

# Oswald in Moscow in 1959

## ...uff of Which

Government as any govern- ment. "But," said Lee, "I can not accept, as a resident of the United States, I shall remain here, if necessary, as a resident of the United States."

Lee said he had a chance to watch American military imperialism in action.

**Year's Planning**

Just a year before, Lee began getting ready to go to the United States. He had a chance to watch American military imperialism in action.

Lee, a nice-looking young man with grey eyes and brown hair, did not consider deserting the Marine Corps.

Did it occur to Lee that Soviet officials might be embarrassed by his efforts to become a citizen of their country at a moment when Russia was cultivating good relations with the United States?

Russian officials, he said, don't encourage and don't discourage men. They warned, however, that neither Lee's wish, nor their, would determine whether his citizenship application was to be accepted.

It depended on the "overall political atmosphere at the moment." Meanwhile, they offered Lee the sanctuary of a prolonged stay in the U.S.S.R.

As for officials at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, they were torn between their desire to give Lee time to think it over, and their legal obligation to hear his self-renouncing American citizenship if he insisted.

Lee was bitter of U.S. Consul Richard Snyder, who, he charged, stalled him when he asked to take the oath on Oct. 11, the only time Lee had been at the Embassy. As a result, Lee wouldn't go back there. He would let the Soviet government handle all details.

Lee, as a Marine private, later had the Philippines.

# Oswald Interview in Moscow Recalled

## Bitterness Detected in Long Talk

Nov. 25, 1963

What kind of man was Lee Harvey Oswald?

Did this admitted Marxist ever indicate he might be capable of shooting the President of the United States, as Dallas police say he assassinated John F. Kennedy last Friday — just five days before he was sent to the Soviet Union — just five days before he was sent to the Soviet Union?

Few people really seem to have known the 24-year-old New Orleans native well. Most describe him as a quiet sort of fellow, one who gave few opportunities to really understand him.

But in a rare moment of earnestness he gave one to Miss Patricia Johnson, and at the time she was halfway through a newspaper article in the North American Newspaper Alliance.

**Interview in Moscow**

The time was early November 1959. The place—the Hotel Metropole, Moscow's preferred hotel for foreigners.

Oswald had arrived in the Soviet Union on Oct. 22 and had met with an Marxist phrean, John F. Kennedy, then a young Massachusetts Senator. "He didn't speak about politics in a personal way."

**Qualities Indicated**

During their long conversation nothing he said indicated he favored such murder as a political weapon.

"I don't see our conversation, I could see that he was a man capable of a whole lot because of his growing bitterness," she said.

"My mother," he said, "was very bitter. She had to produce proof for the consulate, and I good evidence of what happened to workers in the United States."

"But," she added, "I don't think this is the kind of person that might be a methodical way. He would have learned whatever he needed to know."

**Reports Detailed**

This description dovetails with the FBI report that back on March 20 of this year Oswald, using an assumed name, ordered from a mail-order firm the rifle with which President Kennedy was shot during a motorcade in Dallas.

He was bitter, Miss Johnson said, against "capitalism" and "warrior exploitation in the United States—classic Communist propaganda."

But he never expressed any hatred of the presidency or of John F. Kennedy, then a young Massachusetts Senator. "He didn't speak about politics in a personal way."

**Qualities Indicated**

During their long conversation nothing he said indicated he favored such murder as a political weapon.

"I don't see our conversation, I could see that he was a man capable of a whole lot because of his growing bitterness," she said.

"My mother," he said, "was very bitter. She had to produce proof for the consulate, and I good evidence of what happened to workers in the United States."

"But," she added, "I don't think this is the kind of person that might be a methodical way. He would have learned whatever he needed to know."

# Call for Control Of Firearms Grows

By the Associated Press

The Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association said Sunday the assassination of President Kennedy accented a need for federal legislation to control interstate sale of firearms.

Chief Thomas J. O'Brien of Southfield, chairman of the association's legislative committee, asked Rep. Thomas O'Neill Jr. (D) of Massachusetts to introduce legislation, which he said would be introduced in the House.

