

11 17 75

Memo

From: David Lifton

Re: The lack of a "Helmstedt" stamp in Oswald's passport

Synopsis

The claim has been made (see Anson's book, p.170) that the lack of a Helmstedt stamp in Oswald's passport, contrasted with the presence of such a stamp in Marina's, is anomalous, and perhaps indicates that the bearer of Oswald's passport was given some type of special treatment as he and Marina exited from behind the iron curtain on their journey back to the United States.

This is not the case.

Marina's passport is stamped for entry into West Germany (at Helmstedt) because she, being a Russian, needed a visa to travel through West Germany. As a result, the page of her passport containing the West German transit visa bears the stamp for "Helmstedt", the entry point used into West Germany. Oswald, being an American, needed no visa to travel through West Germany. Therefore, he would just display his American passport and be waved on.

1. The following passage appears on p.170 of Anson's book:
"The Oswalds supposedly crossed the iron curtain at the railroad station at Helmstedt, the tensest, most security conscious checkpoint along the border between East and West Berlin. Yet there is no stamp on Lee's passport---as there is on Marina's---showing that he made the crossing.
2. First, a minor error. Helmstedt is a city on the border between East and West Germany (not between East and West Berlin). Its relationship to Berlin is that it is the entry point to the protected corridor which runs through East Germany to the city of Berlin.
The East German city opposite Helmstedt, on the East German/West German border is Marienborn, East Germany.
3. In August, 1961, shortly after the Berlin Wall went up, I traveled to Berlin by car. I thus passed through Helmstedt twice: once on my way in to East Germany, once on way out.
My passport, however, shows no Helmstedt stamp.
It does, however, show two stamps for Marienborn, the city opposite Helmstedt on the East German side of the border: one, dated 8/30/61 was for my entry into East Germany; the other, dated 8/31/61, was for my exit from East Germany.
(See attachment 1 to this memo for xerox of p.9 of my passport)
4. Today, I called the German consulate in Los Angeles and asked why my passport showed no Helmstedt stamp, despite the fact that I went through that city both to enter and then leave West Germany.

Memo, 11/17/75, contd.

I was told that the reason my passport was not stamped was that, being an American, I needed no visa for travel in West Germany. Therefore, at the border, a person with an American passport is simply waved in. On the other hand, had I been from a country which required a visa for travel in West Germany, my passport would not have been enough, I would have needed such a visa, and that visa would have been stamped.

I also asked whether the above might apply not just because I was an American, but because I was an American returning to West Germany but having come from Berlin. I was told that this was not the case: that it didn't matter where I was coming from when I went from East to West Germany at Helmstedt: what mattered was that I was an American and, therefore, needed no visa. Thus, a person (like Oswald) entering at Helmstedt but coming from Frankfurt, East Germany would simply be waved across the border at Helmstedt when he displayed his American passport.

This led me to check my passport again because, in traveling around Europe that summer, I had entered West Germany on at least two other occasions: once driving north from Italy, and another time entering by train, starting at Rotterdam. An examination of my passport reveals that on neither occasion was my passport marked for entry into West Germany, thus confirming the information I was told by the West German consulate here in L.A., and making it clear that an American entering West Germany at any point does not have his passport stamped.

5. Based upon this information, here is a reconstruction of what happened at the East-West crossing (referenced to the pages in Oswald's and Marina's passports).

Oswald and Marina are on the train coming to Marienborn, East Germany, from Frankfurt (where they entered East Germany from Poland). Both needed East German transit visas to make this leg of the journey, and both had such visas. (See p.143, vol. 16, for page containing the Marina Oswald East German transit visa; see p.168, vol 18, for page of Oswald's passport containing his East German transit visa--attachments 2 & 3 of this memo)

As they leave East Germany, at Marienborn, both of their East German transit visas were stamped. (In each case, the stamp appears over the signature of the signing official, in the lower right hand part of the page. It is slightly visible on Oswald's passport, barely visible on Marina's---at least in the reproduction in the volumes. But if there is any doubt about this, compare with the page of my passport, where the same stamp appears twice---once for my entry and once from my exit from East Germany. The stamp is rectangular, says "DDR" at the top; beneath is the date, then a line with the words: "GKA. Marienborn"]

6. Having just passed through Marienborn, East Germany, the Oswald's now move on a few yards to Helmstedt, West Germany.

Oswald, an American, needs no visa for West Germany at Helmstedt. He simply shows his American passport and is waved on. (If PDS's theory is correct, perhaps the officials there winked at him)

Marina, a Russian, does need a West German transit visa.

