

Dear Florence:

Now it is your turn. After our discussion at dinner in your house the week before last--it was an excellent dinner and the wine was especially good--it seems appropriate to address these observations on motive for the assassination of President Kennedy to you, rather than directly to Bob who seems to be concerned chiefly with problems of physical evidence as presented in the Warren Commission Report.

If the physical evidence were conclusive, motive would be of secondary importance. Precisely because this evidence is inconclusive, and in instances dubious, the problem of motive assumes great importance in evaluating the Report. What impelled the assassin to kill the President of the United States? In this country and abroad that question exercises every thinking mind. All over the world men looked to the Warren Commission for an answer. You, because of your professional, academic, and intellectual interests, were interested. Our discussion at dinner demonstrated to me that you had formed ideas on the subject. But you had not read the Report.

If you had you would have found in the first chapter, in the subsection called "Conclusions," the frank admission: "The Commission could not make any definitive determination of Oswald's motives" (p. 22<sup>4</sup>). I consider that the most remarkable statement in the entire Report.

Notice that the Commission did not conclude that Oswald, whom it found to be the assassin, had no motive. It found no evidence of a definitive motive and left the question open to

endless speculation. On the other hand, at your house, when I criticized Mark Lane's position, pointing out that he contended he had no evidence of a conspiracy but that that did not exclude the existence of a conspiracy, everyone around the table, yourself included, accepted this as evidence of Lane's lack of sincerity. Can we have one criterion for sincerity for Lane and another for the Commission?

More important, what criterion in logic does the Report establish? Again and again the Report emphasizes that the Commission found no evidence of a conspiracy. For example, "The Commission has found no evidence that either Lee Harvey Oswald or Jack Ruby was part of any conspiracy, domestic or foreign, to assassinate President Kennedy" (p. 21). And from this absence of evidence of a conspiracy it concludes that a conspiracy did not exist. It does not say so in those words. But that is the unmistakable meaning of its finding: "The evidence. . . identifies Lee Harvey Oswald as the assassin of President Kennedy and indicates that he acted alone in that event" (p. 375).

If the Commission had been consistent in its reasoning it would have had to say that the absence of evidence of a definitive motive "indicates" that there was none on Oswald's part. Or, alternatively, it should not have ruled out a conspiracy to kill Kennedy on the basis of lack of evidence of its existence.

The Commission, however, is consistent in its inconsistency. To have concluded that its inability to establish a motive indicated that Oswald had <sup>one</sup>one would have vitiated its thesis that

Oswald killed Kennedy. On the other hand, had the Commission reasoned that the lack of evidence of a conspiracy did not preclude the existence of one, it would have struck at its other thesis, that Oswald acted alone. This inconsistency in the Commission's reasoning indicates that the Commission was in a dilemma. The seriousness of the dilemma can be measured by the scope and detail of the evidence amassed and compiled by the Commission.

The Commission itself describes the amount and extent of this evidence: "During December and early January the Commission received an increasing volume of reports from Federal and State investigative agencies. Of principal importance was the five-volume report of the F.B.I. . . . After receiving this report, the Commission requested the F.B.I. to furnish the underlying investigative materials. . . . On December 18, the Secret Service submitted a detailed report on security precautions. . . and a summary of the events of November 22 as witnessed by Secret Service agents. A few days later the Department of State submitted a report relating to Oswald's defection to the Soviet Union. . . and his return to the U.S. . . . The Attorney General of Texas submitted an extensive set of investigative materials, largely Dallas police reports, on the assassination of President Kennedy. . . To insure that no relevant information would be overlooked, the Commission directed requests to the 10 major departments of the Federal Government, 14 of its independent agencies or commissions, and 4 Congressional committees, for all information relating

to the assassination. . . . After reviewing the accumulating materials, the Commission directed numerous additional requests to Federal and State investigative agencies. . . . Additional investigative requests. . . were handled by the Internal Revenue Service, Department of State, and the military intelligence agencies. . . . Investigative analyses of particular significance and sensitivity. . . were contributed by the C.I.A. On occasion the Commission used independent experts from State and city governments to supplement or verify information. . . "(pp. xi, xii).

The F.B.I. reports, more than "2,300" in number, required "25,400 pages" and accounted for "25,000 interviews and re-interviews" of persons having information of possible relevance to the investigation. . ." The "Secret Service conducted approximately 1,550 interviews and submitted 800 reports totaling some 4,600 pages" (p. xii).

"In addition the Commission took testimony from 552 witnesses. . ." 94 of whom appeared in person before the Commission, 395 of whom "were questioned by members of the Commission's legal staff," and 61 of whom "supplied sworn affidavits"; two witnesses "gave statements" (p. xii).

