

Date 12/1/63

1

Mr. ROBERT J. FITZPATRICK, S.J., Scholastic, Jesuit House of Studies, Spring Hill College, Mobile, Alabama, advised he recalled LEE HARVEY OSWALD very well. FITZPATRICK said he was studying the Russian language and learned EUGENE MURRETT, another Jesuit Scholastic, was a cousin of OSWALD and that OSWALD spent three years in Russia. He said that arrangements were then made to have OSWALD speak to a group of the Jesuit Scholastics at the seminary there. He explained that the seminary had invited various speakers to address the Jesuit Scholastics previously and this was in connection with the same series of lectures. He recalled previous speakers had included a Protestant Minister and a Jewish Rabbi. He said it was believed OSWALD would have some information which would be extremely interesting to them.

FITZPATRICK recalled OSWALD, OSWALD's wife, who was named MARINA, and their two year old daughter named JUNE, came to Mobile, Alabama, on Saturday, July 27, 1963. He said that the OSWALDS were accompanied by the parents of EUGENE MURRETT. He also said they were accompanied also by MURRETT's brother and sister and their respective spouses and several children. FITZPATRICK said he did not attend OSWALD's talk, but stayed with the MURRETTs and OSWALD's wife. He further informed that Mrs. MURRETT was very anxious to talk with Mrs. OSWALD without LEE OSWALD being present. He explained Mrs. MURRETT told him she never had the opportunity to communicate at any great length with Mrs. OSWALD inasmuch as OSWALD had to translate for her. He said that as a result of this, he and Mrs. MURRETT and Mrs. OSWALD walked throughout the seminary grounds for approximately an hour.

FITZPATRICK stated that apparently MARINA OSWALD could not speak English except for a few words such as yes and no. He said, however, she appeared to be a very fine woman in his opinion. He said that Mrs. OSWALD told him she had been raised in the Russian Orthodox faith until she was approximately ten years of age, when her relations died. He said Mrs. OSWALD had about the equivalent of what could be considered a high school

On 11/30/63 at Mobile, Alabama File # MO 89-25  
 by SA HARRY J. DEGNAN and SA JOHN J. SWEENEY: egp Date dictated 12/1/63

This document contains neither recommendations nor conclusions of the FBI. It is the property of the FBI and is loaned to your agency; it and its contents are not to be distributed outside your agency.

10

COMMISSION EXHIBIT No. 2678

2  
MO 89-25

education in the United States.

He said Mrs. OSWALD stated she was not a communist and loved Russia and the Russian people. He explained that Mrs. OSWALD's love for Russia was not the same type as that he had heard expressed by Nazis for the German fatherland. He further informed Mrs. OSWALD stated there were many inconveniences in Russia; however, people had no difficulty making a living there. He recalled Mrs. OSWALD stated she had no living relatives in Russia and said she met OSWALD at a factory dance in Minsk and that they were subsequently married.

FITZPATRICK said Mrs. OSWALD told him she liked the United States very much and there appeared to be no conflict with this and her love for Russia. He said she stated she had no opportunity to learn English inasmuch as OSWALD kept her completely away from other people. He said Mrs. OSWALD appeared to be very happy with OSWALD; however, OSWALD was definitely the head of the family. He further informed Mrs. OSWALD indicated her husband did a great deal of reading, but that it appeared scattered and apparently had no direction or planning.

FITZPATRICK stated Mrs. OSWALD only mentioned residing in the city of New Orleans, Louisiana; however, in talking to her he received the impression the OSWALDS had lived in other cities of the United States. He stated Mrs. OSWALD said her husband was presently out of work and they were having a difficult time financially. He said she told him OSWALD is away from home a great deal and she did not know any of his associates or any of his activities. He further recalled that Mrs. OSWALD stated she and her husband had a difficult time getting out of Russia, but she did not explain this remark further.

He said Mrs. OSWALD was very neatly dressed, but her clothes did not appear to be expensive. He said OSWALD, although not shabbily attired, did not appear to know how to wear clothes properly.

FITZPATRICK also recalled that Mrs. MURRETT had him ask Mrs. OSWALD if she would care to go to Mass with her the following morning, which was Sunday. He said Mrs. OSWALD stated she would like to do this very much, but could not because of her husband. He further added that on at least two occasions in his talk with Mrs. OSWALD she said a Russian word which indicated OSWALD was "without God."

11

COMMISSION EXHIBIT No. 2678—Continued

3  
MO 89-25.

FITZPATRICK also recalled Mrs. OSWALD indicated that neither she nor her husband had been to Mobile previously.

FITZPATRICK said he later talked with OSWALD for about 20 minutes after his speech at the Jesuit Seminary. He said this talk with OSWALD was in the presence of Mrs. OSWALD and the MURRETT family and a great deal of it was in the Russian language. He said OSWALD appeared to be a very tense and high-strung person. He said OSWALD never smiled and did not appear to be at all friendly. He recalled OSWALD spoke fairly good Russian; however, it definitely was not as smooth or correct grammatically as Mrs. OSWALD's.

He further stated OSWALD did not mention politics to him and evaded several questions he asked OSWALD as to how he managed to leave Russia with his wife.

FITZPATRICK also stated that he asked Mrs. OSWALD if she would care to correspond with him in Russian and she told him she would be very happy to do so. He said Mrs. OSWALD told him she would answer his letters, and also would correct his writing, and return his letters to him. He said he wrote Mrs. OSWALD a letter in Russian, which he mailed about August 8, 1963, and addressed it to 4907 Magazine Street, New Orleans, Louisiana. He advised he placed his return address on this letter; however, he has never received an answer from Mrs. OSWALD and his letter was never returned to him. FITZPATRICK said that he learned later from EUGENE MURRETT that the OSWALDs had moved from New Orleans about the time he mailed this letter.

