

from Albert H. Gurnham's -

(1970)

proper . . . and he was not glad to see them. They felt that he did not like them. . . ."

"Q: Did he show any signs of that attitude towards them?"

"A: Yes. . . . Sometimes he would even quarrel with them."

"Q: When he quarreled with them, was it in regard to political ideas or what subjects?"

"A: Yes, they would not agree with him when he talked on political matters. . . . Of course it is difficult to remember all the conversations. But I know they had a difference of opinion with reference to political matters."

Here again, as at El Toro in the spring of 1959 during Oswald's final months as a Marine, we may observe that Oswald's "meaningful relationships" or lack of them were governed at least in part by ideology.

Sunday, November 18, 1962, marked a dividing line in the Oswalds' life. Henceforward, they were to be ostracized by virtually the entire Russian-speaking community of Dallas, who despised and feared Oswald for his Marxist rudeness but liked and pitied the apolitical Marina, who had disappointed them by returning to live with him. They took their general line from Bouhe, that philanthropist (in a small way), pillar of the Orthodox Church, and community leader. According to the testimony of Mrs. Ray (VIII, 424): "[Bouhe] was so disgusted when she [Marina] went back with Lee, he would have done anything for her. He said, 'If she goes back, I wash my hands clean.'"

Mrs. Ford's testimony (II, 307) coincides with this: "George Bouhe said he was not going to help them any more, he was through. . . . So it was just, rather, sort of, Marina and her husband were dropped at that time, nobody actually wanted to help."

Marina's statements (I, 34-35) show she was aware of the ostracism:

"Q: With regard to your Russian friends, did you find the time when they came less to see you and didn't show so much interest in you?"

"A: Yes."

"Q: Can you give us about the time, just approximately when you noticed that difference?"

"A: Soon after arriving in Dallas. Mostly it was De Mohrenschildt who visited us. He was the only one who remained our friend. The others sort of removed themselves."

Mrs. Ford's testimony makes it clear that the Russian community was generally aware that the De Mohrenschildts, in defiance of Bouhe, stood almost alone in continuing to see the Oswalds from time to time (II, 309):

"Q: You mentioned before that De Mohrenschildt was the only member of the Russian community that kept on seeing the Oswalds and trying to help them. Was there any discussion about that among your friends?"

"A: Yes; George De Mohrenschildt is rather an odd ball, among Russians anyway, so it was nothing unusual about him doing that. . . ."

"Q: Do you remember any specific conversations about the reasons as to why

De Mohrenschildt continued to associate with the Oswalds after the rest of you had given them up?"

"A: Well, I remember his wife was telling me like she said it was their duty now since everybody else dropped them and they needed help."

The testimony of Mrs. Ford's husband, Declan (II, 326-327), throws additional light, although the light of hearsay, on the continued relationship:

"Q: How old are the De Mohrenschildts?"

"A: I guess George De Mohrenschildt is between 50 and 55 years old."

"Q: Did it seem curious to you that a man of that age would be close to Lee Oswald who was around 21 or 22 at that particular time?"

"A: Not in the particular case."

"Q: Why do you say that?"

"A: Well, George De Mohrenschildt has a reputation for being a left-wing enthusiast or something, I don't mean a member of the Communist Party, but he is, I have heard other people say he has expounded the ideals of Marxism and since Lee Oswald is supposedly Marxist or a Communist they would agree on their political views. . . ."

"Q: Your knowledge of De Mohrenschildt's political views are [sic] hearsay?"

"A: All of it is hearsay."

"Q: How did you learn about Oswald's political views?"

"A: Also hearsay, from other people."

Who are the De Mohrenschildts? What is their background? At this point Chapter VI of the *Warren Report* had better be consulted (282-284):

"George De Mohrenschildt and his wife, both of whom speak Russian as well as several other languages . . . did continue to see the Oswalds on occasion up to about the time Oswald went to New Orleans on April 24, 1963. De Mohrenschildt was apparently the only Russian-speaking person in Dallas for whom Oswald had appreciable respect, and this seems to have been true even though De Mohrenschildt helped Marina leave her husband for a period in November of 1962. . . ."