This enormous mass of data, exceeding even the twenty-six volumes of testimony now published by the Commission, was accumulated in a relatively short span of time through the prompt use of the virtually unlimited resources of the U.S. Government which were placed at the disposal of the Commission. Thereby the Com-

mission was able to search out the smallest details of Oswald's life. Thus, for example, "In the late spring of 1942," when Oswald was about two and a half years old, "Mrs. Thomas Roach, who lived with her husband in the same house as the Oswalds. . . . told the next occupant of the house that he (Oswald) was a bad unmanageable child who threw his toy gun at her" (pp. 670-671). The Commission researched his childhood; traced his school career; reviewed his military service; followed the course of his journey to the Soviet Union, his stay there, and his return to the U.S.; mapped his movements in the U.S. and in Mexico; studied his work record; plumbed his married life; plotted his political activities; read his letters and pored over his diary. . . . In short, the Commission reconstructed Oswald's entire life. Many a biographer wished he had data as ample about his subject. If only we knew what toys or tomes Shakespeare threw at whom when he was two and a half years old! Who and where Homer was when he was twenty! If we could read the diary of the lady who sat before Leonardo and became the Mona Lisa! The problems that might be solved! It stimulates the mind with tantalizing phantasy.

Oswald was a relatively obscure individual, not well known anywhere and with few, if any, friends. He was only twenty-four when he was struck down in the drama in which he was the central figure, and history, having vouchsafed him a glittering moment, rushed in. That his life could be reconstructed in the round is a triumph of biographical research. That it could be done in a few months is testimony to the energy and vigor of the

Commission and the agencies that worked for and with it. Moreover, there is a lesson here for literary analysts and historians. What need for a solitary individual to hunt patiently and labor long hours to find and accumulate data for a life history when concentrated governmental effort can produce so much so expeditiously in so short a time! Will not societies of the future ease the path of the biographer by offering him comparable and even superior research facilities? Is not collective effort superior to individual enterprise? Is it not ironic that the Commission which labored so diligently to establish the solitary individual enterprise of Lee Harvey Oswald, should, in the process, demonstrate the superiority of collective effort! Perhaps the Commission made an unintentional contribution to literary art! It may be that this will prove to be its most lasting contribution. Clio is a sardonic muse. Often, like women in general, she works her will by the most unlikely means. Few men read her right; for political prognostications she is full of peril. Who could have foretold that Oswald, a self-avowed Marxist, would be cast in the role of absolute individualist? And that the Commission, comprising distinguished exemplars of individual achievement, should be appointed to establish him in that role by collective effort? Are not the gods laughing?

Whatever its achievements, however, the Commission did not write a definitive biography of Lee Harvey Oswald. It compiled only "a detailed chronological biography of Oswald" (p. 250), apparently because it could not find a "definitive" motive for

what must have been, if the Commission is correct, the most important act of Oswald's short life. It cannot find, in this mass of documentation, including the record of his life and his intimate, self-revelatory autobiographical diary and the testimony of his wife, the reason for the murder, it alleges he committed, <sup>set</sup> for the assassination of the President of the United States. It asks the world to accept the fact without the reason. Of necessity, it must appeal to faith; it must ask the world of men to accept its findings as revealed truth.

Should we do that, we can put aside the contradictions in the Report, as devout Christians accept the contradictions in the Gospels, because they accept the Bible as Holy Writ, as revealed truth. Logic, reason, and fact must bow to a higher truth. The troubled mind is eased; doubts are dispelled; all is serene. Only the skeptical Thomases will continue to subvert the ordered world. The Commission itself, however, does not go as far as the logic of its position indicates it should. It does not have the courage of its conclusions.

Apparently it recoiled from the consequences of its thinking. It was unable to say flatly against the accumulated wisdom of mankind and against the findings of the last sixty years of searching man's mind: thus did he without any reason whatsoever. It filled the vacuum in its reasoning by speculation about "many possible motives for the assassination" (p. 375).

It "considered. . . those which might flow from Oswald's commitment to Marxism or Communism, the existence of some personal

grievance, a desire to effect changes in the structure of society, or simply to go down in history as a well publicized assassin" (p. 375). And it concluded: "None of these possibilities satisfactorily explains Oswald's act if it is judged by the standards of reasonable men" (p. 375).

By what standards should that act be judged if not by the standards of reasonable men? The Commission does not say. Is the implication that judgment be left to God? The Commission is silent. To history? Who can say? Again the Commission makes no finding.

