

Transcript of Mrs. Alliluyeva's Statement

Following is the transcript of the news conference given yesterday by Mrs. Svetlana Alliluyeva. The questions, submitted in advance, were read by Alan U. Schwartz, partner of Edward S. Greenbaum, her counsel.

THURSDAY, APRIL 27, 1967

OPENING STATEMENT

I am very glad to meet you again and to be here. I hope I, in the statement which I, which was given to you in the airport, I could already answer many questions which you were interested in. But I am ready to answer more today and do all possible what I will be able.

I have asked the questions to be given in the written form only because it's a little bit difficult for me sometimes to guess American English to which I am not accustomed and when it is written and cannot be repeated, can be repeated, it is easier for me.

Now, one thing more I want to say because I know that you will be interested in many things concerning my father, my mother, my brothers, my family, and to answer these questions is rather difficult in the short form. It needs long explanation. And I hope you will read my book this autumn and many things you will find there because it is not, there are not, these are not the things which I can explain just in two minutes. So I should like to ask you not to give me these questions concerning my parents and my brothers today.

But still I will do my best to answer everything possible, and I must add that today I feel a little bit like Valentina Tereshkova after her first flight into space because I have never been at a press conference. This is a little bit difficult for me, but I will do my best and I hope that after this you will understand me, I am accustomed to absolutely private life, I never had any political activities in Russia and I am not going to have it here. So I am sure that after answering all the questions I will have peace and finally will get the quiet life for which I have come here, because my only plan is to live without any political activities here and shall do my work, which is writing, which I am happy finally to be able to do, so I hope you will understand me in this.

Thank you very much.

QUESTIONS

Q. Svetlana, this is a question from Mr. [Gilbert] Millstein of N.B.C. News, Huntley-Brinkley. What series of events turned you away from Communism and what is your political philosophy now?

A. Well, my political philosophy — I should say I have no political philosophy. It is just something another what I have.

Well, 20 years ago when I joined the Communist party as a student of Moscow University, I believed in Communism as everybody, all my friends and people of my generation did. And I was taught it since my childhood.

I must say that it was a long chain of events. And also when a person becomes grown up and begins to think a little bit by one's own brains—because in university I studied Marxism very seriously and I had no nihilism towards it. And perhaps the studies of history and social sciences and economics and Marxism itself made me a little bit critical to many things which I could see around me, and to the things I could see in our country and in other socialist countries.

Because it was not exactly what we were taught theoretically. Later, after my father's death, I can say that I have lost quiet a lot with his death, because he was also for me the authority which could not be—well I loved him, I respected him, and when he was gone I have lost maybe a lot of faith. Just personal faith and respect.

Later, I must say that last 15 years perhaps everybody in our country, especially youngest generation, and also my generation, we became more critical because we perhaps were more free to think and to discuss and to judge about things and events.

Religious Feelings

And the lack of freedom everyone could feel quite evidently. Last five years also there were more reasons for me personally. Well, I have said it already in my written statement—that religion has done a great change to me.

I am not saying about some formal religion about—though I was, five years ago I was formally baptized in Moscow in Russian Orthodox Church.

Q. Svetlana, you said quite a little about this in your statement the other day, didn't you; when you came from the airport? A. Yes.

Q. (by Mr. Greenbaum) Maybe we can refer you to that for her further answer on that, and go on with the next question. A. I'll do that.

Q. This is from Miss Eckman of the New York Post. Do you feel your departure from the Soviet Union endangers your children in any way?

and Her Replies at

News Conference

Q. This is from Miss Eckman of the New York Post: Do you feel your departure from the Soviet Union endangers your children in any way?

A. No. I don't think it endangers them because they knew nothing about my plans and they could not know anything. They expected me to return back as I expected to do myself, and of course I was not able to inform them, neither from Delhi nor from Switzerland that I am not coming back. So they have—they are not guilty at all and I believe they cannot be punished for anything.

One thing about which I suffer very much is that they will miss me and their life might be changed or just without me without my presence, because we lived very good life. We were affectionate to each other.

A Difficult Decision

It was quite difficult for me to decide to leave them, but the decision not to return back was too serious for me. I could not continue the same life—the same useless life — which I had for 40 years. I wanted to have another life—a new life—and I said already "I hope that they will understand me."

My son is — my son will be 22 in May. He is a medical student. He has recently been married, so of course, he's responsible for his young wife and his family. He is responsible for his 17-year-old sister, also. But I don't think, I don't think they can — I don't think



The New York Times

AT NEWS SESSION: Mrs. Svetlana Alliluyeva answering questions during conference at the Plaza Hotel. With her are Alan U. Schwartz, center, of law firm of Greenbaum, Wolff & Ernst, and Edward S. Greenbaum, her lawyer.

something bad might happen with them there, because they don't deserve it.

