

library card with Ferrie's name on it."⁶⁹

Ferrie was taken into custody by the Secret Service shortly after his skating trip. He was questioned briefly and released. During this interview the Secret Service did ask Ferrie whether he had lent his library card to Oswald.⁷⁰ The reason for the question has never been explained. The Secret Service question might have been precipitated by Ferrie's own inquiries about the card, although there is no evidence of this. Alternatively, the question may have been spawned by something said or found in Dallas in connection with Oswald's arrest.

In late 1966 Ferrie was under intensive investigation by New Orleans District Attorney Jim Garrison as part of his reinvestigation of the assassination. Ferrie was under heavy surveillance: Garrison had targeted him as part of an alleged conspiracy in the President's assassination. On February 26, 1967, as Garrison was about to go to court, David Ferrie was found dead in his home. The cause of death was listed as "natural", due to a massive brain hemorrhage.⁷¹ No trace of any toxic substance was found.

Ferrie's body was found nude amidst the singular artifacts of his bizarre life: the walls of his bathroom were dotted with hundreds of splotches of dried glue, marking the sites where his mohair wig was hung when out of service; hundreds of mice--fodder for Ferrie's experiments in cancer research--resided in unkempt cages. An assortment of books on medicine and pharmacology were strewn about. There were guns, a large bomb, military equipment and three blank U.S. passports that needed only a picture and some basic data to appear valid.⁷² There were also two suicide

notes, presumably left by the mohair marauder in order to signal the onset of his naturally caused hemorrhage. One note was found on his piano; the other, on a table. Both were typed.⁷³ Each had a typed signature.

The night before Ferrie's body was discovered, he was in his apartment with Washington Post reporter George Lardner, Jr. from midnight to 4:00 a.m. Lardner told Garrison's office that Ferrie seemed in good spirits when he last saw him. The reporter described the forty-nine-year-old adventurer as an "intelligent, well-versed guy [on] a broad range of subjects."⁷⁴

Whatever the cause of Ferrie's demise, his friend and patron Eladio del Valle was murdered before Garrison's investigators could find him and question him about Ferrie and the assassination. Del Valle was a wealthy anti-Castro organizer who had reportedly financed some of Ferrie's activities against Castro. Garrison's investigators had been trying unsuccessfully to track him down in Miami. Twelve hours after Ferrie's body was found, del Valle's turned up in a Miami parking lot. He had been shot in the heart at point-blank range; his skull was split open with an ax. The case was never solved.⁷⁵

The Clinton incident forced the House Assassinations Committee to wrestle with the implications of the Ferrie-Oswald association. In the end the Committee decided:

Since Oswald consistently demonstrated a left-wing Marxist ideology, he would not have supported the anti-Castro movement. At the same time, the Committee noted that Oswald's possible association with Ferrie might be

distinguishable, since it could not be simply termed an anti-Castro association. Ferrie and Oswald may have had a personal friendship unrelated to Cuban activities.⁷⁶

The assumption that Oswald's left-wing involvements were real rather than a charade has forced all official inquiries into weak explanations like the one above. It would have us believe that Oswald and the volatile Ferrie trucked around together observing the political phenomena of civil rights summer as a part of their "personal friendship," spiced, one is led to imagine, by point-counterpoint discussions concerning communism and Castroism. It is far more logical to view the two men as pursuing the same goals in the service of the same organization.

Chapter 5

Smearing the Left Kremlin-Red

According to Director Helms, to "monitor" a group is merely to attend its public meetings and hear what any citizen present would hear; to "infiltrate" a group is to join it as a member and appear to support its purposes in general; to "penetrate" a group is to gain a position of leadership and influence or direct its policies and actions.

--footnote to the Rockefeller Commission Report
on CIA domestic spying¹

Clinton, Louisiana was the beginning and the end of Oswald's brief foray into civil rights politics. Like his flurry of pro-Castro activities in New Orleans, the CORE incident was a never-to-be-repeated phenomenon. Oswald never spoke publicly on behalf of Castro or conducted FPCC leafletting after he closed up shop in New Orleans the summer before the assassination, nor did he have anything to do with the political struggles of blacks. There was another involvement, though--one last domestic political involvement before the assassination. Like the Clinton incident, this one was brief. It is seemingly inexplicable or insignificant in the view of most researchers.

It occurred in Dallas the month before the assassination,

after Oswald had left New Orleans and gone to Mexico, then returned to Dallas. It involved the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), a group of liberal activists staunchly committed to the defense of political freedoms. As with CORE, Oswald's brief contact with the ACLU has been dismissed by most investigators as significant only as a manifestation of his leftism or his political curiosity. Again, as with CORE, there is another perspective concerning the ACLU episode--that it may have been the final domestic-spying assignment for Oswald-the-agent before he was moved into whatever role he played in the President's assassination.

Oswald's contact with the ACLU began when he accompanied his acquaintance Michael Paine* to a meeting of the organization's Dallas chapter (on October 25, 1963).² His strange behavior at the meeting is often viewed as evidence of the mental turmoil that would induce him to commit murder the very next month. Like so much of his ostensibly unstable behavior (wrist slashing, street brawls), it may have been very rational, from a covert-activity frame of reference.

Oswald got up and spoke briefly at the meeting. In a coherent little speech he took issue with the speaker who had asserted that members of the John Birch Society were not, ipso facto, anti-Semites as well. Oswald's friend Michael Paine (who was never called to testify before the House Assassinations

* Ruth Paine befriended Marina Oswald. Marina and Oswald's two daughters lived in the Paine home in Irving, Texas while Oswald took apartments in Dallas and visited his family on weekends.

Committee)³ described to the Warren Commission Oswald's rather contentious and intolerant remarks as, "out of keeping with the mood of the meeting."⁴ The ACLU was founded, in major part, out of an abiding commitment of the principle of tolerance. Oswald seemed determined to test that commitment.

After the meeting broke up, people stood around having discussions in small groups. Oswald joined Paine's friend Frank Krystinik and a third man.⁵ The third man's identity was not known to Paine, but he thought the man was a member of the local chapter. During the discussion, Oswald took a strident leftist position. He railed against free enterprise and got into a heated argument with Krystinik, who was defending certain facets of the free enterprise system. Krystinik employed a few workers in a small-scale business.⁶ Krystinik was irritated by Oswald's criticisms. The two men nearly came to fisticuffs.⁷

To the Warren Commission this was further evidence that Oswald was a left-wing hothead. If, in fact, he was this aggressive about his Marxist beliefs, it's a wonder that he and the volatile David Ferrie made it to Clinton intact, ~~while being~~
~~cooped up together in the black Cadillac on the long drive from~~
~~New Orleans.~~

After the meeting Oswald and Paine rode home together in Paine's car.

As they conversed, Paine remembers that Oswald seemed singularly unimpressed by the ACLU. Paine described the organization's goals and purposes. Oswald responded that he could not join such a group. He expressed surprise that Paine would join an organization whose purpose was to defend free

speech per se.⁸ Paine's impression was that Oswald seemed not to be aware of "the more general principle of freedom of speech for everyone which has value in itself."⁹ In contrast, unknown to Paine, Oswald had stated during his New Orleans radio appearance that the FPCC represented a minority viewpoint which, in a democracy, deserved a full and free exposition--an assertion very much attuned to the principles of the ACLU.

Paine certainly did not encourage Oswald to join, or even suggest that he do so, in light of Oswald's behavior and his comments, which seemed to question the organization's *raison d'être*.¹⁰

Unknown to Michael Paine--until after the assassination--Oswald did join the ACLU. Within a few days of attending the local meeting, he joined via the national headquarters. Almost as surprising as his joining was the question posed in his letter: he asked the national headquarters how he might get in touch with "ACLU groups in my area."¹¹ Both his request and his joining seem inconsistent, if not patently phony. Michael Paine and his wife Ruth were ACLU members, and Oswald had already made contact with the local branch.

