ultimate decision on the expatriation was favorable to Oswald, and his new passport was issued in May 1962, just before he and his family departed for the United States. Although there were some serious problems ahead for his wife's application to be admitted as a nonquota immigrant, the big American hurdle, the expatriation issue, was for all practical purposes overcome on July 10, 1961. Then it was up to the Soviet authorities.

No record of any expert guidance by Soviet authorities is revealed in Oswald's dealings with the Department of State. For example, the letters Oswald wrote from Minsk to the Embassy in Moscow

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are in his handwriting, carry the arrogant attitude which was characteristic of him both before and after he lived in Russia, and, when compared with other letters that were without doubt written by him, show about the same level of sophistication, fluency and spelling.

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Department officer who most frequently dealt with Oswald when he began negotiation to return to the United States, Mr. Richard E. Snyder, has testified that he observed no signs of Soviet coaching in Oswald's actions at the time and that even now, after reflecting upon the subject, he can still discern nothing that indicates Oswald was being

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guided or assisted by a third party. On the contrary, the arrogant and presumptuous attitude which Oswald displayed in his dealings with the Embassy from early 1961 until June 1962, when he finally departed Russia, undoubtedly hindered his attempts to take himself and his family back to the United States. Snyder has testified that although, as was his duty, he made a sincere effort to treat Oswald's application for permission to return objectively, Oswald's attitude made this practically impossible.

Marina has testified that she and Oswald made their intentions known to Soviet officials in Minsk in May, even before coming to Moscow for a conference. The Oswalds' correspondence with the Embassy and the documents furnished by the Russian Government show that Oswald made formal application to the Russian Government on July 15 and his wife did so on July 18. Presumably the greatest difficulty for the Russian authorities was whether Marina could accompany her husband. As it worked out, Marina was called to the Soviet passport office in Minsk on December 25, 1961, and told that authority had been received to issue both her and her husband's exit visas. Obtaining the permission of the Soviet Government to leave may have been facilitated by a conference which Marina had, at her own request, with a high MVD official, probably a Colonel Asenov, sometime in late 1961. She has testified that she applied for the conference and believes that it was granted to her because her uncle with whom

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she had lived in Minsk before her marriage, Colonel Brusakov, was also a high MVD official. She has commented that Oswald tried to arrange such a conference himself and was turned down. The Historic Diary and correspondence with the American Embassy at this time reflect that the Oswalds did not pick up their exit visas immediately. On January 12, 1962, Marina Oswald picked up her Soviet exit visa. It was marked valid until December 1, 1962. The Oswalds did not leave Russia until June 1962, but the additional delay was caused by problems with the American government and by the birth of a child in February. Permission of the Soviet authorities to leave, once given, was never revoked. Oswald told the FBI in July 1962, shortly after he returned to the United States, that he had been interviewed by the "MVD" twice, once when he first came to the Soviet Union and once just before he departed. 81

A slip of paper found among his effects confirms the occurrence of the second interview. 82

Investigation of the timing and circumstances of the Oswalds' obtaining permission from the Soviet Government to leave Russia and live in the United States shows that it differed in no discernible manner from what would ordinarily be expected. The Central Intelligence Agency has informed the Commission that normally a Soviet national would not be permitted to emigrate if he might endanger Soviet national security once he went abroad. Possession of confidential information, for example, would be an important category of such "security risks." 92

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Oswald's pre-departure interview by the "MVD" was probably part of an attempt to ascertain whether he or his wife had had any kind of access to confidential information. Marina Oswald's reported interview with the MVD in December 1961, which was arranged at her request, probably served the same purpose. Our awareness of both interviews derives entirely from Oswald's and his wife's statements and letters to the American Embassy, which affords additional evidence that the conferences carried no subversive significance.

It took the Soviet authorities at least 5 1/2 months, from July 18, 1961 until late December to grant permission for the Oswalds to leave. When asked to comment upon the alleged rapidity of the Oswalds' departure, the Department of State advised the Commission:

... In the immediate post-war period there were about fifteen marriages in which the wife had been waiting for many years for a Soviet exit permit. After the death of Stalin the Soviet Government showed a disposition to settle these cases. In the summer of 1953 permission was given for all of this group of Soviet citizen wives to accompany their American citizen husbands to the United States.