What the Commission probably had in mind was the thought that the assassination was an irrational or "senseless" act. For it goes on to say: "The motives of any man, however, must be analyzed in terms of the character and state of mind of the particular individual involved. For a motive that appears incomprehensible to other men may be the moving force of a man whose view of the world has been twisted, possibly by factors of which those around him were only dimly aware" (p. 375).

That, of course, is so. The Commission states an obvious and general truth. It might have gone further safely and said "or even totally unaware." If this observation were introductory to a process of determining a motive, it would be a relevant generality. But in view of the Commission's confused inability to establish a definitive motive, that observation becomes a rationale for its failure.

Worse, it suggests the mysterious unknown, the dark deeps



of insanity, the world of the irrational. In short, the Commission invokes the widespread beliefs that the unknown or incomprehensible is senseless, that human actions can be senseless, and that murder can be explained as a senseless act. Its premise and refuge are: insanity leads to murder.

Consider the story of the "Marine Arrested in Sniper Slaying" in the New York Times of November 5, 1964, and, I am sure, in other newspapers. "A 25-year-old Marine. . . was charged with homicide. . . in the sniper slaying last June of an 18-year-old girl in a Times Square parking lot." He didn't know his victim. He shot her from the eighth floor fire-escape of the hotel at which he was staying. He fled and got away. Later, the pistol he is alleged to have used was found in the room he had occupied. The pistol was traced to him. He was found and arrested. "At a news conference, Philip J. Walsh, chief of detectives, and Inspector Leo Murphy. . . described the killing as 'senseless.'" Apparently the police couldn't find a motive or recognize the motive (for practical purposes, the same thing) and denounced the act as "senseless."

Two murders, incidentally by men who learned to shoot in the Marine Corps, without apparent motives. Both, therefore, "senseless" acts. How many others! Had murder been committed by hired gunmen would they have been sensible acts? Had the perpetrators known their victims would the assassinations have thereby been sensible actions?

Where is the sense in describing what is not known or

understood as senseless? Is not this use of the word, this idea, a testament of ignorance? Is it not contradictory to and <sup>Y</sup>auguratory of the brilliant progress made in the 20th century of penetrating man's mind, of establishing system, order, and reason in accounting for the behavior and thought of man? Is it not distastefully ironic that the murder of the President of the United States should occasion the prestigious body established to explain it, to invoke outmoded ideas in order to shroud the motivation in obfuscation!

On the other hand, is it sensible to expect modern ideas to issue from a body composed in part by Senator Russell of Georgia and Representative Boggs of Louisiana, both staunch stalwarts in defense of economic privilege and rabid political and social reaction? But what of Warren, target of bitter hate emanating from that same source? Can he be lumped with Russell and Boggs in one stroke of propagandistic blackwash? "Each member of the Commission," says the Report, "has given careful consideration to the entire report and concurs in its findings and conclusions" (p. xv). Time marches backward! In other centuries murder was explained by witchcraft!

The Commission struggled with the problem of Oswald's character. It "endeavored to isolate factors which contributed" to it "and which might have influenced his decision to assassinate President Kennedy" (p. 23). Take note that Oswald "decided" to perform a senseless act. That much the Commission knows. Take note, too, that the isolated factors have only the value

or force of "probability." If they are only probable, why cite them and analyze them at length? The Commission does not say.

The factors the Commission endeavored to isolate, apparently to its satisfaction because they are given the status of "findings and conclusions," are:

- (a) "deep-rooted resentment of all authority"
- (b) "inability to enter into meaningful relationships with people"
- (c) "urge to find a place in history and despair at times over failures"
- (d) "capacity for violence"
- (e) "avowed commitment to Marxism and communism" (p. 23).

The second point, "inability to enter into meaningful relationships with people," is an arbitrary assertion of vague meaning. What is meant by meaningful? As I understand the term, it is manifestly untrue with respect to Oswald. The data published by the Commission disproves it. On some jobs he was a good worker, on others a poor one. On his last job he rode to Irving and from Irving to Dallas on weekends with a fellow employee. Is that a meaningful relation? In the Soviet Union he had affairs with girls. He married one of them. His married life was stormy. But he appears to have been an affectionate father. The Report pictures him playing with his daughter in the evening preceding the assassination. His wife, who appears to have been hostile to him, testified: "And he was a good family man" (New York Times, November 24, 1964, p. 32, col. 3). And on this score the Report

says: "The Commission does not believe that the relations between Oswald and his wife caused him to assassinate the President" (p. 423).

Oswald's "deep-rooted resentment at all authority" is also mythic. Nothing in his service record supports that idea. Nor does his work history bear that out. Perhaps the Commission means political authority or governmental authority, which, of course, is not "all authority." But of this, likewise, the Commission offers no proof, only the repeated assertion as though it were laboring to convince itself. In this connection I was struck by an oddity in Oswald's "Historic Diary." In that document, he refers to Soviet officials as bureaucrats, his references to U.S. embassy officials in Moscow with whom he had contact and with whom he came into conflict on the occasion of his "show-down" over renouncing his American citizenship, are marked by formal respect. He does not characterize them adversely.

