UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : Mr. Belmont

DATE: April 27, 1964

FROM : A. Rosen

SUBJECT: LEE HARVEY OSWALD, AKA
INTERNAL SECURITY - RUSSIA -CUBA

SYNOPSIS:

Leo Sauvage, a 51-year-old French correspondent for a socialist newspaper and reported employee of the French Communist Party in 1956, wrote critical and ostensibly objective article entitled "The Oswald Affair" which appeared in the March, 1964, issue of "Commentary", a publication of the American Jewish Committee. This article is similar to other articles being written by foreign authors having a background of communist sympathies. It is based on speculation, unfounded material and half-truths. Sauvage tries to discredit many of the facts indicating Oswald is guilty and also implies the true facts will never be brought out because of the influence of the FBI and other police agencies.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is not felt we have the responsibility of furnishing the Commission with every piece of inaccurate, speculative commentary on the assassination. If you approve, the President's Commission will not be furnished a copy of this article as the magazine containing the article is readily available in the United States. A copy will be furnished to Dallas for its information.

LEO SAUVAGE

Leo Sauvage was born 2/23/13 in Nancy, France, and was reported to be a correspondent and chief of the New York Bureau of "Le Populaire," French socialist newspaper. (40-0-3796)

105-82555

ENCLOSURE

- Mr. C. D. DeLoach
- Mr. R. E. Wick
- Mr. W. C. Sullivan
- Mr. I. W. Conrad
- Mr. R. E. Lenihan

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Enclosure

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"Commentary" describes Sauvage as an author and New York correspondent for "Le Figaro," Paris for nearly 15 years.

In 1951 information was developed that Sauvage was a member of a small group close to Louis Dolivet who was refused re-entry to the United States due to Dolivet's suspected communist and comintern background. (100-23792-148)

On 9/27/56 a confidential source abroad advised the name of Leo Sauvage appeared on a list of individuals employed by the French Communist Party. (64-200-231-1559)

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

This organization has been described as being founded in 1906 and incorporated in 1911. The fundamental purpose of this organization is said to be to safeguard the civil and religious rights of Jewish people throughout the world and to combat discrimination and prejudice. In 1946 it was described as being pro-Palestine with its ultimate aim being to secure a "real homeland" in Palestine. The committee has been critized by the communist "Daily Worker" in the past for its anticommunist assertions. Some individuals connected with the committee have had communist affiliations. (62-102104-8)

"COMMENTARY"

"Commentary," a monthly magazine published by the American Jewish Committee, states it aims to meet the need for a journal of "significant thought and opinion on Jewish affairs and contemporary issues." It will be "hospitable to diverse points of view and belief" and it hopes to encourage "original creative endeavor." The editor maintains the opinions and views expressed therein are the authors own and do not necessarily express "Commentary's" viewpoint or position.

DETAILS:

Sauvage prefaces his "objective" article with several observations which serve to set the tone of the article which is to follow. He first of all stresses that all the evidence against Oswald was "leaked" to the various news media and he accuses the FBI as one of the principals in leaking this information. Sauvage then states as the Dallas authorities convicted Oswald by "press and television" the FBI has "forced" the hand of the President's Commission by leaking the results of our investigation and in this manner assuring that the Commission will return a verdict of guilty for Oswald.

Sauvage proceeds in a systematic manner to review the alleged evidence against Oswald from the assassination on. He quotes freely the published statements of individuals such as Dallas County District Attorney Henry Wade, Chief Jesse Curry and Captain Will Fritz of the Dallas Police Department, and then endeavors to show that the early erroneous statements made by them were really intended to deceive and cover up the true facts. Sauvage imputes to impulsive publicity-seeking statements intrigue and conspiracy. In order to lend credence to some of his theories Sauvage goes as far as to attribute public statement to SAC Gordon Shanklin of Dallas regarding the assassination. Of course these statements are completely untrue.

Some of the alleged facts which Sauvage highlights as showing Oswald could not be the assassin are as follows:

1. That it was physically impossible for Oswald to have traveled from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository Building and escape without anybody seeing him.

2. That because of the lack of security around the building immediately after the assassination anybody could have entered or left the building without being seen.

3. Sauvage claims the assassination rifle would not lend itself to three accurate shots and that Lee Harvey Oswald did not have the talent or the experience to fire the rifle as accurately as alleged.

4. Sauvage also quotes various statements from doctors at Parkland Memorial Hospital who afforded the President emergency treatment, that the President had been shot from the front. This, of course, is completely erroneous and has been checked out numerous times. This is a favorite of the communist press.

5. Sauvage also claims four shots were fired not three and he is skeptical of the findings of the FBI Laboratory that the three bullets fired were from the assassination rifle.