That visa is shown on the left page of her passport reproduced on page 144 of volume 16 (attachment 4 of this memo). As the translator notes (but it is very difficult to see), it is stamped: "Federal Republic of Germany Entry June 3, 1962 Helmstedt Bhf.20"

7. The above explains why Oswald's passport bears no Helmstedt stamp, while Marina's does. One last thing---not only wasn't my passport stamped at Helmstedt---the wall had just gone up and, while in Berlin, I exercised my right as an American to cross into East Berlin, in my volkswagon, at Checkpoint Charlie. I did that, and spent several hours there driving around in that section of the city; nevertheless, no stamp at Helmstedt upon returning, via East Germany, to West Germany. (No, damn it, I am not an agent. Ask Weisberg---he'll vouch for me).

8. Attachments

1. p.9 of Lifton passport (8/61)
2. page of Marina passport containing East German transit visa (16 H 16)
3. page of LHO passport containing East German transit visa (18 H 16)
4. page of Marina passport containing West German transit visa (16H144)

cc: Anson; Hoch; P.D.Scott; Meagher;

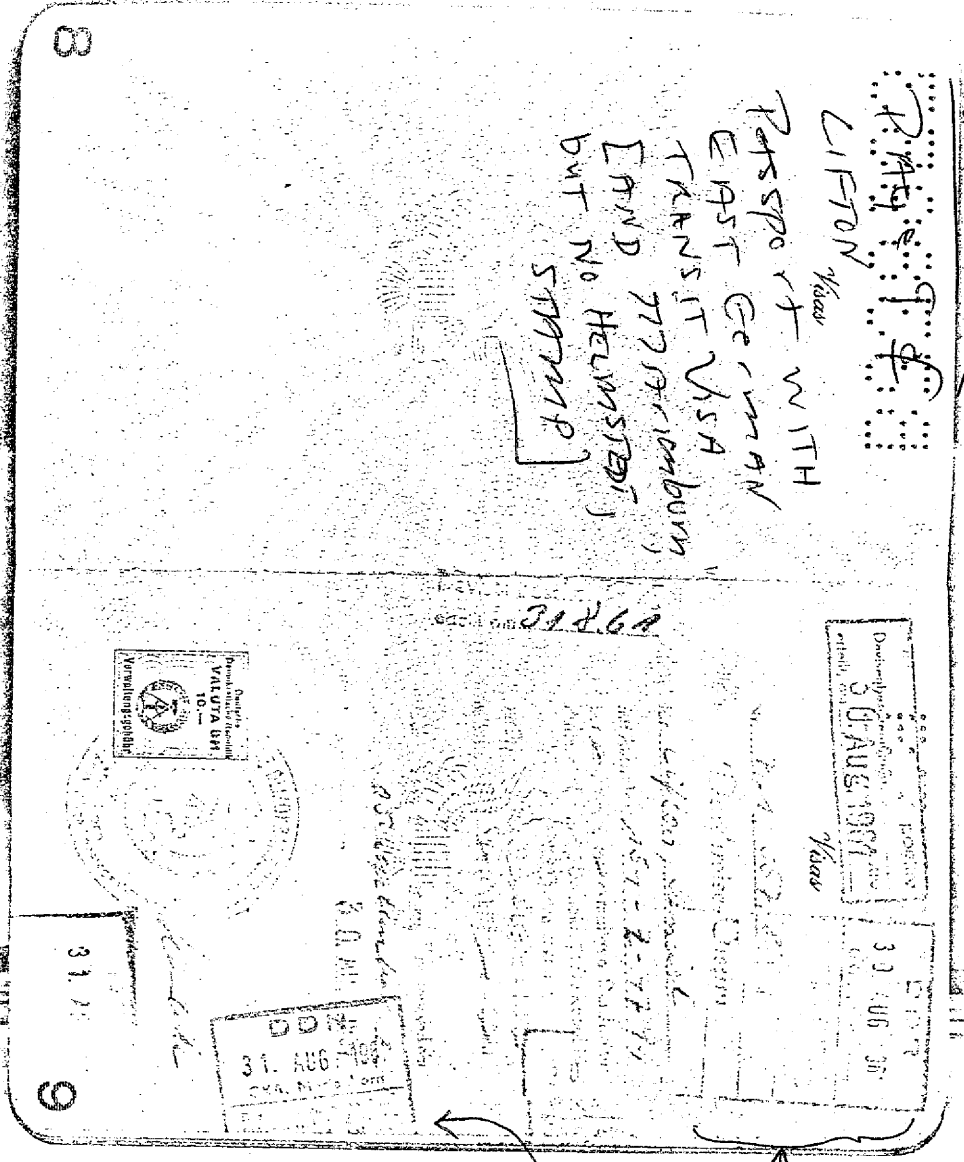
* (and Marienborn
STAMP
(and
Helmstedt
STAMP)