"Extensive investigation has been conducted into the background of both De Mohrenschildts. The investigation has revealed that George De Mohrenschildt is a highly individualistic person of varied interests. He was born in the Russian Ukraine in 1911 and fled Russia with his parents in 1921 during the civil disorder following the revolution. He was in a Polish military academy for 1½ years. Later he studied in Antwerp and attended the University of Liège from which he received a doctor's degree in international commerce in 1928 [surely a misprint for 1938]. Soon thereafter, he emigrated to the United States; he became a U.S. citizen in 1949. De Mohrenschildt eventually became interested in oil exploration and production; he entered the University of Texas in 1944 and received a master's degree in petroleum geology and petroleum engineering in 1945. He has since become active as a petroleum engineer throughout the world. In 1960, after the death of his son, he and his wife made an 8-month hike from the United States-Mexican border to Panama over primitive jungle trails. By happenstance

they were in Guatemala City at the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion. A lengthy film and complete written log was prepared by De Mohrenschildt and a report of the trip was made to the U.S. Government. Upon arriving in Panama they journeyed to Haiti where De Mohrenschildt eventually became involved in a government-oriented business venture in which he has been engaged continuously from June 1963 until the time of this report.

"The members of the Dallas-Fort Worth Russian community and others have variously described De Mohrenschildt as eccentric, outspoken, and a strong believer in individual liberties and in the U.S. form of government, but also of the belief that some form of undemocratic government might be best for other peoples. De Mohrenschildt frankly admits his provocative personality.

"Jeanne De Mohrenschildt was born in Harbin, China, of White Russian parents. She left during the war with Japan, coming to New York in 1938 where she became a successful ladies dress and sportswear apparel designer. She married her present husband in 1959.

"The Commission's investigation has developed no signs of subversive or disloyal conduct on the part of either of the De Mohrenschildts. Neither the FBI, CIA, nor any witness contacted by the Commission has provided any information linking the De Mohrenschildts to subversive or extremist organizations. Nor has there been any evidence linking them in any way with the assassination of President Kennedy [italics mine]."

How did Marina view her husband's relationship with George De Mohrenschildt? According to her testimony (I, 30-31):

"Lee did not have any close friends, but at least he had—here in America—he had a great deal of respect for De Mohrenschildt."

"Q: Could you describe that relationship? Did they see each other often?"

"A: No, not very frequently. From time to time."

"Q: Did your husband tell you why he had so much respect for De Mohrenschildt?"

"A: Because he considered him to be smart, to be full of joy of living, a very energetic and very sympathetic person. . . . It was pleasant to meet with him. He would bring some pleasure and better atmosphere when he came to visit—with his dogs—he is very loud."

"Q: Did you like him?"

"A: Yes. Him and his wife."

"Q: Did you understand any of the conversations between your husband and De Mohrenschildt?"

"A: Yes, they were held in Russian."

"Q: Did they discuss politics or the Marxist philosophy or anything of that kind?"

"A: Being men, of course, sometimes they talked about politics, but they did not discuss Marxist philosophy. They spoke about current political events."

As to De Mohrenschildt's being energetic, Igor Voshinin, a member of the Russian community whose wife once worked for him, described De Mohrenschildt

(VIII, 467) as "a big, athletic man, a permanent tennis player—always playing tennis and liked all kinds of sports, you know; he would go to the ice arena there in the Fair Park, you know, and he devoted always a lot of time to sports—"

It was at this skating rink and on the tennis courts that a petroleum chemist named Everett D. Glover met the De Mohrenschildts; a passage in his testimony (X, 12) may well solve the mystery of why Oswald, who as we have seen quarreled on politics with virtually the entire Russian-speaking community, found it easy during and after the Missile Crisis to maintain his relationship with the De Mohrenschildts. For, according to Glover, when the chips were down and the President took action against the clear and present danger of the Russian nuclear threat from Cuba, De Mohrenschildt found it impossible to support him.