Then, on November 1, 1963 (ten days after attending the meeting) he did two things that may indicate the real purpose of his apparently fickle relationship with the ACLU. First, he wrote to the American Communist Party. In his letter he described the meeting that he had attended, including its location (indicating that he had not forgotten where the local chapter could be found, despite his query to the national ACLU).

The letter described the political "friction" between the left and the right in Dallas. But the last two paragraphs are the most revealing:¹²

Could you advise me as to the general view we had on the American Civil Liberties Union? and to what degree, if any, I should attempt to heighten its progressive tendencies?

This Dallas branch of the ACLU is firmly in the hands of "liberal" professional people (a minister and two law professors conducted the Oct. 25th meeting). However, some of those present showed marked class-awareness and insight.

Suddenly Oswald seems to have a purpose for his ACLU activities: he wants advice on how to "heighten" the organization's "progressive tendencies." As for those who manifested "marked class awareness," was Oswald referring to ACLU speaker with whom he had disagreed; to Krystinik, who had defended free enterprise? Was Oswald so starved for the company of fellow leftists that he invented them, like a child inventing imaginary playmates, or did he invent persons with "marked class awareness and insight" for another purpose?

Arnold Johnson, who was then the national secretary for the American Communist Party, recalled that his only response to Oswald's letter was to send out some literature, nothing more.¹³ Yet Oswald's letter had, in essence, invited the national Communist Party to commit to paper its advice for making the Dallas ACLU more attuned to communist ideology. This letter, by itself, established a linkage between the two organizations.

However artificial or limited this linkage may have been, it now existed on paper.

On the very same day that the letter to the Communist Party was postmarked (November 1), Oswald established another pro-communist link for the ACLU. He opened up a new post office box in Dallas. On the rental form he authorized the receipt of mail for two organizations--the ACLU and the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

Oswald surely did not anticipate much mail relating to either of these organizations. His FPCC activities were finished; ~~he did not write the national FPCC again, and~~ there were no FPCC members remaining in New Orleans (they had all moved to Dallas in the person of Oswald); nor did he set up a chapter or pursue any public FPCC activities in Dallas. As for the ACLU, his correspondence consisted of writing to the national chapter to join, then writing to the Communist Party about tactics. He did not make any further ACLU contacts which might produce mail for his new box.

Most likely, the primary purpose of the box was not to receive mail but, rather, to establish a link between the ACLU and the FPCC. There, in the paper trail of the U.S. Postal Service, was the second communist link for the ACLU, forged by Oswald on the same day as the first.

Whatever transpired with Lee's leftist cubbyhole hole in Dallas, the federal intelligence bureaucracy ~~seems likely~~ ^{may well} to have known about it. As author Sylvia Meagher pointed out, the FBI admitted to the Warren Commission that informant "T-2" had

furnished the Bureau with a copy of a letter Oswald had written to the FPCC from Dallas. The FBI provided a copy to the Commission. T-2 "did not know Oswald personally and could furnish no further information," said the FBI.¹⁴

Did T-2 intercept only one Oswald letter, or was the government privy to all the leftist missives sent by Oswald and was it also monitoring his new FPCC/ACLU box? If the box was under surveillance, wasn't someone worried when the Mannlicher-Carcano Italian carbine rifle was mailed there, to be received by "A. J. Hidell"? This is the alleged murder weapon in President Kennedy's assassination. It was supposedly mail ordered by Oswald to his box using the Hidell alias, as was the .38 revolver alleged to have been used by Oswald to kill Dallas Police officer J.D. Tippit in the aftermath of the President's assassination.

In January of 1963 Senator Thomas J. Dodd (Dem. Conn.) began hearings in Washington conducted by his Senate subcommittee (known as the Dodd Committee). Dodd was gathering evidence to bolster his push for gun-control legislation. He was particularly concerned with mail order guns which could be obtained by any criminal or psychopath without restriction. Could Oswald have been proving the point that pro-Cuban subversives could do the same? Dodd himself was specifically concerned about the subversive threat posed by the FPCC.¹⁵ The two companies from which Oswald allegedly mail ordered the guns (Klein's Sporting Goods in Chicago and Seaport Traders of California) were specific targets of the Dodd Committee's investigation.¹⁶ Perhaps Oswald or his handlers wanted to create some data on the threat of subversive firepower. If he merely

wanted a rifle with which to assassinate the President, he could have bought it over-the-counter anywhere in Texas with no questions asked and only the sales clerk's recall to tie him to the weapon.

The possibility that Oswald's Dallas mail was being diverted is strengthened by the strange history of the November letter he wrote to the Communist Party seeking advice about possibly rendering the Dallas ACLU more progressive. It arrived in New York City four weeks after its postmark. As Sylvia Meagher has noted, for three of the four weeks (until November 22) Oswald was not an infamous, accused assassin, so this cannot account for the delay.¹⁷

If, as the House Assassinations Committee believed, Oswald was a leftist ideologue, then forging linkages among these various groups would make some sense in terms of his political world view. After all, the ACLU was an ultra-liberal defender of political freedoms, including those of far-left political-action groups like the FPCC. But there is also the other pattern, one which recognizes that Oswald had about as much need for information from the ACLU national headquarters as he did to register to vote in Clinton--the pattern of domestic spying.

The CIA's domestic spying activities escalated dramatically in the 1960s. As previously described, they did not suddenly emerge full-blown with the inception of CHAOS in 1967, nor did they begin with CHAOS' inception. The surveillance of one thousand organizations, which surely included the ACLU, may have been formally constituted into a program under the code name

CHAOS in 1967, but some goodly number of those organizations-- certainly the FPCC and quite possibly the ACLU--must have been targeted in the early 1960s. The fact that a thousand groups were targeted¹⁸ indicates that the ACLU must have been included, given its size and prestige and its activities in defense of the political rights of radical groups. ~~Oswald's FBI episode preceded CHAOS by a little over three years.~~

The CIA has been extremely sensitive and ultra-secretive about its domestic-spying activities.¹⁹ For reasons of the limitations imposed by its charter, the almost-certain flak from liberal elements of Congress and the press, and the FBI's defense of turf, the Agency has tended to minimize and obscure its domestic operations, even to the point of lying to Congress and the press about their scope and existence.²⁰ Thus, the Agency's grudging admission to the Rockefeller Commission that it had an interest in certain domestic organizations (names withheld) dating to 1964 increases the likelihood that Oswald's 1963 activities with the FPCC, CORE, and the ACLU were part of the Agency's ongoing spying.²¹

There are other indications of a potential Agency interest in the ACLU. The CIA was concerned about the legal aspects of radical/leftist politics in the U.S.--the ACLU's turf. The Agency monitored the legal proceedings of all twenty-eight persons indicted following the riots that occurred during the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago.²²

In addition, the major premises underlying project CHAOS reveal much about the CIA's domestic clandestine-mentality and much about the nature of Oswald's domestic spying activities.

The premises of CHAOS were that the American Communist Party was a surrogate of the Kremlin and that, in general, foreign regimes were influencing and nurturing left-wing political organizations in the U.S. for subversive purposes.²³ CIA field offices were instructed to search out links between U.S. political groups and "communist, communist-front, or other anti-American foreign elements abroad."²⁴ There was never any doubt that such connections existed: CHAOS was designed to expose them, not to discover whether they were real. These assumptions were not born suddenly in 1967 but, rather, reflected the cold-war, clandestine mentality that has dominated the CIA's organizational culture since its inception.²⁵

Oswald's activities regarding the FPCC and the ACLU manifest a striking similarity to each other and to the CIA's world view and modus operandi concerning domestic spying. If we re-examine his FPCC involvement from this perspective, we find an artificially-created paper trail leading to the American Communist Party, like the one he would create for the ACLU. The contrived quality of his FPCC actions was manifested in Dallas, even before he went to New Orleans. In a letter to the national FPCC (April 19, 1963) he described an incident in which he claimed to have been distributing leaflets in Dallas.