He said he last saw OSWALD about noon, Sunday, July 28, 1963, when the OSWALDS and the MURRETT family had stopped by to say goodbye to EUGENE MURRETT before returning to New Orleans. On this occasion he did not have any conversation with either OSWALD or the MURRETT family, but merely waved at them as they drove away from Spring Hill College.

FITZPATRICK said that as soon as he heard OSWALD had been arrested as a suspect in the assassination of President JOHN F. KENNEDY, he immediately contacted several of the Jesuit Scholastics who had attended OSWALD's speech. He said he obtained the impressions of these individuals of OSWALD and some of the remarks OSWALD made during his talk. FITZPATRICK said he immediately typed up a summary of these impressions and then recontacted the same individuals to determine if this

12

COMMISSION EXHIBIT No. 2678—Continued

4  
MO 89-25

summary were correct. FITZPATRICK said he then made several additions and deletions and subsequently typed up a five page summary of OSWALD's speech and several questions which were asked him by those in attendance.

FITZPATRICK made available the following five page summary mentioned above:

"On Saturday, July 27, 1963, a relative of Lee Oswald, a member of the community at the Jesuit House of Studies, asked Mr. Oswald if he would address the scholastics on his experiences in Russia. The request was not unusual, for the scholastics try from time to time to have either prominent persons or others who have something interesting to relate speak to the scholastics on their experiences. Because Mr. Oswald was an American who had gone to live in Russia and who had returned, obviously for a reason, it was thought that he might be able to communicate the nature of the Russian people themselves better than any official reports might. Those who went to listen to him expected to hear a man who had been disillusioned with Soviet communism and had chosen America to it. What they heard was only partially this.

"The major points of Mr. Oswald's address and details from it are given below, probably never in verbatim form, but always true to his intent, at least as he was heard by a number of people.

"He worked in a factory in Minsk. When he applied for permission to live in the Soviet Union, the Russian authorities had assigned him to a fairly well advanced area, the Minsk area. He said that this was a common practice: showing foreigners those places of which Russians can be proudest.

"The factory life impressed him with the care it provided for the workers. Dances, social gatherings, sports were all benefits for the factory workers. Mr. Oswald belonged to a factory-sponsored hunting club. He and a group of workers would go into the farm regions around Minsk for hunting trips. They would spend the night in the outlying villages, and thus he

13

COMMISSION EXHIBIT No. 2678—Continued

came to know Russian peasant life too. In general, the peasants were very poor, often close to starvation. When the hunting party was returning to Minsk, it would often leave what it had shot with the village people because of their lack of food. He spoke of having even left the food he had brought with him from town. In connection with the hunting party, he mentioned that they had only shotguns, for pistols and rifles are prohibited by Russian law.

"Some details of village life: in each hut there was a radio speaker, even in huts where there was no running water or electricity. The speaker was attached to a cord that ran back to a common receiver. Thus, the inhabitants of the hut could never change stations or turn off the radio. They had to listen to everything that came through it, day or night. In connection with radios, he said that there was a very large radio-jamming tower that was larger than anything else in Minsk.

"More about the factories: factory meetings were held which all had to attend. Everyone attended willingly and in a good frame of mind. Things came up for discussion and voting, but no one ever voted no. The meetings were, in a sense, formalities. If anyone did not attend, he would lose his job.

"Mr. Oswald said that he had met his wife at a factory social.

"The workers, he said, were not against him because he was an American. When the U-2 incident was announced over the factory radio system, the workers were very angry with the United States, but not with him, even though he was an American.

"He made the point that he disliked capitalism because its foundation was the exploitation of the poor. He implied, but did not state directly, that he was disappointed in Russia because the full principles of Marxism were not lived up to and the gap between Marxist theory and the Russian practice disillusioned him with Russian communism. He said, 'Capitalism doesn't work, communism doesn't work. In the middle is socialism, and that doesn't work either.'

On Saturday, July 27, 1963, a relative of Lee Oswald, a member of the community at the Jesuit House of Studies, asked Mr. Oswald if he would address the scholastics on his experiences in Russia. The request was not unusual, for the scholastics try from time to time to have either prominent persons or others who have something interesting to relate speak to the scholastics on their experiences. Because Mr. Oswald was an American who had gone to live in Russia and who had returned, obviously for a reason, it was thought that he might be able to communicate the nature of the Russian people themselves better than any official reports might. Those who went to listen to him expected to hear a man who had been disillusioned with Soviet communism and had chosen America to it. What they heard was only partially this.

The major points of Mr. Oswald's address and details from it are given below, probably never in verbatim form, but always true to his intent, at least as he was heard by a number of people.

He worked in a factory in Minsk. When he applied for permission to live in the Soviet Union, the Russian authorities had assigned him to a fairly well advanced area, the Minsk area. He said that this was a common practice: showing foreigners those places of which the Russians can be proudest.

The factory life impressed him with the care it provided for the workers. Dances, social gatherings, sports were all benefits for the factory workers. Mr. Oswald belonged to a factory-sponsored hunting club. He and a group of workers would go into the farm regions around Minsk for hunting trips. They would spend the night in the outlying villages, and thus he came to know Russian peasant life too. In general, the peasants were very poor, close to starvation. When the hunting party was returning to Minsk,