

## LETTERS

### THE CIA'S MYSTERY MAN

To the Editors:

The CIA's extraordinary reporting of Lee Harvey Oswald's visit to the Soviet Embassy in Mexico City [NYR, April 3] raises several important questions which should be pursued by current Congressional investigations of the Agency. The CIA's unexplained attribution of Oswald's name to photographs of a clearly different person is only one of these questions; and indeed the CIA could quite conceivably have been the victim, rather than the author, of this misrepresentation.

It would seem however that the CIA itself must accept responsibility for another misrepresentation in its strange message of October 1963 about the unidentified visitor—the erroneous reporting of Oswald's name as Lee Henry Oswald. Trivial as this admitted error might seem, it was almost certainly not accidental, but the consequence of the bureaucratic decisions some years earlier to open an ongoing file under this incorrect name.

The CIA had compiled a fairly lengthy and essentially correct memo on Lee Harvey Oswald in 1960. But when the State Department asked in October 1960 for information about American defectors living in the Soviet bloc, the CIA replied on November 3 with a radically reduced summary of this memo under the name "Lee Henry Oswald." The summary was further falsified in two other important respects. Oswald was said to have "visited his mother in Waco, Texas" (rather than Fort Worth—a change that could have protected the Lee Henry Oswald story from being pursued by vigilant investigators).

Oswald was also said to have "renounced his US citizenship" in Moscow—despite State Department reports and a recent official ruling (in a different office of the State Department) that there was no evidence Oswald had done so. As the earlier CIA memo had noted correctly, "The American Embassy wanted him to think it over before hearing his oath renouncing American citi-

zenship." The issue of Oswald's "renunciation" had already become, and would continue to be, the subject of controversy between different offices of the US Government and State Department; it seems highly likely therefore that the CIA's falsifications of its own memo may have been deliberate. By substituting a new name—Lee Henry Oswald—it had created the pretext for opening a new file, where unwelcome contrary evidence about the "renunciation" could simply be ignored.

For whatever reasons, the CIA, on December 9, 1960, then did just this—it opened a new file on Lee Henry Oswald. The six lines for "name variants" were left blank, despite the clear instructions on the file request form that "all known aliases and variants (including maiden name, if applicable) *must* [my italics] be listed." This suggests that the file, or a computerized summary of it, carried no reference to either Lee Harvey Oswald or the CIA's original report about his uncompleted renunciation (Commission Document 692).

Other administrators outside the CIA appear to have been alert to this subtle bureaucratic game. In the State Department, where up to now a voluminous correspondence had been conducted under the name "Lee Harvey Oswald," the next memorandum (of January 26, 1961, Commission Exhibit 2681) refers twice in uncanny fashion to "Lee Oswald." The CIA copy of this memo is duly amended to read "Lee Henry Oswald," even though the same copy also carries on it in large letters the superimposed State Department file stamp of "OSWALD, LEE HARVEY." Thus the allusion in the October 1963 CIA teletype to "Lee Henry Oswald" seems unlikely to have been a momentary slip or accident, but rather part of an ongoing bureaucratic mystery.

It is of course not at all clear why, as late as October 1963, the CIA perpetuated the fiction of a Lee Henry Oswald. The Rockefeller Commission has now rejected Tad Szulc's claim that the then Acting Chief of the Mexico City CIA Station—for a six-week period covering Oswald's visit—was

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none other than E. Howard Hunt. But there are other questions to be raised about Oswald's possible connections with Hunt and the CIA.

It is indisputable that Oswald in New Orleans stamped his pro-Castro literature with the 544 Camp St. address which had formerly been used by the Cuban Revolutionary Council (Report, p. 408). This was an anti-Castro front that had been organized by Hunt. (See Hunt, *Give Us This Day*, pp. 40-44, 182.) Oswald in addition met at least four members of the New Orleans CRC, as well as its registered foreign agent Ronny Caire (22 H 831). One notes moreover that Oswald's Mexican travel permit followed in numerical sequence that of editor William G. Gaudet, who later volunteered information to the FBI about Jack Ruby in New Orleans (26 H 337), and later still identified himself as a former "employee of CIA" (CD 75.588).

The CIA was also linked to an anti-Castro Cuban who lived in Dallas and who allegedly looked so much like Oswald that he was mistaken for him (CD 23.4). This Cuban, Manuel Rodriguez Orcarberrio, was both a member of the DRE, a CIA front contacted by Oswald, and the Dallas president of Alpha 66, a group implicated in the ongoing plans of the CIA (and specifically, if Szulc can be believed, of Hunt) to assassinate Castro. A Treasury Agent told the Warren Commission about Rodriguez's attempts to buy arms for Alpha 66. He discovered these while investigating what he called "the right-wing group in Dallas most likely to have been associated with any effort to assassinate the President." The Warren Commission then obtained an entire file on Manuel Rodriguez Orcarberrio (CD 853) which is still withheld.

These and other closely-related matters should be explored by the Church Committee. For the CIA's name games in its own files, the activities of Oswald in New Orleans, and the still unexplained story of his alleged Dallas "double" suggest that Oswald was more than a disgruntled loner, persistently neglected and ignored.

Peter Dale Scott

Berkeley, California

### Bernard Fensterwald and George O'Toole reply:

Dr. Scott has raised an important issue which parallels the question of the mystery man. We were unaware of the possible significance of the CIA's substitution of "Henry" for "Harvey" as Oswald's middle name, and we are grateful to Dr. Scott for calling it to our attention. We certainly agree that the question he has raised should be added to the list of issues to be explored by the Senate and House Committees now investigating the Central Intelligence Agency.

Shortly after publication of our piece, Dr. Paul Hoch, a researcher who has done extensive work on the JFK assassination, obtained a previously classified CIA document from the National Archives bearing on the case of the mystery man. The document, CD 1287, is the memorandum of transmittal from Richard Helms to the Warren Commission which accompanied his affidavit regarding one photograph of the mystery man. The memo refers to the man in the photograph only as "an unidentified individual," and asks that "this photograph not be reproduced in the Commission's report, because it would jeopardize a most confidential and productive operation. In addition, it could be embarrassing to the individual involved who as far as this Agency is aware, had no connection with Lee Harvey Oswald or the assassination of President Kennedy."

The newly de-classified document does nothing to clear up the question of why the CIA believed Oswald and the mystery man were one and the same during an eight-week period prior to November 22, 1963, or why the Warren Commission was eventually satisfied that the incident was a case of mistaken identity and not imposture. The memo seems to imply that protection of the "unidentified individual" from embarrassment took precedence in the CIA's priorities over the possibility of learning who he really was.

After publication in the April 3 issue of *The New York Review*, the story and photographs were picked up by the wire services and appeared in scores of newspapers across the country. The photographs have been shown repeatedly on television and one was published in the June 2 issue of

*U.S. News and World Report*. To date we have received no creditable identification of the man.

A copy of *The New York Review* piece was furnished to Mr. David Belin, Executive director of the Rockefeller Commission, who promised the authors he would comment on the question. To date we have not received his comment. No reference to the matter was made in the Rockefeller Commission's report, which contained an extensive review of questions recently raised concerning possible involvement of the CIA in the JFK assassination and allegations of CIA ties to Lee Harvey Oswald.

Copies of the article have been furnished to the House and Senate committees currently investigating the CIA and we hope they will be able to obtain additional information on the matter.