Q. Here's another question from Mr. Millstein of N.B.C. News, Huntley-Brinkley: What event determined you to turn to religion? Is yours a formal religion or simply a generalized belief in God?

A. Yes, it is, what should be said, a generalized belief in God. I believe that all religions are true and different religions are only the different ways to the same God. For me, for me the God is just the power of life and justice and when I am talking about God I am just talking about happiness to live and to enjoy life on this earth.

I feel that humanity should be one, that mankind should not be divided, there should be less struggle. The people should together work much for good. Well, this is what is my, this is what is my belief in God. Maybe I am not clear.

No Church Preference

I was baptized in Moscow in Russian Orthodox Church, but it doesn't mean that I prefer this church to others. It was just the following of tradition, following the religion to which my parents and my ancestors belonged. I also feel the great sympathy with modern Hinduism of Rama Krishna and Girikananda and I feel greatest sympathy with Roman Catholic Church because in Switzerland I have met a lot of fine people who were Catholics and I also feel sympathy to which you know here as Christian Science. I don't feel much controversy between these things and I do not want to attach certain label to my religious feeling.

Q. Here's a question from Bob Schakne of C.B.S. News: In your arrival statement last Friday you said you left Russia seeking freedom of self-expression. Were you in your statement implying or perhaps even stating your disapproval of your father's rule in the Soviet Union and if so, how, in what way?

A. Well, there are two points in this: First of all, self-expression — and this is thing which I meant for the — well for the person who thinks that he's a writer. He can write but this is the only thing a thing which I meant for the — well for which he can do. Such person needs freedom to express what he likes and that person should be sure that his books will be published. This is what I could not — as many other writers — which I could not have at home.

Now about the disapproval the politics or — what is it, — of the politics of my father. Well, I should say — I must say that I — of course I disapprove of many things but I think that many other people who still are in our Central Committee and Politburo should be responsible for the same things for which he alone was accused.

And if I feel somewhat responsible for those horrible things, killing people unjustly, I feel that responsibility for this was and is the party's, the regime and the ideology as a whole.

Q. This is a question by Carl Pelleck of The New York Post. How did you manage to get your manuscript out of the Soviet Union? Was there much difficulty involved?

A. Oh, there was no difficulty. The book was written three years ago in August, 1963, and it was with me and two years ago just that winter when we had the Sinyavsky and Daniel case and trial in Moscow, I felt, with the help of my late husband, we felt, both, that it would be better to send the book abroad. And we did it. We have done it with the help of our Indian friends. It was two years ago.

So when I came to India in December, 1966, I have, the book was returned to me. I have asked my friends to return it back to me and when I left for Rome I took it with me. That is all.

The Newsmen in Switzerland

Q. The next question is from Judson Randall of United Press International. How do you feel about reporters chasing you during your first day in Switzerland? Is it true that you told the nuns in the monastery that you found the newsmen's interest "evil and disgusting" as a Frieborg newspaper reported?

A. Well, I don't exactly believe what I have said. But perhaps something like that I did, because when I came to Switzerland I was absolutely exhausted and tired after so many things — my time in India was horrible. One year before that my husband was very ill. I was awfully tired; I felt one thing only — I wanted to rest and relax a little bit.

And, of course, I am not accustomed to correspondents and I was not so — when I found that they are indeed chasing me and they want news and they want something, I felt that it was really something horrible and I did my best to escape it.

Q. Here's another question from Carl Pelleck of The New York Post. Do you intend to make your permanent home in America or anywhere else outside the

Soviet Union? If so, is there any particular part of America in which you'd like to live? And do you intend to apply for American citizenship?

A. Well, I think that before the marriage it should be love. So, if I will love this country and this country will love me, then the marriage will be settled. But I cannot say now.

Q. Here is a question from Lester Smith of WOR. Since you say the dogmas of Communism have lost their significance for you, do you now intend to speak out against these dogmas?

A. I have already said that I am not, I do not intend to have any political activities and by this I mean I am not going to preach neither for Communism neither against it.

Q. Here is a question from Gabe Pressman of N.B.C. Did the Soviet attitude toward your proposed marriage to Mr. Singh cause you to re-evaluate conditions in Russia? If not, what did?

