

A10

Bot 61
H14
P20
D20

The CIA has publicly stated that it never interviewed Lee Harvey Oswald. Numerous allegations have arisen over the years since President Kennedy's assassination that Oswald either had been or should have been debriefed by the CIA upon his return from the Soviet Union since he appeared to be in a position to provide useful information due to the ^{unusual duration} length of his residence and employment there. The ^{response} claim that no records exist which indicate a debriefing of Oswald has stimulated speculation that Oswald may have had some kind of agency relationship either because the contact was not reported through normal channels or because the CIA communicated with Oswald in another ^{obviate(?)} manner which ^{obviate(?)} alleviated the necessity for a routine debriefing.

stimulated by the allegation that Oswald had no response.

The HSCA attempted to determine: 1) whether Oswald was, in fact, interviewed by the CIA upon his return from the Soviet Union; 2) whether there is an official report of the interview if one was conducted; and 3) the reasons why Oswald would not have been interviewed if that was ^{actuality} ^{probability} the case.

RETURN TO CIA
Background Use Only
Do Not Reproduce

This document is made available through the declassification efforts
and research of John Greenewald, Jr., creator of:

The Black Vault



The Black Vault is the largest online Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) document clearinghouse in the world. The research efforts here are responsible for the declassification of hundreds of thousands of pages released by the U.S. Government & Military.

Discover the Truth at: <http://www.theblackvault.com>

In response to the Warren Commission's request of
John A. Malone, Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, submitted
an affidavit stating that the CIA had had no relationship
of any kind with Lee Harvey Oswald. ^{The affidavit,} dated 13 May 1964,
~~states~~ ^{certifies} that "the Agency never contacted him, interviewed him,
talked with him, or received or solicited any reports or information
from him, or communicated with him, directly or indirectly, in

(W.C. Exhibit #570, 17A 566)
any other manner." ^{Mr. Malone's testimony before the Warren Com-}
^{mission on May 14, 1964 gave the same report as}
~~states~~ ^{certifies} the same assertion ^{as to} the Agency's lack of contact

with Oswald. ^{specifically} Mr. Malone was asked ^{whether} the CIA had had
any contact with Oswald during his stay in the Soviet Union.

Malone replied, "No, not to my knowledge, nor to the knowledge
of those who would have been in a position to have made such
contact... nor according to any record we have." ^(Warren Commission Hearings, Exhibit, 5A 123)
He also responded
negatively to the question of whether the CIA had any personal contact
with Oswald subsequent to his return to the United States. (Ibid.)

was it, or
was it not
in response
Commission
by itself

Meloni's affidavit was ^{partially} ~~partially~~ investigated by the appearance of
an article on 28 February 1964 in the Northern Virginia Sun which
made the following allegation:
"Alleged State Department records show that Oswald had several
meetings with the CIA representative in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow."

During this period, the assassin was seeking to renounce his citizenship.

One State Department cable, No. 234, dated November 2, 1959, reports that

Oswald was interviewed by the CIA and other embassy officials. (CIA FOIA Doc # 609-756)

The CIA memoranda reporting this ^{story} informant, both internally and

to the Warren Commission advises that this allegation is totally unfounded.

(Ibid. and CIA FOIA Document # 610-263). The ^{memo} internal explains that the

reference to the State Department "cable" is erroneous and that the document

to which the article was referring is undoubtedly a State Department

"despatch" No. 234, which was dated 2 November 1959 from the U.S. Embassy

in Moscow. (Ibid.) (not a new paragraph)

→ According to the internal memorandum, the despatch contained no state-

ment or reference that Richard E. Snyder, who ^{was} was the Second Secretary of the

U.S. embassy in Moscow and the only person mentioned by name in

the despatch, had any CIA connection. ^{CIA FOIA Req.} (11-15-75)

However, the memorandum acknowledged that Walt Snyder and Edward

L. Frenis, the State Department official who signed the despatch, had

had some past connection with the Agency. Snyder had been employed

by the CIA for less than one year in 1950 when he resigned in order

to assume a position with the State Department. ^{Although the CIA's} ~~records~~ ^{records had never}

records indicate the existence of a history of Agency interest in ~~actually been employed by the~~

Frenis, he was never actually employed by the CIA. (H.C.)

The record of the Central Intelligence Agency throughout the years
is consistent with its position ~~that~~ ^{as stated} to the Warren Commission

that the CIA never interviewed Lee Harvey Oswald. A February

1972 letter from Bernard Fensterwald to the Assistant Director of

the CIA requests any records pertaining to a "debriefing" of Oswald

by or on behalf of the CIA following his return from the Soviet

Union. This request for information contrary to the Agency's previously

stated position ~~was generated by the statement of a source~~
appears to be generated by a statement made by

Richard Helms on 14 April 1971 before the American Society of Newspaper

Editors that "... if there is a chance that if a private citizen travelling

abroad has acquired foreign information that can be useful to the

American policymaker, we are certainly going to try to interview

(CIA FOIA Vol # 961-927-A6).