The present weaknesses in our laws that permit criminals and irresponsible individuals to obtain firearms from without their state of residence in order to circumvent the laws of that state... must be remedied," Mr. O'Brien said.

The police chief's key proposal would prohibit the sale, rental or lease of firearms by dealers within the various states to nonresidents of that state who have not complied with all the laws, rules, and regulations of their state of residence relating to the acquiring of a firearm.

The proposals would apply also to interstate transportation of weapons.

ing to him of Soviet citizenship, and the Soviet Government didn't. He was worried when I talked with him. Their talk was very emotional. She told her "once the Supreme accepted him he would give me his full story. He promised to come and talk with me before he jumped the hedge and went to live in a Russian."

"About two days later I went down to the floor where he lived and asked for him, and they just threw up their hands and said, 'G'bye, g'bye.' He vanished without a trace."

JOHNSON (PRISCILLA) EXHIBIT No. 4

EXHIBIT No. 8

Sunday Globe—November 24, 1963

# re Made'

Lee was answered when I knocked he wouldn't do anything don't go to his door and why, a few minutes without at least letting me know. I was in my room, I never learned why.

Two days later I went to the second floor "debarraza"—the woman who sits near the elevator and hands out keys to each room—and asked for Mr. Oswald. Her hands flew up in a knowing-said gesture. "He's gone," she said.

I wondered what had happened to him since. Now I know before closing the door, that know.

EXHIBIT No. 8—Continued

# Interview With Suspect Oswald in Moscow in 1959 'The Stuff of Which'

The author was Moscow Correspondent for NANA in 1959. A few years before, in 1952, she had been research assistant on Viet Nam for John F. Kennedy, then a senator. She is perhaps the only person to have been good friends with both the late President and his suspected assassin. She is today a freelance writer on Soviet affairs.

By PRISCILLA JOHNSON

OSWALD, Lee Harvey Oswald, was an American newspaperman who was waiting to do this one thing: to divorce his American citizenship and become a citizen of the Soviet Union.

The time was November, 1959. The place was my room on the third floor of Moscow's Hotel Metropol. The speaker was Lee Harvey Oswald, the suspect in the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

With his suit of charcoal gray flannel, dark tie and tan cashmere sweater, Lee looked and sounded like Joe College with a slight southern drawl. But his life hadn't been that of a typical college boy.

His father, an insurance salesman, died before he was two. Raised in Texas and the Midwest, the boy spent two winters in Russia and he didn't speak in New York during the great wave of the language early days. At 17, he was the only eighteenth year old drafted in the U.S. Marine. "I was in 'Datky Mr.' a child," he said, "because I didn't speak one block from over we were poor and I didn't want to be a burden on my mother." In an ocean case there, he spent 14 months as told in the Far East.

In September, 1959, his room all evening and into three-year hitch nearly done, the early hours of morning, the Marines gave Lee a discharge. Just one month later, after an exhaust- ing trip by land, sea and air, he arrived in Moscow to petition the Supreme Soviet, highest legislative body in the U.S.S.R. for Soviet citizenship. "I've been a fanatic," he said. "I've been a fanatic."

For days, Oswald had been sitting in the room, waiting for the

Government as "my government." "But," said Lee, "Even if I am not accepted, on no account will I go back to the United States. I shall remain here, if necessary, as a resident alien."

AD Soviet officials would promise at the time was that Lee could stay on in Russia whether or not he became a citizen. Meanwhile, they were investigating the possibility of sending him to a Soviet higher technical institute. As an age when young rebels all over the world had released in the streets, what brought this serious, soft-spoken southern boy to Moscow with no other ambition but to spend the rest of his life as a Soviet citizen? Evidently, it was a combination of poverty, the plight of the U. S. Negro, and the U. S. Marines.

"My mother," said Lee, "has been a worker all her life. She's a good example," he added, "of what happens to workers in the United States." He declined to elaborate. "At the age of 12," he added, "after watching the way workers are treated in New York and Negroes in the South, I was looking for a way to my environment. Then I discovered Socialism."

Lee was struck, in particular, by Marx's "Das Kapital." He concluded that as an American, "I would become either a worker exploited for capitalist profit or an exploiter or, since there are many in this category, I'd be one of the unemployed." Lee became a Marxist.