Since I am unemployed, I stood yesterday for the first time in my life with a placare [sic] around my neck, passing out Fair play for Cuba pamphlets [sic], etc. I only had 15 or so.

In 40 minutes they were all gone. I was cursed as well

as praised by some. My home made placare [sic] said Hands off Cuba! and Viva Fidel! Now I ask for 40 to 50 more of the fine, basic pamphlets [sic].²⁶

Oswald was unemployed, but there is no evidence that this incident ever occurred. In May 1964, during the Warren Commission investigation, a Dallas policeman recalled that he had seen an unidentified white male passing out pro-Castro literature the previous year, but the policeman never got a close look at the subject and could not identify him.²⁷ Some researchers think that it might have been Oswald.²⁸ The policeman remembered this incident as taking place "on a day in late spring or early summer 1963."²⁹ Oswald had departed Dallas for New Orleans by April 25.

His letter describing the alleged incident did not mention anything about moving to New Orleans or pursuing FPCC activities there, although he moved within a week after writing it. He again wrote the FPCC's national headquarters after arriving in New Orleans and declared his intention to set up a New Orleans chapter. He also mentioned the possibility of renting a small office.³⁰ This was written in late May after he had settled into his new job at Reily Coffee near the Camp Street offices of Guy Banister. Banister's modus operandi was in keeping with the style of CIA domestic spying that would later be manifested in CHAOS and MERRIMAC. He hired young men to infiltrate college campuses in New Orleans and search out pro-Castro sympathizers and activists.³¹

As described previously, the FPCC national director was not thrilled by Oswald's announced intention of starting a New

Orleans chapter. The director cautioned that the city's right-wing political culture would not be hospitable; he admonished Oswald not to get involved in "unnecessary incidents that frighten away prospective supporters."³² As the director was probably well aware, the FPCC was a prime target of U.S. intelligence and thus had reason to be worried about being disrupted or discredited.

One of the most active agencies, by virtue of both its Cuban fixation and its expanding domestic spying, was the CIA. The Agency was not only interested in collecting documents, mailing lists, and photographs relating to FPCC but announced its intention to conduct covert activities as well.³³ According to an FBI document, the Bureau was advised on September 16, 1963 that the CIA was "giving some thought to planting deceptive information which might embarrass the Committee [FPCC] in areas where it does have support."³⁴ The Agency went on to assure the Bureau that it would make certain that "the CIA activity will not jeopardize any Bureau investigation."³⁵ Given the CIA's panoply of anti-Castro groups and the scope of its Cuban operations (which, as of the date of the above memo, had outstripped the Bureau's ³ Miami operation in personnel), it is likely that what the CIA was really thinking was that it was time to protect itself on paper vis-à-vis the Bureau or the Congress concerning its expanding ^{surveillance.} ~~domestic~~ ~~spying role.~~

We now return to Oswald's FPCC agenda. After passing out his pamphlets to the sailors from the USS Wasp on June 16th, he discontinued his public activities until early August. After

being in such a rush--presumably spawned by ideological zeal-- that he had to print his own literature (3,000 copies), his own membership applications (500 forms), and his own membership cards (300), he handed out a few pamphlets to some sailors one afternoon and then called it quits for nearly two months.³⁶

There is no evidence that the founder, president, and only member of the New Orleans FPCC ever attempted to broaden the chapter's membership base beyond his person--no recruiting, no real proselytizing of any kind. After working feverishly to create a small mountain of paper, Oswald simply dropped out of action. But this is the consistent pattern that runs through Lee Harvey Oswald's domestic political involvements: they were primarily concerned with paper, not people.

Perhaps this was because Oswald was a loner: though he was able to associate with people on the extreme political right like Ferrie and, as we shall see, George de Mohrenschildt. Perhaps Oswald found right-wing New Orleans too tough a place to make a go of a chapter, as the FPCC national director had warned. If this was the problem he certainly exacerbated it: during the two-month hiatus between passing out leaflets on the docks and his next FPCC event in August he worked at Reily Coffee, in the heart of the anti-Castro bastion at Camp Street. Given William Reily's anti-Castro politics, his coffee company was probably an unlikely place for seeking out pro-Castro supporters.

Not much is known about what Oswald did during his break from public displays on behalf of the FPCC, but he apparently did a lot of reading. A post-assassination inventory of the books he checked out of the New Orleans library that summer is itself

interesting reading. The six-page analysis of Oswald's reading habits was done by the Warren Commission's staff, based on Secret Service and FBI documents."³⁷ Of thirty-four books listed, not one has anything to do with Oswald's ostensible preoccupation that summer--Cuba. There are four books on communism: one is on China; two, on Russia; one is a general work. Five titles had to do with another topic which Oswald may have been more versed in than communism. There was Ian Fleming's Thunderball, Goldfinger, Moonraker, From Russia with Love, and an edited collection entitled Five Spy Novels. Katherine Ford, an associate of Marina and Lee Oswald's in Dallas, told the Bureau that "Oswald read some books about how to be a spy."³⁸

Maybe it's an occupational spin-off or a busman's holiday sort of thing--that spies like to read or write spy tales. One recalls clandestine warrior E. Howard Hunt writing numerous cloak-and-dagger paperbacks under a pseudonym. Oswald also read two books dealing with his alleged victim--Profiles in Courage and Portrait of a President, the former written by John F. Kennedy.

Just before Oswald's June 16 leafletting near the Wasp, and before he went underground for two months, he did something significant. Again it was on paper. He wrote to The Worker, the official organ of the American Communist Party. The letter requested yet more paper, in the form of Communist-Party pamphlets. The important thing was the letter itself, not the pamphlets it requested. The letter established a linkage between the FPCC and the Communist Party. Moreover, it indicated that

the New Orleans FPCC was, in the view of its president, a vehicle for a broad "popular struggle" of the kind promoted in communist ideology. To strengthen the linkage, Oswald sent along some honorary FPCC membership cards to American-Communist-Party luminaries Gus Hall and B. Davis (hardly a sacrifice on Oswald's part since he had 299 unused cards lying around).³⁹

L. H. Oswald
P. O. Box 30061
New Orleans, La.

The Worker
23 W. 26th St.

Dear Sirs:

As a long time subscriber to the Worker I know I can ask a favor of you with full confidence of its fulfillment.

I have formed a "Fair Play for Cuba Committee" here in New Orleans, I think it is the best way to attract the broad mass of people to a popular struggle.

I ask that you give me as much literature as you judge possible since I think it would be very nice to have your literature among the "Fair Play" leaflets (like the one enclosed) and pamphlets in my office.

Also please be so kind as to convey the enclosed "honorary membership" cards to those fighters for peace Mr. Gus Hall and Mr. B. Davis.

Arnold Johnson, the Communist-Party secretary, responded that literature would be sent but cautiously pointed out that the Party did not have any organizational ties with the FPCC.⁴⁰ Johnson's guarded response may have resulted from the recognition that the political right in the U.S., as well as the intelligence

community, was striving to demonstrate that the American Communist Party was linked to nearly everything left of center, and that the Party was trying to use such ties to broaden its subversive activities. Johnson was wrong in a very important sense: if the Party had no organizational ties with the FPCC in the past, it did now. Oswald was creating them on paper.

After the two-month respite Oswald's activity became feverish. In August he thrust the FPCC into the media spotlight, both radio and television; he also posed as an anti-Castro militant at Carlos Bringuier's store; he got into the street scuffle with Bringuier and friends. The reader will recall that latter incident allegedly resulted when Bringuier received a "tip" from a friend that Oswald was passing out pro-Castro literature. The scuffle that led to Oswald's arrest seemed to one policeman to have been "set up."⁴¹ At the scene of the leafletting Bringuier menacingly approached Oswald. Undaunted, Oswald taunted Bringuier: "O.K., Carlos," he said smiling, "if you want to hit me, hit me."⁴²

The suspicious nature of this incident is augmented by the fact that Oswald reported it to the national FPCC before it occurred. In a letter dated August 4, 1963 he erroneously reported that he had distributed "thousands" of pamphlets before being attacked by Cuban exiles in the street and then approached by police. He further asserted, "The incident robbed me of what support I had, leaving me alone."⁴³ Of course, Oswald never was anything but alone, except for anti-Castroites. His letter was as contrived as the incident it claimed to report. This was, most likely, his second false report to the FPCC: the first

being his claim to have been "cursed as well as praised" while distributing pamphlets in Dallas before moving to New Orleans.