ATTACHMENTS 1 & 3

ATT 1

Passport with
LIFTON

Passport with
EAST German
TRANSIT VISA
Frankfurt,
but no HELMSBORN
STAMP



Page of LHO Passport
with
OSWALD Egypt
German
TRANSIT
VISA

Page 17

Stamp:
German Democratic Republic
KPP

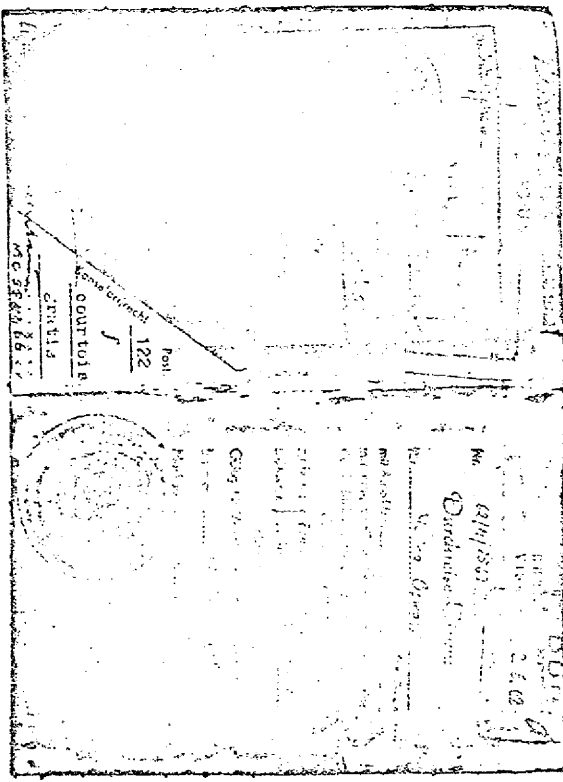
No. 62/01/257
26
(sic)

June 2, 1962
Frankfurt (Oder)

Transit Visa
for Leo Oswald for one travel through the G
border stations:
For the entry: Frankfurt (Oder)
For the departure: Sachsenhof-Marienborn
without stay.
Valid for traffic routes in the transit until June 10, 1
Stamp of the German Democratic Republic
Consular Section Embassy of the USSR

Stamp of G
partly legible
Ju

Commission Exhibit 646



Left page:

EMBASSY OF THE NETHERLANDS
 No. 249/hr 02
 Stamp: IJeral Consulariary, The Netherlands, June 8, 1962, Oldenzaal Station
 IN Visa OUTP

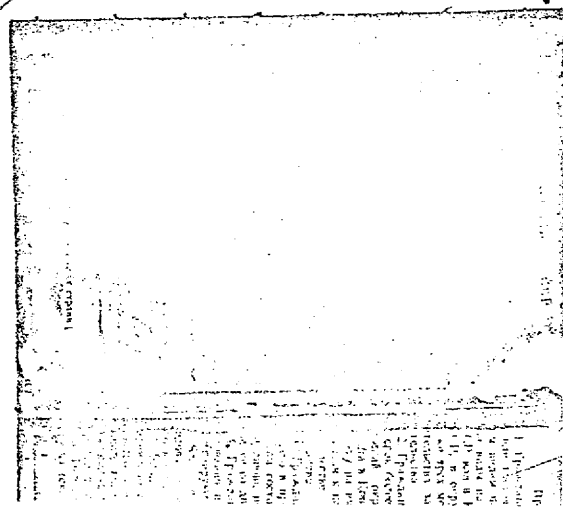
Issued on May 29, 1962,
 valid for one transit,
 to be completed before June 29, 1962.
 Stamp: IJver Polite IN June 4, 1962 OUTP Rotterdam
 The Temporary Charge d'Affaires
 For the same
 Signature and seal
 Paul/Voelk (?)
 Embassy of the Netherlands
 Moscow
 First Embassy Secretary
 Consul fee: 122

Right page:
 Gratis.

No. 62/01/2762
 Stamp: D)DR (-German Democratic Republic) KPP Entry 86 Departure June 2, 1962
 Frankfurt
 Transit Visa

for Martha Oswald and one child, for one transit through the German Democratic Republic via the border stations: Frankfurt (Oder); entry and Schönefeld-Marienborn; departure, without stop.
 Valid for traffic routes in transit traffic until June 19, 1963.
 Moscow, May 29, 1962
 German Democratic Republic
 Consular Section

Handwritten note in a box:
 2762 IN A C
 EAST GERMAN
 TRAVEL VISA



Left page:

VISA FOR ENTRY INTO THE
 Visa of Examining and Grant

There are 20 numbered pages in instant permit.
 (The rest is in German, translated separately.)
 Stamp: Federal Republic of Germany Entry June 8, 1962
 No. 694/62 No Fee
 Transit Visa

for Oswald, Martha, for one journey through the Fed
 eluding the area of the Land Berlin).
 Term of the transit: 2 days from the crossing of the Frc
 Moscow, May 29, 1962
 Embassy of the Federal
 Republic of Germany
 By order of
 Signature: Redfordin (?)

Right page:
 Rules for Residence Per
 (These Rules consisting of 6 paragraphs prescribe
 lion, change of residence, travel, extension, etc.)
 COMMISSION EXHIBIT 20-C

ATTACHMENTS
 2 and 3 =

P.143
 V.116