Later, as a Marine private in Japan and the Philippines, he "had a chance to watch American militarist imperialism in action."

Year's Planning Fully a year before, Lee began getting ready to go to Russia. Using a Berlitz grammar, he taught himself to read and write Russian. Never, said Lee, a nice-looking young man with gray eyes and brown hair, did he consider deserting the Marine Corps. "Did it occur to Lee that Soviet officials might be embarrassed by his efforts to become a citizen of their country at a moment when Russia was cultivating good relations with the United States? Russian officials, he said, "don't appreciate and don't encourage me." They warned, however, that neither Lee's wish, nor theirs, would determine whether his citizenship application was to be accepted. They said it depended on the "ever-all political atmosphere at the moment." Meanwhile, they offered Lee the sanctuary of a prolonged stay in the U.S.S.R.

As for officials of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, they were torn between their desire to give Lee time to think it over, and their legal obligation to hear his oath renouncing American citizenship if he lasted.

Lee was bitter at U.S. Consul Richard Snyder, who, he charged, advised him when he asked to take the oath on Oct. 31, the only time Lee had been in the Embassy. As a result, Lee wouldn't go back there. He would let the Soviet government handle legal details when, and if, he became a citizen.

## Oswald's Interview

Nov 25, 1959  
By a Staff Writer of the Communist Party  
What kind of man was Lee Harvey Oswald? Did this assassin ever indicate he might be capable of shooting the President of the United States as Dallas police say the assassinated John F. Kennedy last Friday—just two days before he was similarly shot and killed as the case took on a bizarre twist. Few people really seem to have known the 24-year-old New Orleans native until, almost overnight, he was a well-known person, one who did not only well-known. He gave few opportunities to really understand him. But in a rare moment of candor, he gave an American such a chance. She is Miss Priscilla Johnson, and at the time she was busy with the through a two-year stint in Moscow as a correspondent for the North American Newspaper Alliance.

Interview in Moscow The time was early November, 1959. The place—the Hotel Metropol, Moscow's principal hotel for foreigners—was Oswald had arrived in the Soviet Union on Oct. 30 that year with the announced intention of seeking Soviet citizenship.

Ten days later Miss Johnson was doing research at Harvard for a book, learned he was staying at the hotel and asked if he would give her an interview. She said he would, and they talked quite freely for seven hours.

The impression of Oswald that emerges from that meeting is one of a young man intensely bitter at the United States, who is capable of absolute single-mindedness about whatever he was attempting to do—at that moment trying to obtain Soviet citizenship.

Is this the sort of man who might have assassinated the President? "I don't know," she said. "I don't know."

Single-minded Drive "It struck me," Miss Johnson said in an interview this week, "that probably when he

JOHNSON (PRISCILLA) EXHIBIT No. 3

The Boston Sunday Globe—November 24, 1959 49

# Fanatics Are Made

fan of the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, he handed over his passport to the American Embassy. I asked Lee if the ordinary Russians he met expressed surprise at his desire to defect to a new country, always being the "wall," he said, "they're very curious and they ask me why. But waterfalls. Mrs. Kovaleva are strong and good. I believe he added, "understand when I'm doing right." That was why Lee wouldn't answer the phone when his mother was calling from Ft. Worth, trying to plead with him to return home. He had refused to speak to any American correspondent. Just why

he answered when I knocked at his door and why, a few hours later, he came to see me in my room, I never learned. As our conversation drew to a close, we ate nothing and had been stopping only ten minutes. "I was sure," he said, "I was sure, awaited him." As he was leaving I strove to come one me again. The Russians, Oswald told me, had warned that he mustn't talk to Americans. But he promised, before closing the door, that

Never Go Back

he wouldn't do anything decisive without at least letting me know.

Regardless of any material

Two days later I went to the second floor "dzhurbaray" the woman who sits near the elevator and hands out keys to each room—and asked for Mr. Oswald. Her hands flew up in a know-nothing gesture. "He's gone," she said.

I'd wondered what had happened to him since. Now I know.

JOHNSON (PRISCILLA) EXHIBIT No. 3—Continued

288  
288