He eventually reported the street scuffle four days after it occurred, not to the FPCC but to the American Communist Party. He wrote Party secretary Arnold Johnson and forwarded a newspaper clipping describing the incident. Oswald asked for still more pamphlets and dispensed yet another chapter membership card.⁴⁴

Arnold Johnson
23 W. 26th St.
New York, 10, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Johnson:

I wish to thank you for the literature which you sent me for our local branch of the "Fair Play for Cuba Committee," of which I am the secretary-president.

As you can see from the enclosed clipping I am doing my best to help the cause of new Cuba, a cause which I know you approve of also.

Would you from time to time send us literature? Any at all will be greatly appreciated.

Please accept an honorary New Orleans branch membership card as a token of esteem.

Thank you

/s/ Lee H. Oswald

P.O. Box 30061
New Orleans, La.

Oswald also wanted to be sure that the FBI knew all about the Binguier confrontation and about the New Orleans FPCC. As mentioned previously, after his arrest by police (on August 9,

1963) he requested that a representative of the Bureau come to his cell. Agent John Quigley obliged, and Oswald provided a wealth of information. Quigley's summary report is five single-spaced pages.⁴⁵ Oswald had a lot of information to dispense, but most of it was false. It seems that he wanted to salt the Bureau's files and to set the stage for his subsequent unmasking as a Soviet defector--all part of his job of discrediting the FPCC by tying it to Communist subversion (he also saw to it that Quigley received a sampling of FPCC literature and membership cards).

One of the first points that Oswald made was to tell Quigley that the FPCC was not a communist or communist-controlled group, a claim which Oswald's letters to the Communist Party and his radio appearance (to be described shortly) were designed to belie. Oswald described the New Orleans chapter in ways that made it appear clandestine. He told Quigley that he did not know where the group's offices were located nor did he know the home addresses of members. He showed the agent his chapter membership card: it bore the membership number 33, implying that there were at least thirty-two other members. The card was signed A.J. Hidell, whom Oswald portrayed as the shadowy leader of the New Orleans FPCC--a man whom Oswald had never seen in person but who contacted him by letter or by phone to inform him when and where meetings would be held and what the agenda for political activities would be. While the national FPCC emphasized public lobbying and outreach, Oswald described the New Orleans operation as more akin to an underground cell: its meetings were not advertised but were communicated to members by phone and held at

shifting locations. At these meetings no last names were used, only first names. Oswald had similarly told New Orleans Police Lieutenant Francis Martello, who had participated in his arrest, that the local FPCC had thirty-five members, but members' names and the location of meeting places were not to be revealed.⁴⁶

Oswald set about the work of using the street scuffle as a springboard for a media blitz. The day after the incident he was in the office of the city editor of the New Orleans States-Item trying to persuade him to give more coverage to the FPCC.⁴⁷ Three days later he reportedly phoned New York radio personality Long John Nebel and offered to travel North at his own expense to appear on Nebel's show.⁴⁸ Then, on August 16th, he performed his last activist ritual--handing out pamphlets in front of the New Orleans Trade Mart (with the help of his paid recruit from the unemployment line). This leafletting lasted only a few minutes, but it was just long enough for a mobile unit from TV station WDSU to capture it on film.⁴⁹ It would be interesting to know what brought WDSU to the scene so promptly. Perhaps there was another fortuitous tip like the one that brought Bringuier to confront Oswald. Perhaps the tip came from Oswald himself. If it was a tip, it wasn't the last: there was another within a few days.

The day after the TV camera recorded Oswald and his recruit outside the Trade Mart, he was interviewed by a local radio station.⁵⁰ The interviewer found Oswald's performance to be "oddly deliberate."⁵¹ A few days later the climactic event of his FPCC summer occurred--a radio debate conducted before a large

metropolitan audience. Oswald took on two anti-communists. One was Ed Butler, the head of a stridently anti-communist organization called the Information Council of the Americas.⁵² It functioned as a private propaganda mill whose principal activity was to tape-record interviews with Cuban and iron-curtain refugees and distribute the tapes to the hundred or so radio stations that aired them.⁵³ The second of Oswald's debate opponents was none other than Carlos Bringuier.

Oswald held his own in the early part of the program, conducting himself with poise. Ed Butler remembered that Oswald seemed "very articulate," especially for a young man twenty-four years old. Butler said the public image of Oswald as being inarticulate was inaccurate.⁵⁴ After listening to an audio tape of the program, the author too was impressed with Oswald's performance.

Even so, the radio debate was a no-win situation for Oswald-the-leftist and for the FPCC, especially for the FPCC. His opponents had a secret weapon, a bombshell to drop. They had discovered that the president of the New Orleans chapter of the FPCC was, in reality, a Russian defector. His Russian-communist ties were dramatically revealed to the listening audience. From that point on, the program focussed almost exclusively on this sensational revelation. The FPCC's links to the Kremlin, in the person of Lee Harvey Oswald, were exposed for all to hear.

Both of Oswald's debate opponents had ties to the CIA's anti-Castro network. Bringuier's Directorio Revolucionario Estudiantil (DRE) was the outgrowth of a militant, CIA-funded anti-Castro student group that was heavily involved with the CIA

at the time of the Bay of Pigs invasion.⁵⁵ There was also a DRE chapter in Dallas: an FBI document indicated that ~~he~~^{Oswald} attended a DRE fund-raising meeting the month before the assassination.⁵⁶ A witness said that Oswald did not speak to anyone but listened for a while and then left.⁵⁷ Bringuier's DRE published a newsletter that was also backed by the CIA-funded Crusade to Free Cuba Committee--the organization patronized by William Reily of Reily Coffee, ~~the~~ organization which served as a fund-raising arm of the Cuban Revolutionary Council (CRC) headquartered at Camp Street above Guy Banister, the organization led by Ronnie Caire, whose address appeared (in scrambled form) in Oswald's notebook.⁵⁸

As for Oswald's second opponent, Ed Butler, his Information Council of the Americas (INCA) had as its manager a man who was a member of the Cuban Revolutionary Council (CRC).⁵⁹ This interface helped the INCA obtain taped interviews with Cuban exiles.

There was no chance that Oswald's Russian defection would not be aired: all three participants (his two opponents and the radio host) found out about it before the program. Bringuier claimed to have sent a spy to Oswald's New Orleans home. Bringuier's friend allegedly posed as a pro-Castro sympathizer and talked with Oswald (as Oswald had done in posing as an anti-Castro supporter when visiting Bringuier's store).⁶⁰ Bringuier's man supposedly heard Oswald speak Russian to his family and thereby became suspicious of a Russian connection. According to Bringuier, he and his friend visited Ed Butler two days before

the debate and informed him of the Russian dimension, whereupon Butler allegedly called "someone at the House Un-American Activities Committee" in Washington, D.C. and got confirmation of Oswald's Soviet ties.⁶¹ By whatever method, the two anti-Castro supporters arrived at the radio station primed to expose Oswald.