Many men have had an "urge to find a place in history." It is generally called ambition and is considered a laudable quality. In the Report it has been transmuted into an "isolated" factor contributing to the formation of a character on the part of a malcontent who, in part therefore, assassinated the President of the United States. But perhaps it was not the ambition, or not the ambition alone, which made the contribution. Very like it was the despair which followed failure. I suppose failure has driven some men to deeds of desperation. More often, I have observed, it has the opposite effect. Cromwell, when he thought

failure attended him, considered quitting England. Lenin, also a self-avowed Marxist like Oswald, several months before the February revolution of 1917 thought that his cause was hopeless and pondered emigrating to America in order to start building a revolutionary movement anew. Oswald, when his hopes for a better life in the Soviet Union were dashed, did not try to assassinate Khrushchev or even his son-in-law, but decamped with his family to the United States. Ironic, isn't it?, that his "defection" should be made to obscure his return! If I understand the Report, Oswald, driven to despair by his failure to kill Walker, assassinated Kennedy. Can you understand that reasoning?

In discovering that Oswald had a capacity for violence, the Commission did no more than affirm an ancient saw. Every man that ever lived was capable of violence. Are we not born with aggressive instincts prompting violence under various conditions? Are these instincts not <sup>nurtured</sup> retained by our culture and especially by "our" government which prepares constantly for global conflict and uses violence as an instrument of policy in Asia, Africa, America, and Europe as occasion seems to it to make it necessary?

Assuredly, like every man Oswald was capable of violence. We did not need the Commission to tell us that. The problem, however, was not whether he had a capacity for violence, but whether he was addicted to it, had manifested a recourse to it either temperamentally or by design. The Commission says he was. The Report refers to his striking his wife. She so testified. She

also testified that she provoked him. On one such occasion she said, "Generally, I think that was right, for such things that is the right thing to do. There was some grounds for it" (p. 468). It reminds one of the Russian proverb: Who does not beat his wife does not love her. When the Russian "colonists" in Fort Worth persuaded Marina to leave Oswald and hid her from him, George De Morenschildt told Oswald where she was; he told the Commission "if somebody did that to me, a lousy trick like that, to take my wife away, and all the furniture, I would be mad as hell, too. I am surprised that he didn't do something worse" (p. 401). Apparently Oswald's capacity for violence was not sufficiently stimulated.

The Commission establishes Oswald's capacity for violence by citing his attempt to kill General Walker. Apparently the Commission did not find it necessary to comment on the extraordinary discrepancy between the poor marksmanship displayed by Oswald when he missed Walker, who was sitting before a lighted window at a relatively short distance from the fence on which Oswald rested his rifle and telescopic sight, and the excellent marksmanship shown by the sniper who "got" Kennedy.

The information that Oswald had made an attempt on Walker's life was offered to the Commission by Oswald's wife. It was a surprise to the F.B.I. J. Edgar Hoover, who told the Commission that "if any person has fought Communism, I certainly have fought it," said, "Mrs. Oswald told us about the attempt on Walker's life. . . . No one had known a thing about that" (New

York Times, November 24, 1964, p. 31, col. 8).

The surprise must have been mortifying. F.B.I. agents had interviewed Oswald following his return to the United States from the Soviet Union and thrice subsequently (p.326). They concluded, Hoover testified, "We found no evidence at all that Oswald was a man addicted to violence" (ibid). Notice Hoover's emphasis: "no indication at all." Notice, too, that the absence of evidence of an indication of violence on Oswald's part led the F.B.I. to conclude that he was not a threat to the President's life, and it did not include his name among those it turned over to the Secret Service as possible assassins. Possibly this is what the Commission had in mind when it criticized the F.B.I. for having too restrictive a view of its functions. And possibly Hoover had the same point in his mind when he, in turn, denounced the Commission for a classic case of Monday morning quaeter <sup>h</sup> tracking.

With superior wisdom and hindsight the Commission decided "that in spite of the belief among those who knew him that he was apparently not dangerous, Oswald did not lack the determination and other traits required to carry out a carefully planned killing of another human being and was willing to consummate such a purpose if he thought there was sufficient reason to do so" (p. 406).

