

# Ex-Diplomat Denies Oswald Told Cubans He Might Kill JFK

By George Lardner Jr.

Washington Post Staff Writer

The Cuban consul who spurned Lee Harvey Oswald's attempts to get to Havana in the fall of 1963 yesterday indignantly denied long-persistent reports that Oswald had told the Cubans he might kill President Kennedy.

Testifying with the blessings of Cuban President Fidel Castro, the now-retired diplomat, Eusebio Azcue, insisted that he "would have never tolerated such a conversation."

"That would have been a provocation and we do not allow ourselves to be provoked," Azcue told the House Assassinations Committee. "This is ridiculous that we should attempt to walk into the mouth of the lion."

The reports that Castro had been given advance notice of Oswald's intentions were picked up by authorities years ago and reached their fullest flower in an Oct. 15, 1967, article in the National Enquirer that melodramatically quoted Castro as saying:

"It's possible that I could have saved him [Kennedy]. I might have been able to—but I didn't. I never believed that the plan would be put into effect . . . I thought that he [Oswald] must have been some sort of wild man."

Despite the questionable credentials of the now dead British journalist who wrote the article (other stories of his included "I Was Hitler's Secret Love" and "British Girls as Nazi Sex Slaves"), the House committee staff reported that the substance of the article is not without some foundation.

The journalist, a free-lancer named Comer Clark, may never have interviewed Castro as he claimed to have done, the staff reported, but it added:

"The committee has been informed that the substance of the Clark article is supported by highly confidential, but reliable, sources available to the United States government."

Chairman Louis Stokes (D-Ohio), who concluded the day's hearing with high praise for Castro's cooperation in the inquiry, refused to elaborate on the tantalizing disclosure.

For his part, Castro, who gave the committee a more-than-four-hour interview last April, denied making any such remarks and called the story "a lie from head to toe." The transcript of the committee's interview with Castro is to be made public today.

Yesterday's hearing was a first in several respects. The witnesses, Azcue and former consul Alfredo Mirabal, who served with him in Mexico City, were accompanied to the hearing by Ricardo Escartin, consul and first sec-

retary to the Cuban interests section in Washington. In an opening statement on behalf of the Castro government, New York lawyer Michael Standard denounced the assassination as "an act of the vilest kind . . . unacceptable by any standard of political behavior," and he emphasized Cuba's official decision "to cooperate" with Congress in the inquiry.

Oswald visited the Cuban consulate in Mexico City on Sept. 27, 1963, in an effort to get a "transit visa" for a stop there on the way to the Soviet Union. He dealt with Sylvia Tirado Duran (now Bazan), a secretary at the consulate, and later with Azcue and Mirabal. Although he spoke no English, Mirabal signed the application for a visa, which Oswald wanted immediately but never got.

Revealing himself as a fan of former New Orleans district attorney Jim Garrison, Azcue repeated under oath his statements in Havana earlier this summer that he thinks "there were two Oswalds."

Azcue said that at some point after the Nov. 22 1963, assassination, when he was back in Havana, he saw the film of Jack Ruby shooting Oswald and concluded that this was not "the Oswald who visited the consulate" in late September.

Recalling an argument he had with the "discourteous" Oswald he remembered, Azcue said he had "a clear picture" in his mind of a man over 30, "very thin-faced. He had cold, hard eyes. His cheeks were thin. His nose was very thin and pointed." The Oswald on film, he said, seemed younger and heavier.

In a taped interview with the committee staff, Sylvia Tirado, by contrast, identified Oswald's pictures from Dallas as those of the man who came to the consulate. Mirabal said "I believe he is the same person," too. A copy of Oswald's original visa application, examined by committee staffers in Havana, contains the real Oswald's photo. Chief Committee counsel G. Robert Blakey added that committee handwriting experts have confirmed that the real Oswald signed the visa application.

Azcue, however, held firm to what he called "my truth." He said he never even looked at the visa photos to see if they matched with the man presenting them, until this past April when the committee staff showed one to him.

Azcue also said he was sure the Oswald who visited the consulate spoke to no one other than him, Mirabal and Tirado. Like Azcue, they told the committee they remembered no threats against President Kennedy.

