

Defector Study
HSCA Volume XII
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Summary

The chapter on defectors was submitted by Johanna Smith, whose title was Researcher. The HSCA undertook a comparative analysis of 11 defectors who were similar to Lee Harvey Oswald to determine if there was anything unusual about Lee Harvey Oswald's defection. The examination was a detailed one dealing with defectors from the 1958-1964 period. The chapter concluded with an addendum on America's debriefing practices. There was a review of defectors' files in order to determine whether defectors other than Oswald were routinely debriefed upon their return to the United States. The HSCA report notes that while CIA did conduct interviews of some tourists who visited the USSR from 1959-1963 as well as some Americans who defected and then came back to the US, there was no standard policy to interview all persons in either category. The HSCA report ends by saying that the fact that Oswald was not interviewed was more the rule than the exception according to procedures followed by CIA at that point in time.

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Listing of the criteria for determining which defectors the HSCA would study in an effort to see what, if anything at all, was unusual about Oswald's defection. CIA assistance was needed to obtain names and files of individuals to

study. The HSCA wanted to know who defected between 1958 and 1964 and was provided with 380 names by the CIA. CIA provided a computer listing of the name, a 201 file number, the date and place of birth, a compilation of information derived from the 201 file and citations for various other Government agency reports. HSCA went through a winnowing process to determine which individuals to study. Those born outside the United States, had gone to the USSR at a time other than from 1958-1962 and those who remained outside the US until 1964 were not studied. HSCA then decided to examine the files of the remaining 23 individuals.

Next the HSCA examined the State Department's October 25, 1960 request to the CIA for information on 13 individuals they considered defectors. Oswald's name was on the list as were seven individuals whose files the committee had decided to examine under previous criteria. Also on the list of 13 names were two individuals whose names had appeared on the computer listing but had been excluded because they were not born within the US and three individuals who had not previously been known to the committee as defectors. The CIA responded to the State Department request on November 21, 1960 and in addition to the names on the State Department's request added two other names of individuals who, while not renouncing their US citizenship, were employed by the bloc nations in which they resided.

On February 27, 1978 the HSCA wrote CIA requesting

access to 201 files for the following individuals: the 23 names from the computer listing, 5 others whose names appeared on the defector list with Oswald's name and another person (because the CIA added his name as a possible defector). Subsequently, five individuals were immediately dropped from the study. One person, a **Sergeant Jones (first name unknown)** could not be identified by CIA without additional data which could not be found (name was on the request list State sent to CIA).

Two others were eliminated because they defected to Communist China and did not offer any insight into Oswald's defection to the USSR. The information on two others (**William H. Martin and Bernon F. Mitchell**) was considered too sensitive in nature by CIA to be given to the committee (these names were also on the same request sent from State to CIA). The committee also requested the FBI, State and DoD to provide selected information on the 24-name defector sample. From the information available, the committee performed an analysis of the treatment provided by the Soviets to individuals during the approximate period that Oswald was there.

The HSCA used an extensive set of criteria in conducting its study. They were: background, date of defection, defection with whom, rejection of American citizenship, and the length of time for residence to be granted and the type permitted. Also examined were the circumstances after defection and before resettlement, any propaganda statements made to the Soviet press,

relationships with Soviet citizens and where they resided.

Military training prior to defection was also examined as was the job held while in the USSR, any income and financial aid provided and any contact with Soviet officials, especially KGB personnel. Known surveillance was also an item of interest for HSCA as well as the time period for the USSR to grant an exit visa, and the time taken by the United States to grant an entrance visa. Time periods for spouses and children to obtain either type of visa was also studied.

The HSCA ultimately dropped 13 names from the list of 24 for the following reasons: (a) lack of substantive information on the individual, (b) Communist party members who made many trips to the USSR, were there on official party business, or had lived outside the US for an extended time period before entering the USSR which made comparison to the Oswald situation difficult and (c) residing in the USSR for over 20 years which again made a comparison to the Oswald case difficult. Thus the defector sample studied was reduced to 11 individuals.

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*An synopsis of the other 11 defector cases was conducted on these pages. The individuals profiled were **Morris and Mollie Block, Harold Citrynell, Bruce Frederick Davis, Shirley Dubinsky, Joseph Dutkanicz, Martin Greendlinger, Nicholas Petrulli, Libero Ricciardelli, Vladimir Sloboda, and Robert Webster.** Those defectors, besides Oswald, with a*

military background were **Bruce Frederick Davis**, **Joseph Dutkanicz**, and **Vladimir Sloboda**. **Robert Webster** worked with the Rand Development Co.

451-457

Description of **Lee Harvey Oswald Case**. Given the other files we we have on his time in the USSR, I did not go into too much detail here. The HSCA notes that in May 1964 the USSR provided approximately 15 documents concerning the "sojourn" employment and medical history of Oswald as well as his and Marina's departure from the USSR. The HSCA also added that no documents appear to be from the KGB or make any mention of his being debriefed by it.