The program's host, William Stuckey, would certainly not dispute their charge that Oswald was a Soviet defector: he too had found out, and by the usual method--a tip. One of Stuckey's "news sources" in Washington--a source which to this day remains unidentified--called him and told of Oswald's stay in Russia.⁶² It is unclear as to how the Washington source divined that Oswald was about to appear on a New Orleans radio show. The caller gave Stuckey a list of dates by which to find Washington newspaper clippings that reported the defection.⁶³ We know of at least one Washington-based organization that kept a clipping file on this event. When the CIA sent the Warren Commission the Agency's Oswald dossier, it included "four newspaper clippings" from the Washington Post and the Washington Evening Star dealing with Oswald's defection.⁶⁴

The full transcript of the radio "debate" reveals that it was less a debate than an Oswald monologue. After initially exposing Oswald as a former Russian defector, his two opponents didn't have much to say.⁶⁵ Oswald said all that needed to be said--not about Castro or Cuba, about which Oswald said little of substance, but about the nature of the FPCC and its relationships with the American Communist Party. Speaking in a poised, articulate, and deliberate manner, he exaggerated the size of his one-man chapter, claiming it had several officers and a number of

members. He refused to reveal its exact size, causing Butler to chide him about it being a "secret society." Oswald's description of the local FPCC was hardly reassuring on that score. He portrayed the membership as publicity-shy if not mole-like. "Yes, as secretary I am responsible for the keeping of the records and the protection of the members' names so that undue publicity or attention will not be drawn to them, as they do not desire it."

Oswald used the show to set up the FPCC for a big fall, politically and public-relations wise. It was he, not any of the other three participants, who announced that "the Fair Play for Cuba Committee is now on the Attorney General's subversive list." But his main message, which he repeated again and again so that there would be a lasting impression on the listeners, was that the FPCC had absolutely no ties with the Communist Party. He himself posed the issue of whether the FPCC was communist controlled, before his opponents did. Oswald's reassurance to the right-leaning political culture of New Orleans must have sounded to most listeners like the non sequitur that it was (which is doubtless how he intended it to sound).

That is correct, and I think it is the fact that I did live for a time in the Soviet Union that gives me excellent qualifications to repudiate charges that the Fair Play for Cuba Committee is communist controlled.

Again and again, Oswald eschewed discussions of Castro, Cuba, or ideology in favor of harping away at denials of FPCC-communist linkages.

The Senate Subcommittee, who have occupied themselves with investigating the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, have found that there is nothing to connect the two committees [communist and FPCC]. We have been investigated from several points of view. That is, points of view of taxes, allegiance, aversion and so forth. The findings have been, as I say, absolutely zero.

The frequency of his denials must have made the audience suspicious that the young former defector "doth protest too much". Moreover, the denials highlighted the case against him better than his opponents might have.

We are not at all communist controlled regardless of the fact that we have been investigated, regardless of any of those facts, the Fair Play for Cuba Committee is an independent organization not affiliated with any organization."

Asked whether his New Orleans FPCC would "benefit the Communist Party or the goals of international Communism?" he replied:

It is inconsistent with my ideals to support communism, my personal ideals. It is inconsistent with the ideals of the Fair Play for Cuba Committee to support international communism.... In other words, we do not feel that we are supporting international communism or communism in supporting Fidel Castro.

Within a week of the radio show Oswald would write to the

American Communist Party, establishing on paper the very linkages he was denying on the air. He would claim to have used the FPCC "to foster communist ideals."

Oswald made one other notable comment during his radio appearance. It was about a topic he never publicly mentioned at any other time before or after--the CIA.

Although I feel that it is a jest [sic] and a right development in Cuba, still we could be on much friendlier relations with them and had [sic] the Government of the United States, its Government Agencies, particularly certain covert, under cover agencies like the now defunct CIA.

Oswald's comment about the Agency was intriguing. The show's moderator was taken aback by his reference to the "now defunct" CIA, and he questioned Oswald about it. "Well," Oswald replied, "its leadership is now defunct. Allen Dulles is now defunct." This is an odd comment for a leftist ideologue, but not for an Agency spook. No self-respecting leftist would conceive of the CIA as defunct simply because it changed directors: the organization would still be seen as the very powerful, malevolent tool of U.S. capitalism--a tool whose reputation as a brutal counter-leftist force around the world remained undiminished by Dulles' departure. Within the CIA's clandestine culture, however, the sudden departure of the founding father when he was fired by President Kennedy was viewed as a severe blow that seriously weakened the Agency. Oswald was in the Soviet Union when Dulles was fired and did not return to

the U.S. until nine months later. But the pinko Marine seemed to be aware that Dulles' loss was significant for the CIA.

After exposing Oswald as a Russian Communist, Carlos Bringuier urged his supporters, via a missive he called a "press relief," to ask their Congressmen for a full-scale investigation of Oswald and of his communist background.⁶⁶ There is no evidence that the plea was successful in getting the House Un-American Activities Committee, or anyone else, to investigate Oswald. But if it had been successful, there was certainly a clear paper trail of communist linkages for investigators to follow.

The events of Oswald's New Orleans summer were a disaster for the FPCC, whose announced goal was to *cultivate sympathy for the Castro regime*. Conversely, it was a major public-relations and propaganda coup for Bringuier and the anti-Castroites.

There was to be one last addition to Oswald's FPCC paper trail. He never wrote to the national FPCC to inform them of his unmasking as a Russian defector, but he did write to the Central Committee of the American Communist Party and asked for their advice in dealing with the problem it created--i.e. that his Russian background could be used by his opponents to the detriment of the FPCC. The letter (dated August 28, 1963, and replete with spelling errors) contributes to the very problem it is ostensibly trying to solve: Oswald confesses that he was using the FPCC "to foster communist ideals."⁶⁷

Central Committee
CP, U.S.A.

Lee H. Oswald

P.O. Box 30061
New Orleans, La.

August 28, 1963

Comrades:

Please advise me upon a problem of personal tactics.

I have lived in the Soviet Union from Oct. 1958 to July 1962.

I had, in 1959, in Moscow, tried to legally dissolve my United States citizenship in favor of Soviet citizenship, however, I did not complete the legal formalities for this.

Having come back to the U.S. in 1962 and thrown myself into the struggle for progress and freedom in the United States, I would like to know weather, in your opion, I can continue to fight, handicapped as it were, by my past record, can I still, under these circumstances, compete with anti-progressive forces, above ground or weather in your opion I should always remain in the background, i.e. underground.

Our opponents could use my background of residence in the U.S.S.R. against any cause which I join, by association, they could say the organization of which I am a member, is Russian controled ect. I am sure you see my point.

I could of course openly proclaim, (if pressed on the subject) that I wanted to dissolve my American citizenship as a personal protest against the policy of the U.S. government in supporting dictatorship, ect. But what do you think I should do? which is the bast tactic in

general?

Should I dissociate myself from all progressive activities?

Here in New Orleans, I am secretary of the local branch of the "Fair Play for Cuba Committee," a position which, frankly, I have used to foster communist ideals. On a local radio show, I was attacked by Cuban exile organization representatives for my residence ect., in the Soviet Union.

I feel I may have compromised the FPCC, so you see that I need the advice of trusted. long time fighters for progress. Please advise.

With Ferternal Greeting

Sincerely

/s/ Lee H. Oswald

It is an incredible letter, offering up a scenario that would confirm the worst paranoias of the most zealous anti-communists. Here it is on paper: a former Russian defector using a pro-Castro group as a front for advancing communist ideals is unmasked, then writes his comrades in the American Communist Party and asks whether or not he should go underground--proof that the insidious tentacles of Kremlin subversion reached into domestic politics in the U.S., proof that the Kremlin, Castro, and the American Communist Party were linked in political action as well as ideological affinity.

The national FPCC would surely have been touched by Oswald's sensitivity to the adverse effects that his background might have

on the organization's efforts. After disregarding its warning and creating a plethora of negative publicity, he never did inform the group that he had placed it in a situation in which its opponents could give new meaning to charges that it was communist controlled.