Sen. A. Fensterwald cites Oswald as appearing to be such a person.

It follows an exchange of letters between Fensterwald and

Argus M. Thuermer, who was the Assistant to the Director of the CIA

in which Thuermer refers Fensterwald to the testimony of Malone and

Helms before the House Commission. Thuermer states that "the testimony
is still valid; therefore the information you request does not exist." (CIA FOIA
LIC # 962-927
AM)

When Oswald responds to this answer with a request for
Thuermer's own position with respect to the records rather than "conclu-
sions based upon statements of persons other than yourself," Thuermer
ends the exchange by stating that his previous response was
"a simple declarative statement in the best possible authority that
the Agency never had any contact with Oswald and that, therefore,
the information sought by you in your letter of February 9th does
not exist and never did exist." (CIA FOIA Lic. # 970-927-AB)

In April of 1978, the HSCA requested that the CIA provide a state-
ment as to whether Lee Harvey Oswald was ever contacted, spoken to
or interviewed by anyone directly or indirectly representing the CIA.
(HSCA H. Rep. 10-27, 4/1/78)

The Agency responded in the same manner it had used in responding to
numerous requests from other sources, by way of referring the Committee

to the testimony of Helms and Malone before the House Commission and to Malone's
affidavit denying any Agency contact with Oswald. (CIA Statement Regarding and Con-
firmation of Testimony of Helms and Malone)

On 25 November 1963 CIA Memorandum (now located in LHO's

20A file as CIA FOIA #435-173-A) is the only documented evidence

of any CIA interest in interviewing Oswald. ^{The memorandum written} ~~the author of the memo,~~

Thomas B. Casaris, stated: "As soon as I had heard Oswald's

name, I recalled that as Chief of the 6 Branch I had discussed ^{sometimes} ~~with~~

^{in Summer} ~~the then~~ 1960 - with the then Chief and Deputy Chief of the 6 Reserve

Section the laying on of interviews through (KUTUM) or other suitable

channels. At the moment I don't recall if this was discussed while

Oswald and his family were en route to this country or if it was

after their arrival." (CIA FOIA Document #435-173-A).

(Casaris) was interviewed by ^{the} HSCA staff members on August 17, 1978.

In this interview, he stated that he worked as Chief of the 6 Branch

from September 1960 until his reassignment in September 1962. ^(CIA Staff Interview of CIA Employee) ^{SH/TB, p.1} He

advised that the function of the 6 Branch was

[Redacted]

7 16

[Redacted]

The 6 Branch also relied upon the CIA's Contacts Division and the FBI as sources of this type of information, as well as collecting information from the State Department and the press concerning Americans in the Soviet Union. (Ibid., p.4)

During this interview, (Casasin's) recollection of the discussion mentioned in the 25 November, 1963 memo was that it took place during the last days of his tenure with the 6 Branch. (Ibid., p.4) This would have placed the discussion sometime in July 1962. He stated that the date cited after the discussion in the memo must have been erroneous as he was travelling with his family between assignments in the summer of 1960 and did not begin his assignment with the 6 Branch until September of that year. (Ibid., pp. 4-5)

(Casasin) stated that at the time the Oswald case was discussed, he assumed that Oswald must have been sent out of the Soviet Union by the KGB. (Ibid., p.4) Therefore, exercising caution, he did not attempt

to debrief Oswald but suggested that Oswald be debriefed by (KUTUMPF)

which represented the Office of Operations, an office which debriefed persons through its Contacts Division or "other suitable channels"

by which he meant the FBI or the Immigration and Naturalization

Service. ^(Ibid., pp. 4-5) He ~~did not~~ ^{stated that} he did not believe that this had been done at

that time because ^{this} ~~such~~ type of information would have been routinely

passed on to the CIA and to this section if such a debriefing had

occurred. ^(Ibid., p. 5) ~~Other~~ information he had on Oswald at the time was in

the form of State Department dispatches. (Ibid.)

In the memorandum (Casas) states that he told his subordinates something to the effect of "Don't push too hard to get the information

we need, because this individual looks odd." ^(CIA FOIA Document # 435-173-A) He explained in the

interview that this statement reflected the CIA's assessment of

Oswald based on the unusual facts that Oswald was permitted by

the Soviets to remain in the USSR and was further permitted to marry

a Soviet citizen. (HSCA Staff Interview of CIA Employee, 5/17/75, p. 5.)