"The substance of what he said, he didn't like what Kennedy was doing at all. And the reason he gave, as far as I can remember, was the possible involvement in a nuclear war. . . . In other words, he was suggesting that he was sympathetic with Castro, at least I thought so—well, Castro is all right, he can't do any harm, he is just a little guy, and this is the general impression I got. Again, those may not be the exact expressions that he may have used. . . . He certainly never, in my acquaintance with him, tried to make out a case for the Communist system against our system. It was just sort of his shouting off about this thing I just described."

If the Glover statement is accurate, De Mohrenschildt was decidedly in the minority in his views on Kennedy, Castro, and the crisis. A nationwide Gallup Poll taken on October 23, the day following the President's speech announcing the detection of the missiles and declaring the naval quarantine found 86 percent of the American people fully approving the President's action. It may be confidently stated from a careful reading of the *Morning News* and *Times Herald* of the period that the percentage behind Kennedy in Dallas was a good deal higher than 86.

According to the testimony of the Voshinins, De Mohrenschildt tried rather strenuously to get them to meet the Oswalds, but they steadfastly refused. Voshinin thanked the Almighty that this was so (VIII, 466):

"So, anyhow, these people [the De Mohrenschildts] are, of course, leftist people."

"Q: The De Mohrenschildts are leftist?"

"A: Yeah. But she much more than him. . . . She was always bitterly to the left."

"Q: Did you ever meet either Lee or Marina Oswald?"

"A: No, sir; thank God!"

Mrs. Voshinin testified (VIII, 436, 437):

"According to George, he [Oswald] was a great—he had great intellectual powers; he was a very clever person—definitely intellectually inclined and very well-read person. . . . We wanted to stay away from them. Yes. And the De Mohrenschildts argued with us about that. . . . He [George] told me on several

occasions that, 'You know, I believe that he's just an idealistical Marxist.' And he said, 'You know, he's one of those pure Marxists.' . . .

"And finally I remember a pretty good conversation—George mentioned the possibility of Oswald being actually a Communist. Because, he said, 'You know, Natalie, I believe that he remained what he was.' . . .

"Q: Did it ever occur to you that [Oswald's] knowledge and his learning were entirely superficial? . . ."

"A: Not never. Because George was so emphatic about his mental powers, about his erudition, education, you know, that it really never occurred to me. I thought that he was an intellectual, very well read. Because George said that many times. He said, 'He's a very interesting person, he's very well read, a very intelligent person.'"

Since Mrs. Voshinin never saw or conversed with Lee Oswald, the testimony above must depend entirely on what the De Mohrenschildts told her. It does not square very well, to say the least, with what George De Mohrenschildt told the Commission's interrogating attorney (IX, 237):

"His mind was of a man with exceedingly poor background, who read rather advanced books, and did not understand even the words in them. . . . He did not understand the words—he just used them. So how can you take seriously a person like that? You just laugh at him. But there was always an element of pity I had, and my wife had, for him."

One of the more outrageous coincidences of the John F. Kennedy case is that on Long Island shortly after George De Mohrenschildt's arrival in the United States he met a family named Bouvier and their small daughter, Jacqueline. After the assassination he wrote, from Haiti, where he and Jeanne had arrived in mid-June of 1963, a letter of condolence (dated December 12, 1963) to Mrs. Kennedy's mother, now Mrs. Janet Lee Auchincloss of Washington, D.C. It reads in part as follows (De Mohrenschildt Exhibit 14, XIX, 557):

"Dear Janet:

"We were appaled [*sic*] and deeply disgusted by President Kennedy's cowardly assasination [*sic*]. We were ashamed that it happened in our home town. May I ask you to express my deepest sympathy to your daughter and tell her that both my brother [a Dartmouth professor] and I will always remember her as a charming little girl from East Hampton. So many sorrows have been ruining her young life.