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The HSCA began an analysis on this page which compared various facets of the Oswald case with that of the 11 other defectors.

The report notes the difficulties Oswald had in obtaining citizenship while residing in the USSR. He was not a Soviet citizen while in the USSR. After not receiving Soviet citizenship in October 1959, he attempted to commit suicide in an effort to delay a departure mandated by the authorities. After his hospital stay, he again did not receive citizenship but on January 4, 1960 received a residence visa for foreigners without citizenship.

The HSCA report notes that one year later, this visa was extended after Oswald refused the Soviet citizenship offered him. In January 1962, the US Embassy in Moscow reissued his US passport and the Soviets issued

him a residence visa for foreigners.

Other Americans defecting had difficulty obtaining Soviet citizenship. **Ricciardelli** repeatedly requested citizenship and eventually received an Internal Russian Passport, indicating he was a Soviet citizen, in July, 1959. His wife refused a Soviet passport but his children were considered Soviet citizens.

Robert Webster waited for 2 months for acceptance by the Soviets and received citizenship only after altering his stated reason for defection and assuring the Russians that he could manufacture the Rand spray gun he was exhibiting in the Soviet Union.

Neither **Dubinsky** nor **Petrulli** were granted Soviet citizenship and both left the USSR. **Davis** was documented as a "stateless person" and allowed to reside in the USSR.

Sloboda waited one month to be granted Soviet citizenship as did his oldest and youngest child. His wife and middle child were issued internal passports for foreigners.

The Blocks were offered Soviet citizenship but they received internal passports for foreigners. After a number of years they were pressed to accept Soviet citizenship but would not do so.

Dutkanicz was granted citizenship by the Supreme Soviet, by special decree, 1 month prior to defection.

The HSCA report discussed the use made or not made by the USSR for propaganda purposes of the American defectors. When Richard Snyder, the American consul at the Moscow Embassy and the man who spoke with Oswald in 1959, was asked about this he said "that if there is a usual pattern [Snyder noted how difficult it is to use this phrase because no two cases are alike]... it is that there is some exploitation of the defector in the Soviet public media, usually after the details of his defection have been settled, particularly the detail as to whether the Soviet Union desires to have him. Up to that point, publicity in the Soviet Press probably is not to be expected."

Snyder did testify that in the Oswald case, there was no known Soviet press or propaganda which contradicts Marina Oswald's testimony to the Warren Commission. HSCA found no information that any Oswald statements were used for Soviet propaganda purposes.

HSCA found no information that the Soviets had used **Citrynell, Dubinsky, Greendlinger, Petrulli or Webster** for propaganda purposes. Also, HSCA stated that there was no apparent correlation between the granting of Soviet citizenship and subsequent propaganda exploitation. **Dubinsky and Petrulli** were not granted any type of residence visa while **Citrynell and Webster** became Soviet citizens with relatively little difficulty. There was a qualifying remark that the absence of data does not necessarily mean that the Soviets made no propaganda

use of these five persons or Oswald.

Three of the defectors who had anti-American propaganda statements published were Soviet citizens and two other defectors whose remarks received Soviet press possessed residence visas for foreigners. Davis was the only defector documented as a "stateless person," as was Oswald, who did have anti-American statements published for propaganda purposes.

Two defectors made propaganda statements during radio broadcasts. Both defectors, Sloboda and Dutkanicz, had contact with the KGB while stationed in West Germany with the US Army. They were still serving in the Army when they entered the USSR.

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The HSCA compared the various defectors places of residence as well as employment and financial arrangements. All individuals, including Oswald, were assigned to reside in cities within the western part of the USSR. Income comparison was not easy as the number of household members varied over time. HSCA found that incomes of additional members were usually unknown and that the devaluation of the ruble in 1960 confused amounts in some cases.

460-461

The HSCA did an analysis of Soviet relationships (marriages to Soviet citizens) and exit visas. Only one Soviet exit visa was found to be granted in a shorter time period than was Oswald's's. But this was the only case

where the visa (for *Sloboda's wife*) was an exit-reentry visa and the application procedures may have been different. This section concluded by saying that "reasons for Oswald's short wait obtaining an exit visa are unknown."

461-463

The HSCA did an analysis of KGB contact with American defectors. The report notes Oswald's lack of candor about his activities in the USSR during questioning by US Embassy personnel as part of his efforts to regain his US passport. The HSCA concludes that his lack of candor places into doubt his statement that (in the words of the HSCA), "he had never been subjected to any questioning...by Soviet authorities concerning his life prior to entering the Soviet Union and that he had never provided information to any Soviet organ." Oswald had seen a lot of his Intourist guide in Moscow, (an October 17, 1959 diary entry says this person asks him about himself and his reasons for "doing this"), and also met with Red Cross employees as well as representatives of the pass and registration or visa department. Without going into much detail, it is clear that Oswald had many contacts with Soviet officials and that some may well have been secretly KGB. The KGB frequently used Intourist guides as agents or sources of information, according to information provided to the committee by defecting KGB officers.

