

Washington

Today

By David Lawrence

RED PRESS IGNORES OSWALD'S COMMUNIST BACKGROUND

WASHINGTON — The Soviet Press has been getting away with a lot of misleading comments about the motives of Lee Harvey Oswald, and seems to have ignored completely the fact that the assassin of President Kennedy was deeply influenced in his thinking by Marxism and Communism.

The "Literary Gazette," published in Moscow, had the effrontery this week to charge that Governor Ronald Reagan of California is "controlled by the forces which took John Kennedy's life." This was reported in a UPI dispatch on Wednesday to newspapers in the United States.

So far as American observers are concerned, they have been inclined for a long time to believe that Oswald was just a "crackpot." But if there is to be a re-examination of what really influenced Oswald's life, the facts can be found in the Warren Commission Report. They show clearly that there was no Hitlerism or fascism involved—as is now claimed by the Soviet newspaper.

The Warren Commission Report says it could not make any "definitive determination" of Oswald's motives, but it mentions this factor:

"His avowed commitment to Marxism and Communism, as he understood the terms and developed his own interpretation of them; this was expressed by his antagonism toward the United States, by his defection to the Soviet Union, by his failure to be reconciled with life in the United States even after his disenchantment with the Soviet Union, and by his efforts, though frustrated, to go to Cuba."

Very little attention has been

given in the American press to the impact on Oswald's mind which resulted from his identification with Communism. The Warren Commission says he started to read about Communism when he was 15 years old and told his fellow Marines later that he was a Communist, though he never formally joined a Communist party. The Warren Commission in its report adds:

"It seems clear that his (Oswald's) commitment to Marxism was an important factor influencing his conduct during his adult years. It was an obvious element in his decision to go to Russia and later to Cuba and it probably influenced his decision to shoot at General

Walker. It was a factor which contributed to his character and thereby might have influenced his decision to assassinate President Kennedy."

Oswald went to the Soviet Union in October 1959, at the age of 19, and wrote to his brother that he would fight for Com-

munism. He defected to the Soviet Union and lived there for two years. When he came back to the United States in 1961, he said he was disillusioned with the Soviet system, but that he nevertheless maintained his belief in Communist ideology.

Early in 1963 Oswald became active in promoting the "fair play for Cuba committee," and in September—two months before the assassination—went from New Orleans to Mexico City to apply at the Cuban Embassy there for a visa to Cuba on his way to Russia once more. The Warren Commission comments on this phase when it says:

"Oswald's attempt to go to Cuba was another act which expressed his hostility toward the United States and its institutions as well as a concomitant attachment to a country in which he must have thought were embodied the political principles to which he had been committed for so long."

Recently Henry J. Taylor, the newspaper columnist who was American Ambassador to Switzerland under the Eisenhower administration, published a series of articles which reported that Oswald had a key contact with an officer in the Soviet Intelligence Service and had written letters to Soviet Embassy officials as late as November 9, 1963. Mr. Taylor pointed out that Oswald received preferential treatment in the Soviet Union and declared that he was affiliated "with the Communist cause and its personnel up to the very moment he died."

At the time Oswald was in Moscow, he wrote to his brother:

"In event of War I would kill any American who put a uniform on in defense of the American government — any American."

There is no doubt that Oswald had an unbalanced mind. But responsibility for unbalancing it rests to some extent on the Communist philosophy in which he was indoctrinated during his two-year stay in Russia.

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