"Some idea of what he thought was sufficient reason. . . may be found in the nature of the motive that he stated for his attack on General Walker" (p. 406). In this instance the Commission found the motive. Rather it was handed to the Com-

mission by Oswald's living wife. "She testified that Oswald said that General Walker "'was a very bad man, that he was a fascist, that he was the leader of a fascist organization, and when I said that even though all of that might be true, just the same he had no right to take his life, he said if someone had killed Hitler in time it would have saved many lives'" (p. 436).

Marina Oswald's testimony is hearsay evidence and probably inadmissible in a trial. The Commission gives it full credit; It has no other way to establish the point. Ironically, the reason Marina says Oswald gave for the attempt to kill Walker, which the Commission accepted at face value, is the kind of reason offered by the apologists for the atom bombing of Japan in World War II--to save lives! This is the sensible kind of action the Commission, as reasonable men, will understand.

Above all, the motive is political. What political motive did Oswald have for killing Kennedy? Did he think Kennedy was a fascist? Did he hate Kennedy?

"Oswald was asked during the New Orleans radio debate in which he engaged on August 21, 1963, whether. . . 'he agreed with Castro that President Kennedy was a ruffian and a thief. He replied that he would not agree with that particular wording.' It should also be noted. . . that one witness testified that shortly before the assassination Oswald had expressed approval of President Kennedy's active role in the area of civil rights" (pp. 414-415).

On October 25, 1963, Oswald attended "a meeting of the



American Civil Liberties Union, held at Southern Methodist University. . . . Later in the evening Oswald became involved in a discussion. . . declared he was a Marxist, although denying that he was a Communist. . . admitted that the United States was superior to the Soviet Union in the area of civil liberties and praised President Kennedy for his work in that connection" (pp. 738-739).

Oswald's wife testified that "her husband never said anything bad about President Kennedy. . . . She said Oswald used to read her magazine articles about the President that were generally favorable and never would say anything approving or disapproving about Mr. Kennedy" (New York Times, November 24, 1963, p. 32, col. 4).

When Oswald was in the hands of the Dallas police, charged with murder of patrolman Tippett and President Kennedy, he was asked "what he thought of President Kennedy. . . . He said 'I like the President's family very much. I have my own views about national policies'" (Report of Capt. J. W. Fritz, Dallas Police Dept., p. 607).

Thomas J. Kelley, Inspector, U.S. Secret Service, in his "First Interview of Lee Harvey Oswald," reported that Oswald replied to Fritz: "I have no views on the President. My wife and I like the President's family. They are interesting people. I have my own views on the President's national policy. I have a right to express my views but because of the charges I do not think I should comment further. . . . I am not a malcontent,

nothing irritated me about the President" (p. 627).

Had Oswald yearned for his place in history in accordance with the disturbed values of his disordered mind, that was his golden opportunity to proclaim his deed and advance his reason into the <sup>consciousness</sup> conscience of the entire world. His interrogators inquired about his political views and religious beliefs. That was his opportunity. The worldwide press, radio, television, all the media of communication were, so to speak, at his disposal. The world was waiting to hear what the alleged killer had to say. Lincoln's assassin paused in his flight to denounce his victim as a tyrant. Other presidential assassins acknowledged their acts and stated their motives. Trotsky's murderer carried on his person a spurious political raison d'etre for his deed. Oswald, the self-avowed Marxist, in the dream situation of a revolutionary in capitalist police captivity, disclaimed any motive for killing Kennedy while he proclaimed his innocence. Gone was his golden moment and sealed was his fate, for thereby he created the motive for his own assassination. Oswald guilty would have been permitted to live until put to death by the standards of reasonable men. But Oswald "innocent" had to die forthwith. If Oswald's capacity for violence was proved by his attack on Walker, whom he hated and whom he thought a dangerous fascist, then it was disproved by the assassination of Kennedy, whom Oswald apparently liked and whose civil-liberties policy he approved.

One by one the isolated factors of Oswald's character lead

not to murder. There remains only his "avowed commitment to Marxism and communism." On this theme I can speak with some small authority. The idea that a commitment to Marxism can in itself contribute to a murder is a phantastic slander more appropriate to the Hearst or other yellow press than to a Presidential Commission charged with establishing the truth about the assassination of the head of state of the United States.

Marxism, historically and theoretically, offers the workers of the world the vision and ideal of a better life and rational social order than is their lot under capitalism. Oswald had that vision. He approved that ideal. He began to read radical literature when he was fifteen. "He told Aline Mosby, a reporter who interviewed him after he arrived in Moscow: 'I'm a Marxist. . . I became interested about the age of 15. From an ideological viewpoint. An old lady handed me a pamphlet about saving the Rosenbergs'" (388).