There is also evidence, neglected by most researchers, that Oswald's efforts to lump leftist groups together and to link them to domestic and foreign communism were to have extended to the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) as well. As we would expect from Oswald's now-familiar modus operandi, his SWP interactions were confined to paper. In November 1962 while living in Dallas, he wrote the SWP and applied for membership. The Party's National Secretary replied that the organization's constitution required five members before a chapter could be formed and that without a chapter no individual memberships could be granted.⁶⁸ A month later, while working at the Dallas photo-optics firm of Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall, Oswald sent samples of his photographic work to the SWP and offered to do photo chores.⁶⁹

He may have intended to establish--or been in the process of establishing--a Dallas chapter of the Socialist Workers party.

Perhaps it was to be another one-man paper-chapter. In any case, *included in* among the items found among his possessions in Dallas is an item described in the FBI evidence log as:

Negative Bearing: "Join The Socialist Workers Party
fight for a better world! Write Box 2915 Dallas, Texas"

Short of forming a chapter, Oswald may have been content with mixing the socialists into the left-wing melting pot that was his

Dallas post office box, thus establishing linkages with the FPCC and the ACLU.

According to a secret memorandum written in 1963, an FBI source advised the Bureau:

[D]uring the first two years of the FPCC's existence there was a struggle between the Communist Party (CP) and Socialist Workers Party (SWP) elements to exert their power within the FPCC and thereby influence FPCC policy. However, during the past year this source observed there has been a successful effort by FPCC leadership to minimize the role of these other organizations in the FPCC so that today their influence is negligible.⁷⁰

It seems Oswald was out to single-handedly prove the Bureau's informant wrong. Through his maze of letters, memberships, and ostensible sympathies, he was linking up the three organizations and--in the case of the Communist Party, at least--was claiming on paper that outside influence over the FPCC did indeed exist.

A truly committed communist would certainly be disposed to using other organizations to foster party ideology, as Oswald's letter to the Communist Party claimed he was doing with the FPCC. But his pursuit of communist ideals was, like the rest of his leftist involvements, a veneer--a paper-thin one at that. His ties to the American Communist Party consisted of his subscription to its newspaper (The Worker) and his letters, the primary thrust of which was to link the party to the FPCC and the ACLU. In fact, Oswald was not a member of the American Communist

Party. There is no evidence of his ever having sought out communists in Dallas or New Orleans. He never attended any communist meetings or attempted to socialize with his alleged ideological "comrades." His associate Michael Paine told the Warren Commission that Oswald had apparently not made contact with any communist elements in Dallas, nor had Oswald ever mentioned having any communist affiliation.⁷¹

There was a Communist Party in Dallas. The FBI was worried that the former Russian defector might pose some security threat upon his return to America, so the Bureau checked Oswald out with two of its informants within the Dallas communist organization. It found that Oswald "was not a communist, was not a member of the Communist Party."⁷² The FBI's informers had never heard of him. When queried by the Warren Commission as to the reliability of its sources, the Bureau described them as "excellent."⁷³ The FBI also checked with its informants in New Orleans and found that Oswald was unknown in Communist Party circles there.

If the loner image fits Oswald at all, it fits his leftist domestic politics. It seems he was incapable of seeking out and contacting his supposed ideological brethren. He made not one convert to his FPCC chapter and, beyond handing out a few leaflets, never tried to. He had no known contact with leftists of any description in New Orleans. In Dallas he made brief contact with the ACLU, but that was all--no communist or leftist associations. In contrast, he was able to make contacts on the right. He ^{also} had no trouble at being outgoing with the media--visiting a newspaper editor to ask for more FPCC coverage, seeking out radio interviews. And he was not afraid to confront

the supposed opposition, whether on the radio or at Bringuier's store or in the street. He could strike up a friendly conversation with Captain Davison at the American Embassy in Moscow or ride to Clinton with David Ferrie (and perhaps Banister). On the left, however, it was all solo performances surrounded by piles of pamphlets and cards, set in a red tableau sketched by Oswald's numerous letters.

In the 1960s the CIA's expanded domestic spying went beyond monitoring to what a Senate investigation would later describe as, "actual penetration with the dissident organization."⁷⁵ Oswald's activities seemed aimed not so much at spying on the FPCC or the ACLU as painting them into a communist monolith whose subversive implications were traceable back to Moscow. This fit the CIA's assumptions concerning the Kremlin's domestic incursion.⁷⁶ It also fit the Agency's expressed intention of "planting deceptive information which might embarrass the Committee [FPCC]."⁷⁷

Tying leftist groups in the U.S. to the American Communist Party and to Moscow would also serve another goal in addition to discrediting them: it would help to legitimate domestic spying by the CIA. The more foreign linkages there were, the broader a domestic-spying role the Agency could claim under its charter, and the better it could fend off its critics in Congress and its rivals in the intelligence community.

Oswald's New Orleans summer was indeed productive: it generated negative publicity for the FPCC and was a propaganda coup for the anti-Castroites; it produced a paper trail

supporting the Agency's professed theory of communist subversion while simultaneously legitimating domestic spying. Beyond these payoffs, there was another one which--whether it was specifically intended at the time or not--would be crucial within three months. Oswald's pro-Castro involvement would be a central element in the purposely crafted image of Oswald-the-assassin.

portfolios. He was declared persona non grata and deported. The reason, as George described it, was that, "they [the Mexican authorities] said 'that is the best way, for you to leave, because you cannot fight the constitutional forces of Mexico'."12

There are some clues as to de Mohrenschildt's activities in Mexico. A letter sent to him by one of his relatives shortly before the Mexican trip instructed George to "get the necessary letters of credit from Nelson Rockefeller."13 When he was booted out of Mexico, he was indeed carrying letters of credit worth thousands of dollars, issued by the Rockefellers' Chase Manhattan Bank.14 During World War II, Nelson Rockefeller was active on behalf of U.S. intelligence through an organization called British Security Co-Ordination. One of Rockefeller's aims was to prevent Latin American oil from reaching Nazi Germany.15

Whatever George's role in Mexico, he and his trusty sketch pad were to become tools of U.S. intelligence after the war. A House Assassinations Committee staffer whose work centered on de Mohrenschildt commented in 1978 that George "had contacts with intelligence again and again."16

He traveled widely--Ghana, Yugoslavia, Guatemala, Haiti, Costa Rica. The Warren Commission described him as a "petroleum engineer," but his activities went far beyond the collection of rock and silt samples. In 1957 he went to Yugoslavia, ostensibly on a geological field survey. He was accused by the Yugoslavian government of sketching military facilities.17 This is not surprising since he was then working for the American Co-Operation Administration, which was subsequently exposed as a

CIA-funded subsidiary of what would become the Agency for International Development (AID).¹⁸ AID became infamous as an umbrella for the CIA's clandestine activities abroad.

On his return from Yugoslavia de Mohrenschildt was debriefed by the CIA both in Washington D.C. and Dallas. The debriefing took place over the course of "several meetings" which generated no fewer than "ten separate intelligence reports."¹⁹

George and his wife Jeanne took an eight-month hike through Central America in 1960, traveling from the U.S. to Panama over primitive jungle trails. One photograph shows George in the company of the U.S. ambassador to Costa Rica.²⁰ The couple kept a log of their unusual trip and took extensive movie film.²¹ The hike happened to put them in Guatemala City during the Bay of Pigs invasion. Guatemala was a major staging area for CIA-backed Cuban exiles.²²

While in Haiti, de Mohrenschildt palled around with a man named Clemard Charles, a banker and close associate of the President of Haiti. Charles was involved in U.S.-Haitian arms deals.²³ House Assassinations Committee sources described him as having "many connections" with the CIA. One source believed that the CIA had "planted" a secretary on Charles' staff.²⁴ Committee sources who knew de Mohrenschildt in Haiti described his activities there as "strange." One said that George "followed people in his car."²⁵ Another source, who was introduced to de Mohrenschildt by Charles, observed that George claimed to be in Haiti to scout for oil but that it was difficult to figure out what he actually did. The source believed that George had "intelligence connections." He asserted that de Mohrenschildt

and Charles hung out in an establishment "frequented by many American intelligence personnel from the American embassy."²⁶ It is also rumored by sources with CIA connections that de Mohrenschildt was involved in the abortive coup that tried to topple Haitian President-for-Life "Papa Doc" Duvalier. Subsequently the CIA would attempt to have Duvalier assassinated.²⁷

George was apparently very well-connected to a variety of important persons. Peggy Adler Robohm, who has conducted in-depth research on de Mohrenschildt, has told the author that he had extensive, elite ties to U.S. military and intelligence officers, State Department officials, prominent oil men and socialites, and politicians--many of whom were, or would become, national figures. In numerous instances, he possessed the home addresses and phone numbers of these notables. Such information would be difficult, if not impossible, for an outsider to obtain.