A. Yes, I understand. This is just when Mr. Greenbaum has spoke to me, I just was coming to this point in the chain of events which brought me here. Yes, the attitude of Government and of the party to our marriage was one thing which was I think disgusting because I cannot understand until now how in the country where the marriage with foreigners is allowed by law, why a person like myself was not allowed to do it by the party and by the government.

I think this is not the business of the Government at all and the whole thing finished quite tragically because my husband has died in Moscow and his death exactly made me absolutely intolerant to the things to which I was rather tolerant before. So this was quite an important reason for me to feel that it is impossible for me to return back and among other events I can mention also the courts, the trial of Sinyavsky and Daniel which produced horrible impression on all the intellectuals in Russia and on me also and I can say that I lost the hopes which I had before that we are coming, we are going to become liberal somehow. The way how two writers were treated and sentenced made me absolutely disbelieve in justice.

Official Restrictions

Q. This is a question from Leonard Fried of The Suffolk Sun. In your statement Friday you said because of your name you were considered as a kind of state property by the Russian Government. Would you give us more details about the demands and restrictions on your personal life made by the Government?

A. Well, I was — there was no restrictions in the sense that I was denied something in my country. But I was said many times, officially, that I will never be allowed to travel abroad, because abroad I can meet the press, correspondents, and this is thing not for me.

Then secondly, I was not allowed to marry officially the Indian citizen, though he was a member of Indian Communist party.

Well, I had — comparing with other Soviet citizens — I had perhaps something what can be named as a privileged life. Because I had pension from the Government; I had some comforts which other people don't have. But, as you know, people cannot live only by bread. People need also something else.

And I knew exactly that the work as a writer will never be possible for me in the Soviet Union.

Q. S vetlana, here's a nother question from Carl Pelleck of The New York Post. It is reported that you plan to meet soon with writers and college professors so you can acquaint yourself with American intellectuals. Who in particular do you want to meet?

A. Well, I was not planning very soon to make such meetings. Perhaps later. I think this is a little bit mistake, because what I was planning to do was rather quiet, rather secluded life. And finally, I want to work, I want to write. To meet people — maybe I will meet rather narrow circle of my friends here which will gradually become larger.

But I am not planning anything like the big, large meetings with many people now. I think it might be later.

Q. Here's a question from Oriana Fallaci of L'Europeo magazine in Italy. It has been said that you will get from your book \$1-million free of tax. If this is true, and whatever the amount will be, how do you feel about the possibility of becoming a very wealthy woman? In other words, what is called a capitalist?

A. Oh, well, first of all, according to Marx, writers are not capitalists because it's little, it's different way of labor. Well, I quite understand that my book will give me a rather substantial sum of money here which I am going not to use for myself.

I think it has been already mentioned in the newspapers but I can repeat it again. I am intended to give a rather big part of it for India, for Indian village Kalakankar which is the birth-

place of my husband. I have been there, I have seen how poor people live, how much they need. So I am, I should be, I would be happy to establish something like a Brijesh Singh memorial fund there for the peasants of this village to help them with this money.

Also, I was intended to give a substantial sum of money for Switzerland for the land which was so kind and nice to me for a children's houses there. In Switzerland there are houses for orphans from all the countries, so for that purpose also.

And finally, in this country also, I am not sure just now what can be, where can be this money used here, but I will use them here also for some social purpose and I am not going to become very rich woman because, while my children are far away from me and they have rather more than modest life, it is absolutely impossible for me to become a rich person here. I think you understand this.

The Jewish Question

Q. Here's a question from Mr. Gershon Jacobson of The New York Day, which is a Jewish journal: There is a great deal of talk about the situation of Jews in the Soviet Union. Charges are being made that the Jewish religion and Jewish culture are being suppressed. Can you comment about this?

A. I not know much about Jewish religion. All I can see, I always had many friends among Jewish people in Russia and what I know, what I can see, I know about restrictions in universities and in the institutes when very talented Jewish young people sometimes can, sometimes are not adapted and instead of them people of other nationalities are adapted but who are less talented. This is all what I know. This is what I can say as a fact because I know it myself.

Q. Here's another question from Leonard Fried of The Suffolk Sun. What do you think of modern American literature and who are your favorite American writers?

A. Well, I think still my favorite American writer is Hemingway and we do not know much about modern American writers in Russia. I hope here I will be able to get acquainted. Well, I like Salinger very much.

Q. Here's another question from Gabe Pressman of NBC: In your first statement you said there were no Communists or capitalists for you, only good people and bad people. Do you think the day is coming when leaders of the Soviet Union and the United States will embrace that philosophy? How soon?