So he began with official Soviet communist literature. But apparently he transcended that body of dogma while in the Marine Corps; about two years after his introduction to radical literature, "one of Oswald's favorite books was Orwell's 1984" (p. 388). Nevertheless, while serving in Japan, Oswald "made up his mind to go to Russia and see for himself how a revolutionary society operates, a Marxist society" (p. 390).

In letters from the Soviet Union, Oswald wrote to his brother Robert that he "could never have been personally happy in the U.S.," in which the economic system "exploits all its workers"

and in which "art, culture and the spirit of man are subjected to commercial enterprising, religion and education are used as a tool to suppress what would otherwise be a population questioning their government's unfair economic system and class .'"

He criticized "segregation, unemployment, automation, and the use of military force to suppress other populations" (p. 391).

He explained that he did not want "'ever again. . . to be used as a tool in its (U.S.) military aggressions.'" And he reproached Robert, who apparently misunderstood his motives for going to the Soviet Union to live. "'So you speak of advantages.. Do you think that is why I am here? For personal, material advantages? Happiness is not based on oneself, it does not consist of a small home, of taking and getting. Happiness is taking part in the struggle where there is no borderline between one's own personal world and the world in general. I never believed I would find more material advantages at this stage of development in the Soviet Union than I might of had in the U.S.'" (p. 391).

The reproof was justified. Oswald was an idealist. So high had been his hopes for identification with the Soviet world, wherein, thereby, he had hoped to achieve identity as a fighter for communism, that when a petty bureaucrat ignored his application for Soviet citizenship and the government ordered him out of the country on twenty-four hours' notice, Oswald cut "himself above his left wrist in an apparent suicide attempt" (p. 692). He was hospitalized and was examined by a psychiatrist, who concluded that he was not dangerous to other people" (p. 692).

9 quotes 7  
The Commissioners were all men of material substance and were not taken in by Oswald's youthful revolutionary zeal and Marxist idealism. They found that "While his defection resulted in part" from his commitment to Marxism, there was "validity in the observation of" at least one person who knew Oswald after his return "to the U.S.," that his defection had a more personal and psychological basis" (p. 390). It is possible to eat one's cake and have it, too!

9 quotes 7  
Oswald tried to build a new life in the Soviet Union. In January 1960 he was sent by the Soviet Government to Minsk. The governmental Red Cross gave him 500 rubles and bought a railroad ticket for 150 rubles. Government employees met him in Minsk. He was introduced to the Mayor who welcomed him and provided him a rent-free apartment, but got, later, an "attractive one" with a balcony overlooking the <sup>view</sup>, "for which, had he been a Russian worker, he would "have had to wait for several years." He described it as a "Russian dream." He went to work as a lathe operator in the "experimental shop" of the Belorussian Radio and Television Factory, employing about 5,000 workers, for which he received a salary of 900 rubles a month, "normal for his type of work." From the governmental Red Cross he received a supplemental sum of 700 rubles a month, making his total income "about equal to that of the director of the factory." He became a dues-paying union member (pp. 697-698).

The man who could not establish "meaningful relationships" with people became "good friends with department head" Alexander

Ziger and his family and with co-worker Pavel Solovachev, with both of whom he corresponded after his return to the U.S. (pp. 697-698). His "Historic Diary" records that he was "very satisfied." For a while, at least, it seemed that the lonely idealist who went to the Soviet Union spurning material advantages and hungering for a meaningful part in the worldwide struggle for communism, was corrupted by friendly human acceptance and economic privileges extended by the Soviet government. Henry Thorn<sup>2</sup>lay, who served in the Marine Corps with Oswald, thought that the latter "not only wanted a place in history but also wanted to live comfortably in the present" (p. 389).

But it was not to be. The bribe was effective only temporarily. Oswald's observing eye retained its brightness, his critical faculty its acumen. The core of his Marxist beliefs remained intact and enabled him to see through the shams and shibboleths of official Soviet communism. Against the ponderous and ubiquitous weight of official Soviet officialdom, his sympathies remained with the poor, with the peasant and worker.

He joined the Belorussian Society of Hunters and Fishermen, "hunting for small game," spending "the night in small villages." He "described the peasant life which he saw as crude and poor" (pp. 698-699).

On May 1, 1960, six and a half months after arriving in the Soviet Union and only 108 days after starting work in Minsk, "he noted that one of his acquaintances 'relats many things I do not know about the U.S.S.R. I begin to feel uneasy inside,

its true!" Two months later he wrote: "'As my Russian improved I became increasingly conscious of just what sort of a society I live in.'" He noted the "compulsory afterwork meeting, usually political information meeting. Compulsory attendance at lectures and the sending of the entire shop collective (except me) to pick potatoes on Sunday. . . . The opinions of the workers (unvoiced) are that its a great pain in the neck. . . . I am increasingly aware of the presence, in all things, of Lebizen, shop party secretary, fat, fortyish, and jovial on the outside. He is a no-nonsense party regular'" (p. 394).