## Soviet Writer Suggests Peking Role in JFK Death

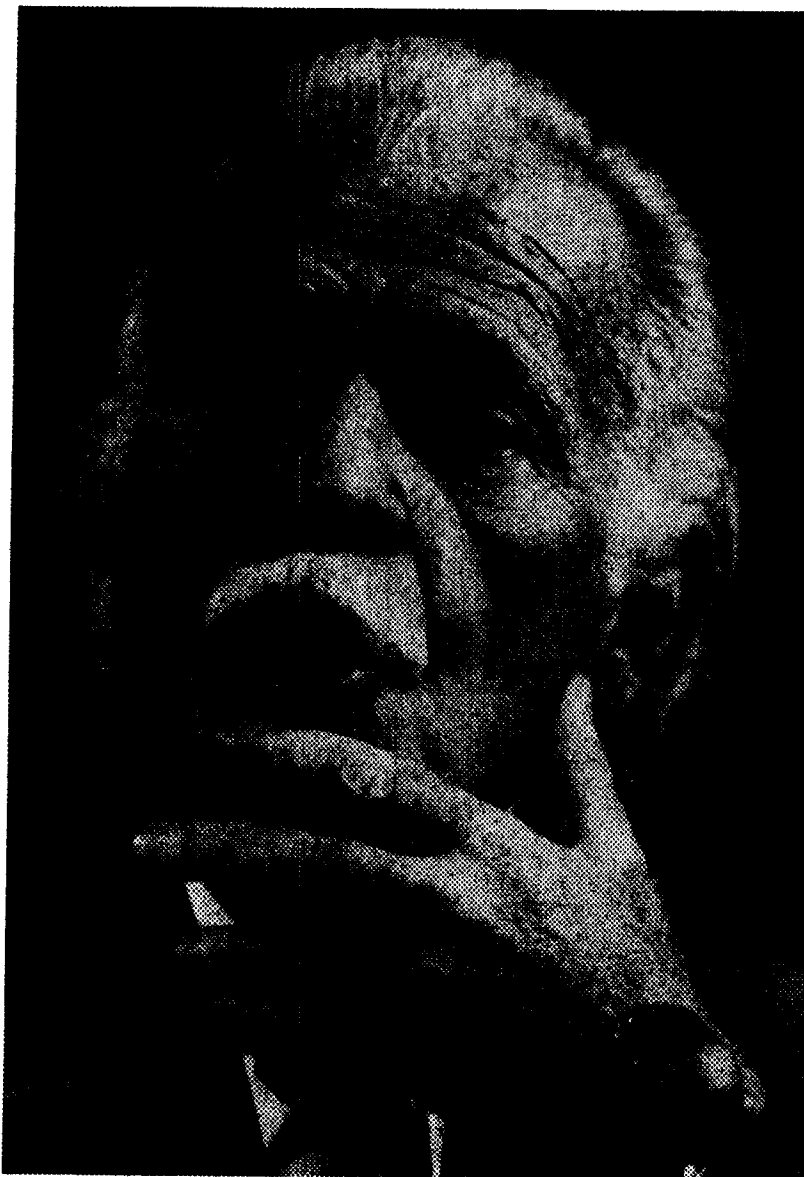
Reuter

MOSCOW—A Soviet writer suggested yesterday that Lee Harvey Oswald was a Chinese agent and that his assassination of President Kennedy was planned jointly by Peking and the mafia.

The link between China and the U.S. underworld, novelist Yulian Semyonov theorizes, was Dallas nightclub owner Jack Ruby, who shot Oswald two days after the president's death to prevent him from revealing the plot.

The new Soviet version, one of several that have been publicized in Moscow over the past 15 years, appears in the first of a series of articles by Semyonov, who has written extensively about Soviet police and intelligence agents, in the weekly Ogonyok.

Publication of his theory, which he partly bases on information gathered during a visit to Dallas, marks the first time the Soviet Union has sought to implicate China in the killing, which Russian commentators have earlier put down to a right-wing plot.



By James K. W. Atherton—The Washington Post  
Azcue: insisted that he "would never have tolerated such a conversation."