Some of George's associates in Dallas were puzzled by his finances. One noted that at certain times he seemed to have very little money; at others, "plenty."²⁸ Gary E. Taylor, a former son-in-law, wondered to the FBI how George was able to finance his extensive travel when he seemed to be in financial need.²⁹ Taylor could not understand how the de Mohrenschildts outfitted themselves so well for their hike through Central America.³⁰ Another associate observed that George "did not work steady" but "got along well financially" and traveled extensively.³¹

The House Assassinations Committee obtained information that de Mohrenschildt had received a "substantial sum" of money

Chapter 6

Dallas: The Long Arm of Langley

The point of this is that the CIA is not simply an agency that gathers foreign intelligence for the United States in far-off corners of the globe. It is deeply involved in many diverse, clandestine activities right here in the United States in at least twenty metropolitan areas.

--David Wise and Thomas B. Ross The Invisible Government, 1964

The pattern manifested in Moscow, in New Orleans, and throughout much of Oswald's life continued in Dallas. The unseen hand was there, moving events toward the climax of the President's assassination. As usual, the CIA is there too--officially and unofficially, overtly and covertly. The events of Oswald's life in Dallas are often obscured by mistaken assumptions--that Oswald was not an intelligence agent, that the CIA had no domestic clandestine involvements.

It was assumed by the Warren Commission that the Agency had no presence in Dallas beyond overt intelligence gathering, and thus no leverage by which to influence events surrounding Oswald. The House Assassinations Committee reached much the same conclusion, which was less excusable given the post-Warren

Commission revelations about the CIA's broad role in domestic spying and domestic clandestine activities. From the ignorance of the Warren Commission's perspective and from the myopia of the House Committee's perspective, searching out a CIA role in the events of Dallas (events occurring before, during, and after the assassination) would be an exercise in paranoiac fantasy--to be pursued only by those who mistakenly view the CIA as omnipotent and omnipresent.

Both the Commission and the Committee interpreted the events of Dallas through the prism of Oswald-the-leftist-ideologue. Having followed him on the long and mysterious trail from his days as the pinko Marine to his role as a provocateur, we can approach these events with a much different perspective.

CIA linkages to Oswald, so clearly manifested in New Orleans, begin to emerge in Dallas immediately upon his June 1962 arrival when he returned from the Soviet Union. Then, George de Mohrenschildt became his closest friend and became a, if not the, primary influence in the young man's life. De Mohrenschildt would also provide some of the most damning testimony about Oswald to the Warren Commission. His accounts were a key element in the Commission's image of Oswald as an ill-tempered malcontent and a violence-prone crackpot who, according to de Mohrenschildt, assassinated the President because, "It made him a hero in his own mind." De Mohrenschildt asserted that Oswald was extremely jealous of Kennedy, "who was young, attractive, had a beautiful wife, and had all the money in the world and was a world figure. And poor Oswald. He had nothing. He had a bitchy wife, had no money, and was a miserable failure in everything he

did."¹

Who was this man who helped cast his young friend into historical infamy. George de Mohrenschildt, the Baron, the descendant of Russian nobility--this was the man who, along with his friends in the White Russian Community in Dallas, despised the Soviet Communist regime. The Baron's close relationship with Oswald, thirty years his junior, was very strange if one assumes that Oswald's Marxist-communist credentials were bona fide.

Like David Ferrie, de Mohrenschildt's political philosophy and background were hardly pro-leftist: George too was a zealous anti-communist. He liked to brag that he was a staunch Republican. He belonged to such establishment, conservative organizations as the Dallas Petroleum Club and the local country club.² He once stated to friends that he favored Nazi Germany and thought that Heinrich Himmler was "all right."³ An FBI memo written in 1942 described him as "very pro-Nazi." So much so, that the FBI suspected him of being a German spy during World War II. He was detained by authorities and was searched and interrogated after allegedly sketching cargo facilities in Port Arthur, Texas.⁴ At the end of the war it was not uncommon for U.S. intelligence to take over former German agents and use them in the cold war against the communists.⁵

A Dallas associate of de Mohrenschildt remembered warning an acquaintance not to hang around George, partly because he had no visible means of support yet appeared to live comfortably. According to the associate, de Mohrenschildt heard about the conversation and called up to say, "A good friend of mine told me

that you said I was a communist. If I hear any more statements of this nature I will come over and beat the hell out of you."⁶ George's sensitivity about communism was understandable given his background.

According to one associate, de Mohrenschildt claimed to have had a troubled childhood, suffering under the Russian Communist regime.⁷ His father was a member of the aristocracy and was arrested by the communists shortly after the revolution. The senior de Mohrenschildt had been an official in the Czarist government and had helped mobilize the Czar's army against insurgents.⁸ The Bolshevik revolution deprived George of his future barony. Then eight years old, young George was forced to wander the streets in search of food.

He finally escaped to Poland where he trained for a career as a army officer. But he had lost the wealth needed to sustain this position: Polish officers were expected to personally finance their careers. Eventually George found his way to the U.S.⁹ His wife Jeanne had also suffered at the hands of communists: the Chinese communists had allegedly executed her father.¹⁰

Whether George de Mohrenschildt worked for the French underground during World War II, as he claimed, or for the Germans or for both, his involvement in intelligence work is a certitude. In 1942, only a year after he was detained for possibly spying in the U.S., he showed up in Mexico. He stayed for nine months doing what he later described as "painting" and "investing."¹¹ The Mexican authorities seemed to suspect that there was more to his visit than straightforward pictures and

shortly after the assassination (paid to his account in Haiti). Jacqueline Lancelot, who owned a Haitian restaurant frequented by intelligence types, reported that she learned from a source in a Haitian bank that \$200,000 to \$250,000 had been deposited in de Mohrenschildt's account and had been paid out shortly before he left Haiti and returned to the U.S. after the assassination. Lancelot did not claim to know to whom the funds were dispensed.³² The Committee also discovered that in May 1963 George went to Washington, D.C. and met with the CIA. The purpose of the meeting is not known.³³

De Mohrenschildt was frequently seen in the company of a man reported to be a CIA operative in Cuba.³⁴ In fact, the White Russian community in Dallas, into which George introduced his ostensibly Marxist friend Oswald, received financial assistance from the CIA. Most of the White Russians had fled communist persecution and had been brought to the U.S. by the Tolstoy Foundation, an anti-communist lobby which received yearly subsidies from the Agency.³⁵ The Russian Orthodox Church, a centerpiece of the very conservative and religious White Russian community, also received Agency philanthropy.³⁶

The pattern of de Mohrenschildt's CIA linkages caused his friend and lawyer Patrick Russell to state in 1978, "I personally have always felt that George was a CIA agent."³⁷ As we will see later in this chapter, George's CIA connections in Dallas included J. Walton Moore, the Agency's Domestic Contact Service officer in Dallas: the connection specifically involved Oswald.