"While in the Soviet Union he wrote his longest and clearest piece of work, The Collective," (p. 395)"which amounted to 50 typed pages" (p. 700). "This was a fairly coherent description of life in that country" (p. 395). Oswald described the manuscript. . . as 'a look into the lives of work-a-day average Russians'" (p. 700).

In his manuscript, Oswald attributed the lack of unemployment to the shortage of labor-saving machinery and the heavy load of bureaucracy. . . . He described life in Russia as centering around the Kollektive. . . . Meetings of the Kollektive were so numerous as to be staggering. . . . They were scheduled so as not to interfere with work, and lasted anywhere from 10 minutes to 2 hours. . . at the political meetings. . . party members were posted in the audience to watch for the slightest sign that anyone's attention might relax, even for a moment. . . . The 'spontaneous' demonstrations on Soviet holidays. . . were

almost as well organized as the Kollektivist meetings at the factory. . . elections were supervised to ensure that everyone voted, and that they voted for the candidate of the Communist Party.'\*\* The manuscript touches on other aspects of Soviet life as the housing shortage and the corruption it evoked. . . and the omni-present radio. . ." (p. 701).

"On January 4, 1961, 1 year after he had been issued his 'stateless' residence permit, Oswald was summoned to the passport office in Minsk and asked if he still wanted to become a Soviet citizen. He replied that he did not. . ." (p. 701). Privilege and plenty were not for him. He wrote in his diary for January 4-31: "'I have had enough'" (p. 701).

His contact with economic, political, and social reality was strong and true, nurtured not by ego or id, but despite neurotic conflict in his personality, by superego in the form of Marxist idealism and belief.

After his return to the United States "Oswald often commented on Russian life. . . . His most frequent criticism concerned the contrast between the lives of ordinary workers and the lives of Communist Party members. He told an acquaintance in Dallas that the working class in the Soviet Union made just about enough to buy clothing and food and that only party members could afford luxuries. . . . He complained about the lack of freedom in Russia, the lack of opportunity to travel. . . and the chronic scarcity of food products. To one acquaintance, he observed that the party members were all 'opportunists' who 'shouted and made the most noise,' but who were interested only



in their own welfare" (pp. 699-700). He did not, however, like a large number of disillusioned communists and disenchanted idealists, become reconciled to capitalism. He renounced neither his idealism nor his beliefs. The "material" which Oswald seems to have written after he left the Soviet Union. . . expresses great hostility to both communism and capitalism. He wrote, that to a person knowing both of those systems, 'there can be no mediation between those systems as they exist today and that person. He must be opposed to their basic foundations and representatives. . . . No man, having known, having lived, under the Russian Communist and American capitalist system, could possibly make a choice between them, there is no choice, one offers oppression, the other poverty. Both offer imperialistic injustice, tinted with two brands of slavery'" (p. 397). Of these views the Commission, with purposeful or blind misunderstanding, says that they appear "to be more an expression of his own psychological condition than of reasoned analysis" (p. 397).

With such views, it is not to be wondered at that Oswald could not establish a rapport with the "so-called Russian community" in Fort Worth and environs. These were chiefly middle or upper class professionals and businessmen, no doubt sensitive about their Russian origin and therefore carefully patriotic; and committed to conformist American bourgeois ideals of society, comfort, and success. Oswald was for them a dangerous interloper. His personality defects must have exacerbated the inevitable conflict between him and them. Moreover, they seem to

have showered Marina Oswald with help. "Jean De Mohrenschildt said: 'Marina had a hundred dresses given to her. . . he objected to that lavish help, because Marina was throwing it into his face. . . . He was offensive with the people. And I can understand why, because. . . he could never give her what the people were showering on her. . . no matter how hard he worked--and he worked very hard'" (pp. 400-401). Could it be that Mr. De Mohrenschildt misunderstood Oswald's attitude<sup>x</sup> that his resentment was born of what he considered a repetition of his Soviet experience--an attempt to win his family's or his wife's conformity by the offer of material advantages, by a bribe, or by what he took to be a bribe? Did he regard his wife's responses as a betrayal of his hopes? Should his resentment at the "colonists" virtually stealing his wife and child from him be considered a "normal" and justified attitude in the circumstances? Or should his hostility be cited by the Commission as evidence of mental or emotional instability and an inability to establish meaningful relationships with people? Incidentally, is not hostility in such circumstances a meaningful relationship?