A. I can say nothing about the leaders. You should better ask them.

Q. Here's a question from June L. Aulick of The Christian Herald, I believe: Are there many other Russians who also feel that a belief in God provides strength to meet the daily challenges all human beings face? Are there many other Russians who also feel that a belief in God is important for them to meet the challenges of their life? A. I believe there are many.

Q. Here's a question from Brij Lal of ABC Radio: Do you suppose there may be other Russian writers who would like to leave Russia to be able to express their thoughts freely?

A. I don't know. I don't know. All I can say that many of them, many of them are never printed, and quite a lot of good poetry and short stories and novels we know only in titles because there is quite a lot of modern literature in Russia which is not printed.

Q. Here's a question from Linda Charlton of Newsday: Have you been in touch with your children since arriving in the United States and will you continue to communicate with them?

A. No, I have not been in touch with them and I really do not know how is it possible. All I could do was, once I telephoned to my home from Switzerland and once I could talk with my son, and what was possible the next time after three days when I tried to telephone again I could not get the connection with his number. And the letters, I am sure the letters will not reach them, sent by mail.

Financing of Trip

Q. Here's another question from Leonard Fried of The Suffolk Sun: How did you finance your trip from Russia? A. From Russia?

Q. Yes. A. Well, I paid for the tickets and went to India, to India, they mean, or farther . . . ?

Q. I don't know. A. . . . or here?

Q. Here's a question from Steve Flanders at WCBS Radio: Do you think Boris Pasternak will ever be fully published in the Soviet Union?

A. Well, I hope, I hope this time will come because it is a great shame that such a great Russian writer is not fully published, and "Dr. Zhivago" is not yet published in Russia.

Q. Here is a question from Mary McGrory of The Washington Star: How did you feel when the Soviet Govern-

ment discredited your father's philosophy and action?

A. Well, I have already said I believe that they should not accuse one person in the crimes in which so many people were involved, and I believe it was not the way to put the blame on one person for the things which were the action of the party as a whole.

Q. Here is a question from Lenore Hershey of McCall's magazine: Of all the factors which brought you to the point of coming to the United States, which would you say was the outstanding one? A. From all the facts?

Q. All the different reasons that you came here, would you pick one that was most important to you?

A. I think that the most important for me was the fact it was the death of my husband. Because I was attached to him, I loved him, I respected him, he really deserved it and when he was denied the, in the Soviet Union, the main human rights, it affected him and me also and when he has finally died, I felt that I have myself completely changed. I have become intolerant to many of those things to which I was tolerant and patient before.

Q. This is from Paul Wohl of the Christian Science Monitor: Do you believe that religion and the basic ideas and ideals of Communism are compatible? Do you believe that religion and Communism can exist together?

A. I don't think that class struggle and revolution can go hand in hand with idea of love which, with idea of love to—no, I don't believe it can be joined together.

Q. This is from Doug Edelson, WINS News, Westinghouse Broadcasting: At the time of the death of your father, it was rumored both here and in the Soviet Union that he was assassinated. Is there any truth to this rumor?

A. Well, I have already said that the last days of my father and his death, about all this, you will read in my book. But I can answer that to me this was quite evident that he was sick and he died, his death was the natural result of illness, nothing else.

Q. This is from Evelyn Irons, the New York correspondent of The Sunday Times in London: Can you please tell us the reasons why you chose the United States instead of, for example, England?

A. Instead of England?

Q. For example. A. Well, perhaps I felt more sympathy to the United States than I felt for England.

Relevance of Dogma

Q. This is a question from Peter Kihss of The New York Times: What dogmas of Communism, to use your words, do you believe have lost their significance or are wrong?

A. I believe that in modern world, in 20th century to which we belong, in the century of atom bomb and space flights, the idea of class revolution which can bring people to progress has lost its significance.

Because the progress in our time should be reached by the work of humanity, by the work of mankind, notwithstanding which classes are involved in this work. And less struggle and less bloodshed it will be, it will be better for people. That is what I believe.

Q. This is from Bill Jorgenson of WNEW-TV, I believe: How will the Soviet press report your statements here? Will your words ever reach them?

A. I don't know. I think we shall see how they will report it, if they will at all.

Q. This is again from Doug Edelson of WINS News? Have you had an opportunity since your arrival in this country to read our newspapers, watch television or listen to the radio? If you have, what is your feeling as to the free press in this country compared to the press in the Soviet Union?

A. Well, of course, I was reading newspapers and looking television, which I generally don't like very much, so I'm not inclined to look at much.

Well, of course, the press and newspapers here are quite different from Russia, because its a lot of information—sometimes I think information which is not important at all. But still it is there, still it is there. And maybe this, to some extent, better than not to have any information at all, as we are accustomed in Russia.

