

May 1, 1964

Mr. J. Lee Rankin, General Counsel
President's Commission on the
Assassination of President Kennedy
200 Maryland Ave., N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20002

Dear Mr. Rankin:

I have your letter of April 24th requesting materials concerning Lee Harvey Oswald. You stated that you would like to have the originals for your permanent file.

We first heard of Oswald's existence from a phone call I had from a Mr. Stanfield (?) of the Special Consular Service of the State Department. My recollection as to the specifics of our conversation is quite hazy, but I believe he mentioned that Oswald's application for return to the United States had been cleared by the State Department and that the Red Cross in Texas was interested in the case. I believe I explained that we usually would not be concerned with returning American citizens and that, as a strongly anti-Communist organization, we would hardly be the appropriate agency for an American who went to Russia to live there. I assume that I suggested that the matter be submitted to us in writing.

A few days later we received a letter from Mrs. Harwell of the Wilberger County Chapter, Vernon, Texas, dated January 14, 1962, to which, to the best of my recollection were attached copies of a letter written by Consul Norbury, American Embassy, Moscow, to Lee Harvey Oswald, dated December 14, 1961, and of a letter addressed to the International Rescue Committee, dated January 13, 1961 (sic), and ostensibly written by Oswald. Mrs. Harwell's letter is not in our file. However, a copy certainly can be, or possibly was already, secured from her office. The enclosures described above are attached.

To a layman's eye it would appear that both copies were typed on the same typewriter. I do not know who added the handwritten words, "Mrs. Helen Harwell, Executive Secretary, American Red Cross", to the Norbury copy. What is most puzzling, although it did not then attract my attention, is that the letter from Oswald, dated January 13th, could have reached the United States by January 14th, and that it reached us via Texas. It is also puzzling that instead of the letter we were given a transcript thereof.

On January 22, 1962 we answered Mrs. Harwell. Our file copy of the reply is enclosed. The original undoubtedly can be found in the Red Cross file in Vernon.

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Mr. Rankin

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On or about February 5, 1962 we did receive a handwritten letter directly from Oswald, dated January 26th, which makes no reference to a previous communication of his. The original was given by Mr. William J. vanden Heuvel to the FBI. I am enclosing a photostatic copy. Also attached is the envelope, which is the only original "document" remaining in our file. (Mr. vanden Heuvel is the President of our organization. He can be reached at the Attorney General's office in Washington.)

We did not reply to Oswald's letter because we would not enter into correspondence with people residing behind the Iron Curtain. To the best of my knowledge, no answer was ever received to our letter to Mrs. Helen Harwell. There was no further correspondence or action as far as we were concerned. We have made a thorough search of our files. The attached material is all we have been able to locate.

Sincerely yours,

CS:ma

Re-cc: WvH

Charles Sternberg
Program Director