As previously mentioned de Mohrenschildt had worked for AID (the Agency for International Development), an organization with

extensive CIA ties. Part of the time Oswald was in New Orleans and during the time he lived in Dallas and worked at the Texas School Book Depository, his family lived with Ruth and Michael Paine in Irving, Texas. Ruth Paine's father, William Avery Hyde, was a retired AID employee.³⁸ Michael Paine's brother was employed in the Washington, D.C. area, also by AID.³⁹ During the House Assassinations Committee investigation, a Haitian associate of de Mohrenschildt recognized the name William Avery Hyde as one mentioned by George.⁴⁰

William Avery Hyde was not unknown to the CIA. An FBI memo reporting on the Bureau's post-assassination check of the Paine family gave Hyde a clean bill of health so far as "subversive" activity was concerned. One source for this conclusion was the Agency, which vouched for Hyde. The CIA reported to the Bureau that it had such confidence in him that it considered using him to head a "cooperative educational center" in Vietnam in 1957; although it did not actually use him in that capacity.⁴¹ The House Committee found the possible link between AID alumni Hyde and de Mohrenschildt to be "intriguing."

Oswald's ability to associate with people who had government connections was uncanny. Michael Paine moved out of his home when Oswald's family moved in. He then moved back with his wife Ruth after the assassination, when Marina and her two children found other quarters. He was employed as a security-cleared engineer at Bell Helicopter, a defense department contractor.⁴²

Intriguing too is a Warren Commission document only declassified in 1976.⁴³ It refers to a telephone conversation

recorded by the FBI the day following the assassination. As the Bureau described it: "a male voice was heard to say that he felt sure Lee Harvey Oswald had killed the President but did not feel Oswald was responsible, and further stated, 'We both know who is responsible.'" The male voice was that of Michael Paine, who was talking to Ruth Paine when recorded by the Bureau's telephone tap.

George de Mohrenschildt, the displaced aristocrat, the spook with pro-Nazi sympathies, became Lee Harvey Oswald's patron, his guiding force. He was most likely his CIA baby sitter as well. In the words of George's lawyer, Patrick Russell, the relationship with Oswald "went a little deeper than friendship."⁴⁴ When Oswald was arrested in Dallas following the assassination, he had in his possession what the FBI evidence log described as "#208-Note bearing the telephone number EM3-1365." The log does not indicate whose number it was. In one place, the Warren Commission volumes erroneously list the number as EN3-1365. Dallas assassinologist Mary Ferrell, whose research has included identification and cataloguing of several thousand telephone numbers relevant to the case, told the author that the number found on Oswald was for de Mohrenschildt's unlisted phone.⁴⁵

George's influence over Lee seems to have been quite extraordinary. As de Mohrenschildt's former son-in-law Gary E. Taylor described it, "Whatever his [George's] suggestions were, Lee grabbed them and took them, whether it was what time to go to bed or where to stay."⁴⁶ Taylor told the FBI he thought Oswald would do anything George told him to.⁴⁷ Yet George would

describe Oswald to the Warren Commission as an unstable, insufferable lout whom he could barely endure. Why did de Mohrenschildt bother to befriend Oswald and become his patron?

He befriended the Oswalds and introduced them socially to members of the White Russian community, many of whom were suspicious because of Oswald's pro-communist background. George telephoned friends to set up appointments to help Lee find a job.⁴⁸ He seems to have been the guiding force behind most, if not all, of Oswald's movements.

One thing George evidently told Lee to do was to move into Dallas from Fort Worth. On October 7, 1962 a group of White Russians, including George and Jeanne de Mohrenschildt, visited Lee and Marina at their dumpy apartment in Fort Worth.⁴⁹ Oswald announced to the group that he had lost his job at a nearby metal factory. It was a lie, like so many that Oswald told about losing and seeking jobs.⁵⁰ His announcement of his putative firing precipitated a group discussion about what he might do next. Not surprisingly, George had a ready-made plan.

Lee and Marina would move to Dallas, thirty miles from Fort Worth. She would stay with one of the White Russian families there while Lee looked for work. Those present remember that George seemed conspicuously certain regarding Lee's job prospects in Dallas.⁵¹ De Mohrenschildt also gave the impression that he was subsidizing the Oswalds.⁵² In fact, Oswald did pay off a two-hundred-dollar debt to his brother around this time, in spite of Lee's apparent poverty.

The very day after George had announced the plan, Oswald

moved to Dallas. Only four days after arriving there he secured a new job. Though it was ostensibly found through the services of the Texas Unemployment Commission, de Mohrenschildt's wife and daughter claim that it was George who got Oswald the position.⁵³ Contrary to what Oswald told the White Russian group back in Fort Worth, he had quit his factory job there. His new job in Dallas paid him, within a few pennies, the same wage he had been making in Fort Worth. His new employer was markedly different than his old one.

In Dallas he worked for the firm of Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall, a graphic-arts company that did newspaper advertising layouts and catalogues. It also did sophisticated photographic work. Jaggars processed and analyzed photos taken by the U-2 spy plane.⁵⁴ The U-2 materials were theoretically available only to security-cleared workers, which Oswald was not. In reality, however, the firm's employees worked in cramped quarters that made strict security and limitation of access nearly impossible.⁵⁵

It seems that Lee Harvey Oswald couldn't avoid crossing paths with the Black Lady of espionage. He was near the U-2 in Atsugi, Japan; he was in the Soviet Union when it was shot down; now, back in Texas, he was working at a firm that did U-2 photo analysis. It is not as if the U-2's were like McDonalds restaurants--so ubiquitous one expects to run into them everywhere. It is likely that the pinko Marine and the spy plane kept crossing paths because they were programmed by the same source.

One of Oswald's fellow employees at Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall

recalled him as basically quiet and reserved. Occasionally, however, he would discuss the Soviet Union in a most peculiar manner. As previously mentioned, co-worker Dennis Ofstein said that Oswald would describe the dispersement patterns of Soviet military units--infantry, armor, planes.⁵⁶ These are strange remembrances for a Marxist ideologue whose defection was allegedly motivated by a simplistic political idealism. Perhaps Oswald's keen eye for the deployment of military hardware gave him something in common with his patron George de Mohrenschildt, who made a habit of observing military facilities during his frequent travels abroad.

As we would wearily expect, Oswald's Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall tenure is an enigma. For part of the time he would literally disappear at the end of each workday until he showed up at work the next morning. No official investigation has discovered what he was up to, or even where he was living, for most of the period between October 8 and November 3.⁵⁷

While at Jaggars he became acquainted with sophisticated camera techniques and equipment.⁵⁸ He asked the firm if he could use their facilities to do his own photo developing.⁵⁹ Oswald probably used Jaggars equipment to forge the "Hidell" draft card found in his wallet when he was arrested on the afternoon of the assassination. An FBI expert stated that the forgery involved a very accurate camera "such as are found in photographic labs and printing plants."⁶⁰

Perhaps Oswald knew what he was talking about when he told Dallas police that the infamous photo of him posing with guns in

his backyard was a fake. He calmly asserted that the picture had been fabricated by persons unknown, that the face was his but the body was not.⁶¹ He told police that he "knew about photography." There is no doubt about that. But the question is how he was using this knowledge.

In Dallas Oswald had a cache of strange and expensive equipment, especially for a lowly stock boy living on a menial income. Among the items found by police after the assassination was a Minox camera (generally referred to as a "spy camera"). There was also a 15-power Wollensak telescope, a pair of Nippon Kogaku binoculars, several camera filters, a slide viewer, an Ansco flash assembly, a 35-mm camera, another pair of binoculars, a lens hood, a 7x18 telescope, yet another camera, and a variety of film. In addition, there was a pedometer ^{and} a compass."⁶²

Police found several rolls of pictures taken with a Minox camera.⁶³ It was not until 1978 that a Freedom of Information Act suit against the FBI forced release of some of the photos. Strangely, the majority of the twenty-five released photos show scenes shot in Europe: five are of military facilities thought to be in Asia or Latin America.⁶⁴

In Oswald's address book, found by police after the assassination, there is one page containing the following notations:⁶⁵

Jaggars-Chiles-Stovall

TYPOGRAPHY

522 BROWDER

R111550

micro dots