"Since we lived in Dallas permanently last year and before we had the misfortune to have met Oswald [*sic*] and especially his wife Marina. Sometime last fall both my wife and I tried to help poor Marina who could not speak any English, was mistreated by her husband; she and the baby were malnourished [*sic*] and sickly. We took them to a hospital.

"Sometime last fall we heard that Oswald had beaten his wife cruelly, so we drove to their miserable place and forcibly took Marina and the child away from the character. Then he threatened me and my wife but I did not take him

seriously. Marina stayed with the family of some childless Russian refugees for a while, keeping her baby, but finally decided to return to her husband. *Somehow then we lost interest in the Oswalds.* [italics mine] . . ."

The final sentence is the very reverse of the truth in that, almost uniquely in the Russian-speaking community, the De Mohrenschildts did not "lose interest in" the Oswalds, as even their own testimony (which denigrates the frequency and importance of their contacts with the Oswalds) admits. The reader who enjoys being puzzled is directed to *Hearings*, Vol. IX, 273-275 and 323-325, in which the Commission attorney takes each of the De Mohrenschildts through the letter to Mrs. Auchincloss sentence by sentence and asks for clarification: sentence by sentence, that is, with the sole exception of "Somehow then we lost interest in the Oswalds," *which in each instance he omitted.*

In certain other matters, too, it seems as though the Commission staff (the interrogator and the writers of the *Report*) were trying harder to spare the De Mohrenschildts possible embarrassment than to get at the truth. For example, George was never asked about the statements that Glover alleged he made during the Missile Crisis, *although Glover's testimony was a matter of record before De Mohrenschildt was questioned.* De Mohrenschildt was questioned concerning Oswald's attitude toward Castro, which he answered all too briefly (IX, 267): "He [Oswald] said that he had admiration for Castro for opposing such a big power as the United States." This may be compared with Glover's sworn statement as to what De Mohrenschildt himself said: "Castro . . . is just a little guy." The similarity in thought seems rather evident.

About the time in December 1963 that De Mohrenschildt wrote his letter of condolence to Mrs. Auchincloss, Christiana and Ragmar Bogoiavlensky-Kearnton, Jeanne's daughter by a former marriage and the daughter's husband, visited Haiti for the Christmas-New Year season. They returned to Dallas shortly after the turn of 1964, and made the rounds of the De Mohrenschildts' friends reporting on life in Haiti. What they had to report, according to more than one De Mohrenschildt acquaintance of long standing, was that the American embassy in Haiti was upset over the De Mohrenschildts' statements, at holiday diplomatic cocktail parties, about the assassination. The alleged substance of these is outlined in the testimony of Sam Ballen (IX, 56-58) but is presented more clearly in the sworn statements of Mrs. Voshinin (VIII, 446-447):

"You know, they [Ragmar and Christiana Bogoiavlensky-Kearnton] said so much, I just hate to repeat it because I don't know how much they exaggerated. They were angry with both of them and I just don't believe that—"

"Q: Well, I don't want you to repeat all the personal things. I wanted your over-all impression, which you have now volunteered, that they were angry with George De Mohrenschildt and Mrs. De Mohrenschildt."

"A: Yes."

"Q: Angry in what sense?"

"A: Uh—they said that they were not very hospitable for one thing and for

the De Mohrenschildts' talk or whether indeed the De Mohrenschildts had said anything at all. The report of the FBI agent sent to Haiti after the assassination to interview the couple forms no part of the published record.

In the light of the fact that the De Mohrenschildts constituted virtually the only known association of the Oswalds in the four-month period prior to Lee's attempt on the life of General Walker and the added fact that their testimony concerning certain events of the evening of April 13, the third night following that attempt, conflicts directly with that of Marina (a matter glossed over in the *Warren Report*), this is a glaring omission. The general credibility of the De Mohrenschildts' testimony is extremely important to any intelligent examination of the pivotal Walker affair. No reinvestigation of the John F. Kennedy case that omits a relentlessly thorough questioning of the De Mohrenschildts can be in any sense complete.

Monday, Nov. 19: Headlines in the *Times Herald*: "Red Bomber Issues Seen Near Climax" (United States pressure for withdrawals of Il-28s continues).