But I don't think that — I cannot understand why if they write something about new person, why it should be mentioned how much pound he's weighed, and what is he eating for his lunch, and—I don't know whether it is so important and interesting. Well, I have said that more information is better than no information at all.

Q. Here is a question from Bill Beutel of A.B.C. News: Will you be allowed to communicate freely with your children, who are still in Russia, or will there be some restrictions placed upon your letters to them? A. Yes, I . . . I answered that.

Q. Here is another question from Doug Edelson, WINS: What personal possessions did you leave in the Soviet Union? Did they include any of your father's papers, and if so, which ones?

A. Personal possessions? What do you mean personal possessions? There is my flat, my wardrobe, what else? About my father's papers, I had only his private letters to me, written long ago when I was a child; but all these

Q. Writings or other personal contacts?

A. No, it was not writings and not personal contacts. Perhaps it is just what one may call religious feeling which some people have, some people don't have and as when the person who was blind one day his eyes become open and he can see the world, and the sky, and birds and trees and so it is, it is like this, this is just, this is the feeling that comes, comes to you one day. After that I began to read more.

Q. That middle section, she answered that previously at length. This is a question from United Press International of Boston. Do you plan to live in the New England area, particularly in the Berkshires? Do you know where that is? A. Well, I don't know. I cannot say.

Q. (by Mr. Greenbaum) This question, just to clear it up—I think you mentioned that you were baptized when you were very small. A. Not small, quite grown up.

Q. This is the question: Is it true that you were recently baptized? If yes, when and by whom? It's from, you say who it's from.

A. Yes. Yes, I was baptized by, it was in May, 1962, in Moscow and the name of my priest was Father Nikolai. He has died recently, unfortunately.

Her Father's Influence

Q. Here's another question from Mr. Millstein of N.B.C. News Huntley Brinkley: How much of an influence was your father in shaping the course of your life?

A. Well, as my father he had quite a great influence on me. In my childhood and later also. Well I . . . I do not want to advertise my own book but I must say again that it is all written there. He did quite a lot in, he did quite a lot in, for me as a father, I should say.

Q. This is from TBarry Cunningham of The New York Post: You say there is a new generation in Russia, which is discussing and questioning your homeland's present social system. Is it likely that when this new generation becomes the nation's leaders they will seek to Westernize the Government by allowing greater individual and intellectual freedom in permitting free enterprise to flourish? Do you understand?

A. Yes, I understand. Well, I do not know exactly what will they do, but of course it seems to me that each new generation brings new social work to society and perhaps those students who are now 18, 19, 20 years old in Russia, when they will become grown up and if they will become social leaders in the country, they will bring something more modern and more democratic. I hope so.

Q. Here's another question from Bill Beutel of A.B.C. News: You have seen very little of the United States so far, but how did your impression of it compare with what the Soviet people are told the United States is like?

A. Well, my impressions are very good, but I was not very much surprised because I don't belong to those Soviet citizens who do not know anything about United States. I studied history of United States in Moscow University especially, I have read books. I have seen quite a lot of American movies—good movies.

Many friends of mine visited United States and told me quite a lot of American way of life, so perhaps I knew more than others and, well, my first impressions were very good and I found the country vast and beautiful and people kind and openhearted.

Mr. Greenbaum: Well, with that—we've received over 300 questions and I think we've answered all we have time for. Thank you.

letters will be published in my book. And nothing else is left there.

Q. Here's a question from Jean Parr of WCBS News: Did your father, Josef Stalin, believe that Communism or capitalism could co-exist peacefully together or did he believe Communism must be a monolithic form of government?

A. It was written in all his works. It's better to take the books and read them. Why should I try to talk?

Democracy in the U. S.

Q. Here's another question from Gabe Pressman of NBC News: You say you are not a politician, but as a writer seeking a more peaceful society than one based on class struggle. Would you say you favor an American-style democracy?

A. The last one?

Q. Would you say that you favor a democracy set up on the form of our democracy set up on the form of our government you're in favor of?

A. Well, I believe, of course, your society has more democratic freedoms. This is what I believe and what I see. But I will see later what is your life like perhaps, perhaps it is not so, so nice as it seems from the beginning. But, of course, of course there are more democratic freedoms here. There is no doubt about it.

Q. I'm not sure, Svetlana, whether you answered this or not, but I'll give it to you. It's from Anthony Wigan of British Broadcasting Corporation: On your arrival in New York you said that as a grown-up person you found it impossible to exist without God in your heart. From what writings and contacts did you come to that conclusion? A. From what writings?