The HSCA noted that in reviewing the circumstances regarding KGB contact with these 12 defectors (Oswald

and the other 11 studied) it could be concluded that only those having contact with the KGB prior to their defection had contact with Soviet intelligence afterward. However, the HSCA also noted that this conclusion would be in direct conflict with the testimony before the committee of experts in Soviet intelligence and KGB defectors. In addition, the HSCA learned that Americans entering the USSR were of intelligence interest to the KGB and that Americans who offered to defect were rare and especially paid attention to by the KGB. Most importantly, the HSCA found that in any case similar to that of Oswald, the defector would have been debriefed for intelligence information.

The HSCA concluded its section on KGB contact by noting that in the cases of these defectors, the representatives from the Soviet Red Cross, Intourist, the Office of Visa and Registration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the KGB played overlapping roles. KGB officers would also use employees of the various other agencies as agents to gather information. In addition, defectors may not have realized they were meeting with KGB officers as these officers may have misrepresented their place of employment. Defectors themselves may have misrepresented any contact they may have had with agencies such as the KGB. For these reasons, the files on defectors may not accurately reflect their experiences in the USSR. Thus, as the HSCA notes, contact between the KGB and Oswald can not be ruled out. The HSCA report reveals that in most cases the FBI and CIA files reviewed

did not contain indications of debriefing of the defectors by either agency in the United States meaning that most individuals were never asked if the KGB had made contact with them during their stay in the Soviet Union.

463-466

In a conclusion to the HSCA defector study, there was a section on American debriefing practices regarding defectors. The HSCA conducted a review of defector files to determine if defectors other than Oswald were "routinely" debriefed upon their return to the US. The period examined was 1958-1963.

As was the case in compiling the list of Americans who had defected to the USSR, the HSCA used a list of criteria to determine who to study. Among the factors used in compiling the data was a person's 201 file number, arrival in the USSR and the date of departure, as well as employment in the USSR. In addition to the review of 201 files, Domestic Contact Division files were reviewed as well. Besides a CIA provided computer listing, the HSCA also looked at names from the October 1960 State Department request for information from the CIA on defectors.

Ultimately the Committee requested files on 29 individuals who met the criteria of US citizens born in the US, who defected or attempted to do so from 1958-1963 and who returned to the US in the same period of time. CIA had files on 28 of them. Six were found not to have any indication of a return to the US.

Of the remaining 22, there is no record of CIA contact with 18 of them.

*However, four of the files contained reports by sources who advised the Agency of their contact. One file regarding a former military person, **Bruce Frederick Davis**, contained a report of a debriefing.*

*The CIA's contacts with the remaining four defectors differed in each case. **Irving Amron** had been in the USSR since 1933 with his return in 1962. In 1964 he was debriefed by a CIA officer after applying for employment in response to a newspaper advertisement. **Harold Citrynell** was "unwittingly" interviewed by a CIA officer upon this officer's departure from the USSR. While CIA would have liked a full and controlled debriefing by CIA and FBI, there is no evidence in **Harold Citrynell's** 201 file or any Domestic Contact Division documents that suggested additional CIA contact.*

***Robert Webster**, a plastics expert with Rand, and **Libero Ricciardelli**, who defected in hopes that a socialist system would help straighten out domestic problems and guarantee his children's future well-being, both received more extensive debriefings. CIA debriefed **Webster** in his home territory upon his return, along with Air Force representatives, and was later brought to Washington for a more extensive debriefing. CIA was interested in his work in the USSR and biographical information on persons he met while there. **Ricciardelli** was contacted soon upon his return to the US and was asked about why*

he wanted to defect, what he did while there, and general aspects of life in the USSR.

HSCA concludes that a review of the files on these defectors shows that debriefing by CIA was "somewhat of a random occurrence." When CIA did decide to debrief it seems that they were interested in topics of general interest regarding life in certain areas of the USSR. Persons debriefed were similar to Oswald in that they defected and returned within the same general time period and had spent time in certain areas of interest to CIA.

HSCA concludes that it appears from examining "all available materials" that Oswald was not interviewed by CIA following his return to the US from the USSR. There were individuals in a branch of the Soviet Russia division that expressed an interest in interviewing Oswald but never followed up on this interest. There is no indication that the Office of Operations interviewed Oswald. The HSCA defector study notes that while CIA did conduct interviews of some tourists who visited the USSR from 1959-1963 as well as some US citizens who defected and then returned to the US, "there was no standard policy to interview all persons in either category. Thus, the fact that Oswald was not interviewed was more the rule than the exception according to procedures followed by the CIA at that point in time."

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