Since this group was given permission to leave the Soviet Union, there have been from time to time marriages in the Soviet Union of American citizens and Soviet citizens. With one exception, it is our understanding that all of the Soviet citizens involved have been given permission to emigrate to the United States after waiting periods which were, in some cases from three to six months and in others much longer.

It does not appear to us that Mrs. Oswald's Soviet exit visa application was acted upon with unusual rapidity.

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The Department of State also compiled data on all Soviet wives of American citizens who received exit visas to leave the Soviet Union, where the approximate dates of the applications for and receipt of the exit visas are available. Fourteen such cases fit these criteria. The Department points out that it has information on the dates of application and receipt of Soviet exit visas only on those cases that are brought to its attention by the persons concerned. A very common reason for bringing a case to the attention of the Department is that the granting of the exit visa by the Soviet Union has been delayed, and the American spouse therefore seeks the assistance of his own government. It therefore appears that the sampling data carry a distinct bias toward lengthy waiting periods. The data also seem to bear out the observation previously made by the Department the effect that until the death of Stalin it was virtually impossible for a Soviet wife to leave the Soviet Union with an American husband but that shortly after Stalin's death many long-pending applications were granted and many have been granted since. Of the fourteen cases listed, six involve women who applied for visas after 1953, when the post-Stalin policy was in effect. The approximate waiting periods for these wives were, in decreasing order, 13 months, 8 months, 6 months, 3 months, 1 month, and 10 days.

In his correspondence with the American Embassy while he was still in Russia and in his conversations with friends in the United States after he returned, Oswald several times claimed that Marina had been subjected to pressure by the Soviet Government in an effort to induce

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her not to emigrate to the United States. In the Embassy correspondence Oswald claimed that this pressure had been so intense that she had to be hospitalized for five days for "nervous exhaustion." Marina testified that Oswald was exaggerating and that no such hospitalization or "nervous exhaustion" ever occurred. However, she did testify that she was questioned on the matter occasionally and given to know that her government was not pleased with her decision. Her aunt and uncle in Minsk did not speak to her "for a long time." The uncle was a member of the MVD. She also says that he was dropped from her membership in the Communist Youth Organization (Kosomol) when the news of her visit to the American Embassy in Moscow reached that organization. A student who took Russian lessons from her in Texas has testified that she once referred to the days when the pressure was applied as "a horrible time." In talking about the subject with his friends in the United States after he returned, Oswald never mentioned the alleged nervous exhaustion and hospitalization, but he did insist that the going had been made very rough for Marina. Putting aside the differences of degree in the Oswalds' two versions of these events, it seems clear that they both maintain that the Soviet authorities tried to dissuade Marina Oswald from going to the United States. It is also interesting to note that the application of pressure on the Oswalds is similar to the Soviet treatment of another recent defector who left the Soviet Union to return to the United States. On the basis of all the foregoing evidence, and especially the Department of State data on the waiting periods of other Soviet wives, the Commission concluded that there was no reason to believe that the Oswalds received unusually favorable treatment in being permitted or assisted to leave the Soviet Union.

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The Oswalds' Contacts with the Soviet Embassy  
in the United States

Soon after the Oswalds reached the United States in June of 1962 they made contact with the Soviet Embassy in Washington, D. C. Soviet law required Marina Oswald, as a Soviet citizen living abroad, to remain in contact with her nation's Embassy and to file various papers occasionally. In 1963, there were further contacts when the Oswalds sought permission to return to the Soviet Union. The first such request was a letter written by Marina on February 17, 1963. She wrote that she wished to return to Russia but that her husband would stay in America because, "He is an American by nationality." She was informed on March 8, 1963 that it would take from five to six months to process the application. Sometime before July 8, Oswald asked to be permitted to return with her.

The Soviet Union made available to the Commission what purports to be the entire correspondence between the Oswalds and the Russian Embassy in the United States. This material has been checked for codes and none has been detected.

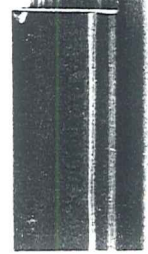
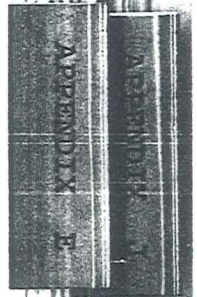
Except for the last letter which Oswald wrote to the Soviet Embassy after his trip to Mexico City, which will be discussed below, there is no material which gives any reason for suspicion.