(Cenani) stated that his interest in Oswald as expressed in the memorandum was just a lead and that it was not unusual that there had been no follow-up regarding a debriefing of Oswald. ^(Ibid., p. 9) He wrote no memo at the time of the discussion as it was not customary to write memos regarding leads that were discussed and subsequently ~~dismissed~~ dismissed as being ~~unimportant~~ ^{of little} unimportant. (Ibid.)

(Walter P. Hattigan), the person to whom (Casasini) 25 November 1963

letter was written, was then employed by the CIA as Chief of

(HSCA Staff Interview of CIA Employee, 6/13/78, p.1) (Hattigan's recollection was in
the Soviet section of the (Paris station). ~~As noted in an~~

interview with HSCA staff members that because of the nature of

(Casasini's) position under [redacted] cover, (Casasini) frequently

wrote informal memos such as the one in FOIA #435-173-A which

were then passed on through the use of [redacted] to the (Paris station). (Ibid.)

These memoranda would then be forwarded to CIA Headquarters,

generally by (Hattigan). However, in this particular instance, Robert G.

(Kempell, who served under (Hattigan)) received and forwarded

the memorandum to Headquarters. (Hattigan) was in the hospital. (Ibid.)

~~in the memo (FOIA)~~

(Hattigan) expressed the general Agency opinion that had the CIA

wished to contact a returning defector, it would have done so through

the contacts Division of the
the Office of Operations that that it was not standard operating

procedure to interview ^{returning defectors} because this job fell within the FBI's

jurisdiction. (Ibid., p. 2)

(James) also told the HSCA
(James) stated that the CIA had a specific interest in Binak

~~as it was~~ ~~known~~ know that the city contained some type of special design plants

that may have involved aviation, nuclear energy or bacteriological

(James) (James) believed that

work. Consequently, although he did not believe that LHO was

working in any type of security facility, anyone who would have been in

the area of those plants would have been of interest to the Agency. (Ibid., p. 6)

However, even with the presence of the design plants, Binak was
not identified as a security or military priority area. (Ibid.)

(James) believed that the CIA maintained a large volume of

information in the Binak radio factory in which Oswald worked. (Ibid.)

Information was stored in the Office of Research and Reporting. This

was corroborated by another CIA employee. Another former CIA employee,

(Ronald Acerslyja) who worked in the Foreign Documents Division

in the Soviet Branch of the Directorate of Intelligence in 1962.

13

- 12 -

1
BA

told the HSCA that he specifically recalled collecting intelligence regarding the Minsk Radio Plant. (HSCA - Interviews of CIA Employees, 12/2/78, p.1).

in fact, ⁰³ (Kerensky) claims that, during the summer of 1962, he reviewed a contact report from representatives of the CIA's New York field

office who interviewed a former Minske who had worked at the Minsk Radio Plant following his defection to the USSR. (Ibid.) This

person, ⁰³ (Kerensky) believes may have been Oswald, had been living with his family in Minsk. (Ibid.) ⁰³ (Kerensky) advised the committee that

the contact report was filed in a volume concerning the Minsk Radio Plant which should be retrievable from the Industrial Registry Branch, which was

then a component of the Office of Central Reference. (Ibid.)

The HSCA requested that the CIA provide the committee with the above-described contact report and the volume of materials concerning the Minsk Radio Plant. Upon review of the documents in the volume on the Minsk Radio Plant revealed that no such contact report existed in that file.

(See also report of 10/17/78, JFK 100-1012023).

14

- 15 -
3
BR

The file review did indicate that in 1975, Daniel Selman had made a similar request and was referred by the CIA that no such report existed. (Ibid.)

15

- 14 -

The Select Committee on Assassinations requested that the Central Intelligence Agency provide a written statement indicating whether

^{the CIA}
whether, from 1958-1963, interviewed or debriefed returning American

defectors to the Soviet Union as a matter of standard operating

(NSA letter to CIA, 4/5/78)

procedure. The Agency was also requested to indicate the circum-

stances under which an interview would be initiated if such inter-

views were not conducted as standard operating procedure. (Ibid.)