"Walker in Mississippi For Tuesday Hearing" (AP dispatch records arrival in Oxford of general with three attorneys).

Tuesday, Nov. 20: Headlines in *Morning News*: "U.S. Hopes for Bomber Removal."

"Gen. Walker Visits Ole Miss Campus" (The general, interviewed previous day, said, "This place has certainly changed since the last time I was here").

Headlines in afternoon *Times Herald*: "Castro 'Surrenders' on Bombers / Russia Can Take Back 'Old, Slow' Jets, Fidel Says." This story is wrapped around "'Procedures' Hit in Walker Case," a one-column story by a staff writer in Oxford, Mississippi.

Wednesday, Nov. 21: Headlines in *Times Herald*: "JFK Says Cuba Crisis Eased / Bombers to Go; Inspection Issue Remains Thorny" (In Tuesday night press conference, President said Khrushchev had agreed that all Il-28s in Cuba would be withdrawn within thirty days; he announced he was ending the naval quarantine).

Prominent feature of front page is three-column photograph of Walker crossing town square in Oxford on way to court. Next to the report of the President's press conference is headline "Walker Testifies He's Set To Assist Own Defense" (General is quoted as saying he didn't cooperate with government psychiatrists in Springfield, Missouri, because he had been advised by his attorneys to give only "name, rank, and serial number" as though he were a prisoner of war).

Thursday, Nov. 22: Headlines in *Morning News*: "Release Ordered for 14,000 Air Reservists" (United States begins disbanding forces called up for Great Confrontation).

"Federal Judge Rules Walker Mentally Competent for Trial."

another thing, they—well, they said that George and Jeanne took a turn for the worse politically.”

“Q: Well, now, would you develop that, please?”

“A: I hate to do that, because I just don’t know how true it all is.”

“Q: I understand that all you are doing is telling us what they said. It is pure hearsay. I understand.”

“A: Pure hearsay of angry children.”

“Q: Yes.”

“A: That’s what it is. Right? Well, they said that the majority of their trouble with Jeanne and George was because they were shooting their mouths off over there—pro-left and against the United States—something to that effect; Chris said that George was making the most—the funniest accusations—statements in public, you know, like at cocktail parties, for example.”

“Q: Yes.”

“A: That he does not believe Oswald murdered the President; he believes that right wing or FBI, I am not sure—and this was, of course, awfully shocking to children.”

“Q: He believed that the right wing or the FBI what?”

“A: That’s what the children said.”

“Q: What?”

“A: Murdered the President. That’s what the children said.”

If the foregoing is correct, the Bogoiavlensky-Keartons were quite right in characterizing statements that the FBI or the right wing killed Kennedy as “pro-left and against the United States,” for that was in general the propaganda line emanating from Moscow and Havana both at the time of their visit to Haiti at the turn of 1963–64 and since.

In only one instance did the Commission staff take perceptible cognizance of this matter. Questioning attorney Max Clark of Fort Worth, a Commission interrogator, asked (VIII, 353):

“Do you have any question about De Mohrenschildt’s loyalty to the United States?”

“A: None; I think he talks a lot and I think he is a character but I don’t think he is disloyal in any respect.”

“Q: Would it surprise you to hear that he was of the opinion that the FBI was responsible for the assassination and that Oswald was just a ‘patsy’ in effect?”

“A: Knowing George, he is liable to say anything. . . .”

The Commission staff failed signally to pursue this further. The De Mohrenschildts never were asked directly whether they had been peddling such theories at gatherings of the diplomatic community in Port-au-Prince with the authority of having known the Oswalds well—theories that were very strange in the light of their later testimony that Oswald was not only a Marxist but a “revolutionary,” the very model of the type of person that the FBI never would utilize for any purpose or on any pretext. The Bogoiavlensky-Keartons were never called as witnesses. Nor, apparently, did anyone connected with the Commission bother to ask our diplomatic representatives in Haiti whether they had been perturbed by