

APR 14 1964

A Soviet agent?

Evidence points to Oswald's training by Reds

CPYRIGHT

CPYRIGHT

By JOHN KEPLINGER

(Second of a series)

Lee Harvey Oswald suddenly found himself in truly strange and foreign surroundings. From the giant metropolis of Moscow, he had been hastily removed to military intelligence had a big job ahead: "... to obtain every particle of information from (Oswald), not merely on electronics and call signs (Oswald had been a radio technician) but also on Marine Corps procedures ...

He had come a long way since that day in Los Angeles two months earlier when his passport application to travel abroad was approved.

He had made his way to Russia seeking Soviet citizenship in a land where the political way of life conformed with his own distasteful views.

On the course of events since Oswald's arrival in Moscow in mid-October had undergone a rapid change. His hoped-for citizenship was denied him and he was moved to an out-of-the-way place.

SOVIET AGENTS

In the opinion of Edward E. Smith of Palo Alto, a former U.S. security-intelligence officer for the Army, State Department and Central Intelligence Agency, Oswald was at this juncture in the hands of Soviet military intelligence agents.

Smith, who has lived in Moscow and was the first full-time State Department security officer of the American Embassy there, has traced Oswald's odyssey from the time he obtained a passport in Los Angeles until the day four years later when President John F. Kennedy was assassinated in Dallas.

Smith is convinced Oswald was a Soviet agent, but the

mental direction. Foreigners are not allowed to join them. Therefore, Oswald either was a member of a Soviet outfit or, more likely, a special arrangement was made for him so he could practice shooting."

Oswald's interrogation dragged on into the spring of 1960, Smith estimates. When it finally ended, intelligence officials, probably began debating how best to utilize him.

Did Oswald have agent potential or was he too unstable? This was one of the prime questions confronting them, Smith believes.

While waiting for a decision to be made, Oswald apparently grew impatient, a trait that was to take on disastrous proportions a few short years later, Smith believes.

Still hungering for Soviet citizenship, Oswald managed to write a letter to the Marine Corps asking that he be discharged as a reservist so he could accept Soviet citizenship. (The Marines complied with an unsatisfactory discharge.)

It is almost incredible that the letter passed Soviet censorship, Smith acknowledges, because it could have damaged Oswald's "agent potential."

There could have been some reason for the letter, but it is Smith's assessment that it got through censorship as the result of some inexplicable "snafu."

Despite this jolt, Soviet intelligence decided to take Oswald into the fold, Smith is convinced. As evidence, he cites the following events:

Continuing with his analysis of Oswald's reported stay in Minsk, Smith says: "We are told that while in Minsk Oswald joined a rifle club and practiced marksmanship. Now, there are no rifle clubs in the Soviet Union. Unless one belongs to a hunter's "Sovkhoz" (for professional hunters), a Soviet citizen is allowed to practice shooting only within the framework of the All-Union Voluntary Society for Cooperation with the Army, Air Force and Navy—a sort of combination national guard and reserve training program.

The point is this: These of-

Oswald's interrogation

Oswald's interrogation

Oswald's interrogation

Oswald's interrogation

Oswald's interrogation

Oswald's interrogation

Oswald's interrogation

Oswald's interrogation

Oswald's interrogation

Oswald's interrogation

Oswald's interrogation

Oswald's interrogation

Oswald's interrogation

Oswald's interrogation

Oswald's interrogation

Oswald's interrogation

Oswald's interrogation

CPYRGHT

It is interesting, Smith believes, that Oswald knew two months in advance when the exit visas would be granted. He states "there is no precedent for the Soviets providing such advance notice."

ASSIGNMENT

"Indeed, what would be their purpose?" he asks. "If a visa had been promised some time in December for mid-February, an assignment was involved which Oswald was to complete before leaving," Smith argues.

"No, (the assignment) was hardly a matter of sheet metal working. This precise predating would make much sense, however, if it was anticipated that Oswald would be completing a course of instruction preparing for his return to the United States as an agent."

Smith offers one further bit of evidence which he believes lends credence to the theory Oswald was trained as a Soviet agent:

In January, 1962, while still in Minsk, Oswald wrote two more letters. One was to Sen. John Tower of Texas, a conservative Republican, beseeching help for his return home, and the other was to Secretary of the Navy John Connally asking reconsideration of his unsatisfactory discharge from the Marines.

Says Smith with a touch of cynicism:

"An American defector living in Minsk would in deadly peril contact the U.S. Navy and a conservative U.S. senator. He would have been immediately accused of attempted espionage against the Soviet Union.

"Had these letters not been cleared beforehand with Soviet security authorities, he would have been promptly arrested!"

Thus, the ground was laid for Oswald's return home.

(Next: the significance of his marriage)

APR 14 1964