6. He suggests clues leading to Oswald's arrest were planted well in advance of the assassination and suggests a conspiracy.

7. He raises doubts concerning the murder of Officer J. D. Tippit by Oswald suggesting the facts as known are completely false.

Memorandum to Mr. Belmont
RE: LEE HARVEY OSWALD

In order to show "objectivity" Sauvage agrees with the facts as known to date that Oswald and Ruby did not conspire together. In fact, Sauvage goes so far as to say that any such idea is "rather childish."

Sauvage's attempt to appear as a humble modest reporter merely inquiring into the facts falls short and it is quite obvious that his intents and purposes for writing this article are to create embarrassment for the U. S. Government and to cloud the true facts relating to Oswald's guilt as well as to elicit support from sympathetic groups.

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- ☐ Teletype
- ☑ Enclosure (describe) Lee Harvey Oswald Commission Exhibit page 21
- ☐ Laboratory Work Sheet
- ☐ Personnel Security Questionnaire (PSQ)
- ☐ Loyalty Form
- ☐ Other (describe)

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THE OSWALD AFFAIR

LÉO SAUVAGE

On the day after the murder of President Kennedy, a New York lawyer, commenting on the case against Lee Harvey Oswald as it had been revealed up to that point, was quoted in the *Journal American* as saying that "The District Attorney has a suspect, but not much more." As a Frenchman, I thought it a strange coincidence that this lawyer's name should have been Emile Zola Berman. Unlike the suspect whom the first Emile Zola brought back from Devil's Island, however, Lee Harvey Oswald—even were he to be proved innocent—can never be brought back from the place to which he has been sent. But *could* he be proved innocent? If we believe that a man must be considered innocent until he is proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, we can already assert that Lee Harvey Oswald *was* innocent. For to the unbiased, critical mind, the case against him is a tissue of improbabilities, contradictions, and outright falsifications.

Is this a hasty judgment? Instead of saying "already," which suggests that any further information we get will strengthen my own impression of Oswald's innocence, should I not at least have said "still," implying that new evidence may yet be brought forward to sustain the almost universal American conviction of Oswald's guilt? Such prudence would certainly be the only proper attitude to take in any other case. But not in this one. All the available evidence against Oswald has either been leaked or eagerly and even ruthlessly spelled out whether true, half true, or demonstrably false; whether pertinent, confused, or obviously irrelevant. So far as Dallas is concerned, the case was proclaimed "cinched" by Chief Will Fritz of the Homicide Bureau as early as November 23, one day after the assassination. The following day, only two hours after Jack Ruby had disposed of Oswald in the basement of Dallas Police Headquarters, the case against him was declared "closed" by Police Chief Jesse Curry and by District Attorney Henry Wade who boasted that he had "sent men to the electric chair with less evidence." That same evening, in a televised press conference whose transcript will stand forever in the international annals of justice as an example of fantastic irresponsibility, Wade spoke the final word for the Dallas authorities: "I would say that without any doubt he [Oswald] is the killer . . . there is no question that he [Oswald] was the killer of President Kennedy . . ."

Of course, there is still the as yet uncompleted investigation of the Presidential Commission headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren. May *it* not turn up new evidence? It is difficult to see how. The Warren Commission, though it has its own legal staff and the right to subpoena witnesses, will nevertheless depend for its technical information on the FBI investigation, and the results of that investigation, though officially still confidential, have already been revealed to the world—and revealed, apparently, before the Warren Commission even received the FBI report from the Justice Department. On December 3, while dutifully publishing a statement by a Justice Department spokesman announcing that the FBI report had not yet been sent to the Attorney General for submission to President Johnson, the evening papers nevertheless felt confident in coming out with enormous banner headlines like "OSWALD LONE KILLER. FBI REPORT TO PROVE IT" (New York *Journal American*). The stories quoted anonymous "government sources," but the identity of these sources was no mystery at all in Washington; the FBI itself had leaked the "probable conclusions" of its report even while the report was still being written. Six days later, on December 9, the Justice Department, acting on instructions from the White House, delivered the now completed report directly to the Warren Commission. Quite naturally, the Commission had asked that nothing be made public until it had reviewed the document and taken whatever action seemed appropriate. Yet the New York *Times* of December 10 was able to put the following headline over the very story in which (in passing) it mentioned the Commission's desire to keep the report confidential: "OSWALD ASSASSIN BEYOND A DOUBT. FBI CONCLUDES. HE ACTED ALONE AND DID NOT KNOW RUBY, SAYS REPORT TO WARREN INQUIRY PANEL."