Oswald's last letter to the Soviet Embassy in Washington, D. C., was dated November 9, 1963 and reads as follows:

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"Dear sirs;

"This is to inform you of recent events since my meetings with comrade Kostin in the Embassy Of the Soviet Union, Mexico City, Mexico.

"I was unable to remain in Mexico indefinitely because of my mexican visa restrictions which was for 15 days only. I could not take a chance of requesting a new visa unless I used my real name, so I returned to the United States.

"I had not planned to contact the Soviet embassy in Mexico so they were unprepared, had I been able to reach the Soviet Embassy in Havana as planned, the embassy there would have had time to complete our business.

"Of course the Soviet embassy was not at fault, they were, as I say unprepared, the Cuban consulate was guilty of a gross breach of regulations, I am glad he has since been replaced.

"The Federal Bureau of Investigation is not now interested in my activities in the progressive organization 'Fair Play For Cuba Committee', of which I was secretary in New Orleans (state Louisiana) since I no longer reside in that state. However, the F.B.I. has visited us here in Dallas, Texas, on November 1st. Agent James P. Hasty warned me that if I engaged in F.P.C.C. activities in Texas the F.B.I. will again take an 'interest' in me.

"This agent also 'suggested' to Marina Nichilayeva that she could remain in the United States under F. B. I. 'protection', that is, she could defect from the Soviet Union, of course, I and my wife strongly protested these tactics by the notorious F.B.I..

"Please inform us of the arrival of our Soviet entrance visas's as soon as they come.

"Also, this is to inform you of the birth on October 20, 1963 of a DAUGHTER, AUDREY MARTINA OSWALD IN DALLAS, TEXAS., to my wife.

Respectfully,  
/s/ Lee H. Oswald"

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The envelope bears a postmark which seems to be November 12. Marina Oswald has testified that Oswald made many drafts of this letter before it was finally sent. Her testimony on this point was confirmed by the woman whose typewriter Oswald used to compose the letter, Mrs. Ruth Paine, who says she observed at least one preliminary draft. A piece of paper which was probably one of these drafts was found among Oswald's effects after the assassination and reads as follows:

(Words crossed out by Oswald have been put in parentheses.)

Draft

Dear Sirs

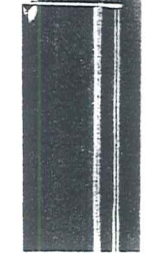
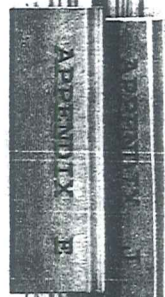
"This is to inform you of (re) events since my interviews with comrade Kostine in the Embassy of the Soviet Union Mexico City, Mexico.

"I was unable to remain in Mexico City (because considered useless) indefinitely because of my (visa) Mexican visa restrictions which was for 5 days only. I had a) I could not take a chance for an extension applying (si) unless I used my real name so I returned to the U.S.

"I and Marina Nicholayeva are now living in Dallas, Texas, (you already know) I

"The FBI is not now interested in my activities in the progressive organization FPCC of which I was secretary in New Orleans (La) Louisiana since (MNC) (New Orleans, Louisiana) live in no longer (connected with) that State.

"(However the however) the FBI has visited us here in Texas on Nov. 1st. An agent of the FBI James P. Hasty warned me that if I attempt to engage in FPCC activities in Texas the FBI will again take an "Interest" in me. This agent also 'suggested' that my wife could 'remain in the U. S. under FBI protection' that is, she could defect from the (refuse to return to the) Soviet Union. Of course I and my wife strongly protested these tactics by the notorious F.B.I.



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"(It was unfortunate that the Soviet Embassy was unable to aid me in Mexico City but) I had not planned to contact the Mexican City Embassy at all so of course they were unprepared for me. Had I been able to reach Havana as planned (I could have contacted the Soviet Embassy there for the completion of rapid have been able to help me get the necessary documents I required assist me.) would have had time to assist me but of course the (stupid) Cuban Consulate was at fault here, I'm glad he had since been replaced by another."