Oswald, however, was not content merely to denounce both the capitalist and Soviet worlds. The man who taught himself Marxism and saw through the lies of both the American and Russian social systems, set about formulating a theory of the ideal social system. "' . . . it is imature,'" he wrote, "'to take the sort of attitude which says 'a curse on both your houses.'<sup>6</sup> There are two great representatives of power in the world, simply

\* Add contrast between O, product of Amer. society who resounded material acquisitions as an ideal, and Marina, "new Soviet" woman, who embraced those same values!

expressed, the left and right. . . any practical attempt at one alternative must have at its nucleus the traditional ideological best of both systems, and yet be utterly opposed to both systems'" (p. 397).

The future society was to be a "separate, democratic, pure communist society. . . but one with union-communes, democratic socializing of production and without regard to the twisting apart of Marxist Communism by other powers" (p. 398).

"He thought the new alternative would have its best chance to be accepted after conflict between the two world systems" will have left the "country without defense or foundation of government after which the survivors would 'seek a alternative to those systems which have brought them misery'" (p. 397). He indicated that the future alternative course to capitalism and communism could be safeguarded by "preparation in a special party" (p. 397). He rejected the Communist Party U.S.A., because it "betrayed itself! it has turned itself into the traditional lever of a foreign power to overthrow the government of the United States; not in the name of freedom or high ideals, but in servile conformity to the wishes of the Soviet Union and in anticipation of Soviet Russia's complete domination of the American continent. There can be no sympathy for those who have turned the idea of communism into a vil curse to western man" (p. 398).

The tactics that Oswald advocated to achieve his alternative society were "'(r)esourfulniss and patient working towards the aforesaid goals. . . rather than loud and useless manifestation's

of protest.'" While these tactics "may prove to be too limited in the near future, they should not be confused with slowness, indecision or fear, only the intellectually fearless could even be remotely attracted to our doctrine, and yet this doctrine requires the utmost restraint, a state of being in itself majestic in power" (p. 398).

So the ardent would-be revolutionary who went to the Soviet Union hoping and intending to find a place in the struggle for communism had returned to the United States still a Marxist, unreconciled to capitalism, but ~~had become~~ a sectarian. His ideals remained intact; he had a new goal; his course now the exposition of his new theory. After his arrest the Soviet government denounced him as a Trotskyist.

The sectarian tried to find organized political activity. He offered to collaborate with the Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Party. In October, 1962, he tried to join the latter organization "but his application was not accepted since there was then no chapter in the Dallas area" (p. 289). All his efforts were unproductive of collaboration. He tried to play a role in support of the social revolution in Cuba and set up a "fictitious" branch of the Fair Play for Cuba movement in New Orleans. It had a short-lived ineffective existence.

The assassination of President Kennedy brought his political career to a tremendous climax and deadly denouement. While in the hands of the police "Oswald said he was a Marxist. He repeated two or three times 'I am a Marxist, but not a Leninist-

Marxist'" (p. 610). U.S. Secret Service Inspector Kelley reported that "Captain Fritz asked: 'Are you a Communist?' Oswald answered, 'No, I am a Marxist but I am not a Marxist Leninist.' Captain Fritz asked him what the difference was and Oswald said it would take too long to explain it to him. . . . Among other things Oswald said. . . that there would be no change in the attitude of the American people toward Cuba with President Johnson becoming President because they both belonged to the same political party and the one would follow pretty generally the policies of the other" (p. 629).

If Oswald had any part in the assassination of President Kennedy it was in spite of, not because of, his commitment to Marxism. So much is clear even without reference to that other pillar of Marxism--the primacy of mass struggles as levers of political and social change. Oswald, who boasted to his jailers "that he had read about everything written by or about Karl Marx" (p. 635), could not have been ignorant of Marx's and Engel's disavowal of the "great-man theory" of history, and of their repudiation of individual terrorism, however heroic, as a policy or method of struggle for ideas and the development of working class consciousness.

When a definitive biography of Oswald is written the author or authors will have to elucidate the relationship of Oswald's personality to his commitment to Marxism. The Commission was not able to do so. It believed and wanted to prove Oswald guilty; it searched in vain for a motive for murder in both

his personality and political credo. In place of a motive it offers a vague theory of a number of isolated factors which, together with "the many other factors which may have molded the character of Lee Harvey Oswald there emerged a man capable of assassinating President Kennedy" (p. 424). To prove its thesis that he and he alone was the assassin, the Commission distorted the meaning of Oswald's life and fabricated the monstrous accusation that Marxism induces murder.

Without more convincing evidence of Oswald's guilt than that offered by the Commission, his loyal espousal of Marxism, his elevated point of view, and his identity with the life of workers in both the U.S. and the Soviet Union speak loudly for him.

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