Léo Sauvage has for almost fifteen years been New York correspondent for *Le Figaro*, Paris' leading morning newspaper. A graduate both of the Sorbonne and of the Paris Law School, he is also the author of *Autopsie du Castrisme* (Paris, 1962). This is his first appearance in COMMENTARY.

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Thus, after the "press and television conviction" of Lee Oswald in Dallas, a second press and television conviction took place in Washington. And just as the Dallas authorities had forced the hand of any jury that would have heard the Oswald case, so the FBI has forced the hand of the Warren Commission. With the help of all the mass media, Oswald's guilt has now twice been sold to the public—despite the fact that no one has even so much as ventured to explain why a psychopathic regicide, acting (as we shall see) under circumstances that would make his capture inevitable, should renounce the ultimate satisfaction of glorying in his deed before the eyes of the world. I really do not see, therefore, why only those of us who are skeptical about the case against Oswald should await further information.

Before going on to raise some of the specific questions that Oswald's accusers should be forced to answer, let me make one final remark. I am a reporter and not a detective. Thus far, however, it is only the reporters, those "amateur investigators into the Kennedy assassination" whom Max Lerner in a recent column sarcastically advised to take "a much needed rest," who have shown up what Mr. Lerner himself described as "the tissue of guesswork, ignorance and contradictions in which the law enforcement officials were caught." In the face of so systematically prejudiced an investigation as has so far been made into the President's assassination, how else will the truth ever be arrived at if "amateurs" fail to ask the questions that the professionals have obfuscated or left unanswered?

I. Did Oswald Have an Alibi?

Though there have been a number of interesting official variations concerning certain quite important details, it is now an undisputed fact that Lee Oswald was in the second-floor lunchroom of the Texas School Book Depository on Elm Street a very short time after three shots were fired at the Presidential motorcade from a window on the sixth floor of the building. He was seen in the lunchroom by two witnesses: the manager of the Texas School Book Depository, Mr. Roy S. Truly, and a motorcycle policeman who was the first officer to enter the building.

The fact of Oswald's presence on the second floor, it should be noted, was first presented to the public as evidence *against* him. In his unforgettable press conference of Sunday, November 24 ("to detail some of the evidence against Oswald for the assassination of the President"), District Attorney Wade put it this way: "A police officer, immediately after the assassination, ran into the building and saw this man [Oswald] in a corner and tried to arrest him. But the manager of the building said he was an employee and it was all right . . ." In emphasizing that Oswald had barely escaped arrest "*immediately after the assassination*," the District Attorney was obviously seeking to convey the impression that Oswald had literally been caught red-handed. He therefore neglected to mention that the place in which Oswald was (as it were) "cornered" was the second-floor lunchroom; nor did he indicate that the police officer and the manager of the building had described Oswald as holding a Coca-Cola bottle in his hand. These details, however, had been announced the day before by Police Chief Jesse Curry, whose Saturday afternoon statement remains very intriguing. Chief Curry started by saying that he could tell from the sound of the shots that they had come from the School Book Depository, and that "right away" he had radioed an order from his car to surround and search the building. Then he told of the first officer to reach it, of this officer climbing the stairs together with the building manager (Mr. Truly), and of the two men seeing Oswald in the lunchroom. There were, he added, "other persons" in the lunchroom as well.

I can see only one explanation for the emphasis both Mr. Wade and Chief Curry placed on how soon *after* the shots Oswald was seen inside the building, and for the singular statement by Chief Curry—never repeated, but never corrected as a mistake either—to the effect that there were other witnesses to Oswald's presence in the lunchroom besides the motorcycle policeman and Mr. Truly. According to the version of the story given out by the police on Friday evening, Oswald had been stopped when leaving the building after the assassination, but had been allowed to proceed when Mr. Truly identified him as an employee. This version collapsed when Mr. Truly told the real story to the press, revealing that he had identified Oswald as an employee in the lunchroom, and not at the street door or on the sidewalk. Thus, there were no witnesses to testify to the exact time Oswald left the Elm Street building; and since this raised the possibility that he might claim to have left it *before* the crime, it became important to stress his presence in the building after the shots had been fired.

Chief Curry's statement that Oswald was in the lunchroom "among others" has never been retracted. But unless we are to impute criminal negligence, we must assume that on this point Mr. Curry was simply ill informed: if there really were other persons in the lunchroom at the time Oswald entered it and nobody bothered to question them about the exact moment and about his behavior, we could stop and draw our conclusions right now. For the exact moment that Oswald entered the lunchroom is of the very first importance in determining whether it was physically possible for him to have been on the sixth floor when the shots were fired.

All the reports we have—including the statements by Wade and Curry on television and those given to individual reporters—place Oswald in