Information produced for the Commission by the CIA is to the effect that the person referred to by Oswald as "Comrade Kostin" was probably a man named "Kostikov" employed ostensibly as a member of the Consular staff of the Soviet Union in Mexico City. He is actually a KGB agent, however, as are many of such employees. The Commission has identified the Cuban Consul referred to in Oswald's letter as Senor Eusebio Azque, the man with whom Oswald argued at the Cuban Consulate, who was in fact replaced. The CIA advised the Commission:

We surmise that the references in Oswald's 9 November letter to a man who had since been replaced must refer to Cuban Consul Eusebio Azque, who left Mexico for Cuba on permanent transfer on 15 November 1963, four days before the assassination. Azque had been in Mexico for 7 years and it was known to us as early as September 1963 that Azque was to be replaced. His replacement did arrive in September. Azque was scheduled to leave in October but did not leave until 28 November.

We do not know who might have told Oswald that Azque or any other Cuban had been or was to be replaced, but we speculate that Silvia Duran or some Soviet official might have mentioned it if Oswald complained about Azque's altercation with him."

"Silvia Duran" is an assistant to Consul Azque who dealt with Oswald when he applied for a visa at the Cuban Consulate.

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When asked to explain the letter Marina Oswald, after a few attempts, gave up with the remark that it was "crazy." Some light on its possible meaning can be shed by comparing it with the early draft. When the differences between the draft and the final document are studied, and especially when crossed-out words are taken into account, it becomes apparent that Oswald was intentionally obfuscating the true state of affairs in order to make his trip to Mexico sound as mysterious and important as possible.

For example, the first sentence in the second paragraph of the letter reads,

"I was unable to remain in Mexico indefinitely because of my Mexican visa restrictions which was for 15 days only."

The same sentence in the draft begins, before the words are crossed out,

"I was unable to remain in Mexico City because I considered useless..."

As already mentioned, we have fairly good evidence that Oswald's trip to Mexico was indeed "useless" and that he returned to Texas with that conviction. The first draft, therefore, spoke the truth; but apparently the truth did not sound urgent enough, so Oswald rewrote the sentence to imply that he had to leave because his visa was about to expire. This is false; Oswald's tourist card still had a full week to run when he departed Mexico on October 3.

The next sentence in the final draft reads,

"I could not take a chance on requesting a new visa when I used my real name, so I returned to the United States."

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The fact is that he did use his real name on his tourist card, and on all other occasions as well, with the sole exception of the bus reservation for the trip back. And even the exception has been explained. Oswald's tourist card was typed by the Mexican Consulate in New Orleans, "Lee, Harvey Oswald." The comma was a clerical error which even Oswald disregarded. He signed both the application and the card, "Lee H. Oswald." The bus reservation clerk, however, since Oswald spoke no Spanish, made out the return reservation from the tourist card and, seeing the comma, wrote the reservation, "H. O. Lee."

On the opinion of the Commission, based upon what it has learned of Oswald's character in general and, in particular, upon what it believes to have been his mounting desperation to escape the complexities of life in the United States by going to Cuba or, failing that, back to the Soviet Union, the letter constitutes more than a clumsy attempt to facilitate his family's return to the Soviet Union. He seems to have written it in the hope that by inferring that he had somehow been part of secret and mysterious dealings involving the Soviet Embassy in Mexico, some benefit, however small, could be salvaged from the otherwise total failure of that trip. What mystery there is in the letter in all probability derives from the psychological complexities of Oswald's mind rather than from any conspiratorial relationships.

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Conclusion

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Throughout its investigation of possible Soviet involvement, the Commission has evaluated the possibility that Lee Harvey Oswald was a secret Soviet agent against the specific facts and circumstances relating to his defection to the USSR, his residence there in Minsk, and his return to the United States in 1962. Apart from the lack of evidence disclosed by this inquiry, the Commission finds two additional basic reasons for its conclusion that Oswald was not a secret agent. First, Oswald's life in the United States from his return until the day of the assassination, ranging from his open correspondence with the Communist Party to public advocacy of Castro's Cuba, was not the life of a secret agent. Second, and closely related, is the fact that Oswald's personality and capabilities were not those of a person who would be selected for, or capable of accomplishing, a mission as a secret agent. \* The conclusion of the Commission that there is no evidence of foreign involvement in the assassination is shared by J. Edgar Hoover,<sup>2</sup> John McCone<sup>3</sup> and James J. Rowley,<sup>4</sup> respectively, the directors of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency and the Secret Service.

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\* The significant events in Oswald's life relied upon by the Commission for this conclusion are discussed in Chapter VII.

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