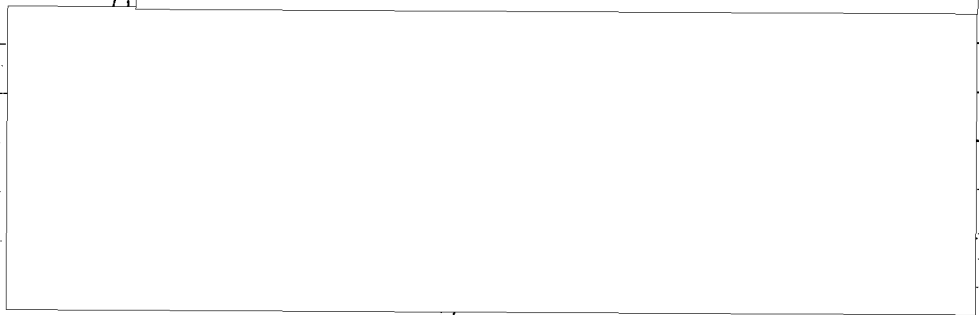
The Agency's response indicated that the Counterintelligence Staff

reviewed the files of 117 persons who had "defected" to the USSR

between 1958 and 1963 and who had subsequently returned to the United

(CIA Memorandum B. Hugh Tovar to Special Assistant to RPO for External Oversight, 4/20/78).

States. /



Another memorandum explained that the CIA had no standard operating procedure with respect to debriefing returning American defectors

6161

as the Agency relied upon the FBI for reporting the results of interviews

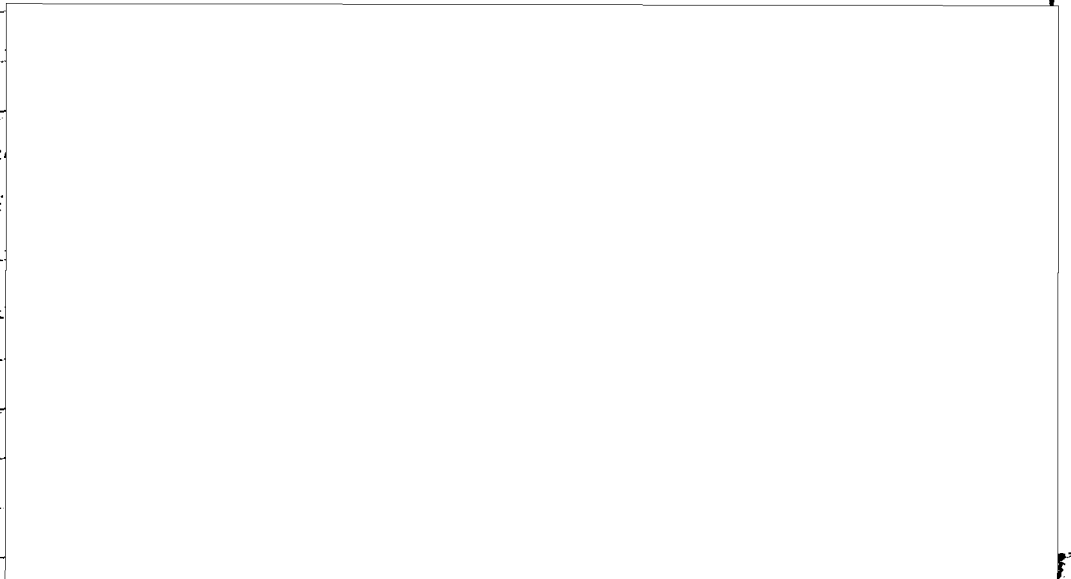
it may have conducted in connection with its responsibility for internal

(CIA Memorandum, Forw. to Special Asst. to Dir. for External Oversight, 5/25/78).

security matters. The Agency further stated that there were no manuals or

regulations for the period of 1958-1963 which specifically address the sub-

ject of American defectors. (Ibid.)



The CIA employee who conducted the research in preparation for the

Agency's response told the HSCA that the requirements he had utilized in ar-

riving at his conclusions had been somewhat broader than those requested

in order to include all those persons regarded as defectors who were residing

in the Soviet Union during the time period in question, rather than just those who actually defected at that time. (HSCA 300, Interview of CIA Employee, 7/26/75).

The House Select Committee on Assassinations conducted ~~an~~ 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 committee requested that the CIA provide a list of persons travelling to the Soviet Union during the period from 1958 to 1963, including both visitors and those persons considered by the Agency to be "defectors." ^{In response,} ~~The Committee (HSCA) (CIA) the committee~~

^{the CIA} ~~was~~ provided a computer listing of 350 individuals entitled "U.S.

Persons Who Have or May Have Defected to the USSR Between 1958-1963"

(Attachment to 27 January 75 Memo, E. Hugh Jones to S.A. to RFD) The Agency

stated that this listing represented ^{U.S. persons,} individuals, including some non-U.S. citizens who owed some measure of allegiance to the United States, who had either defected ^{had} or shown some intention of defecting to the USSR ^{within} the requested time period. (Continuing 95 Memo, 4-1-63 to RFD)

As this list was compiled from a more detailed computer program

on American defectors, a more detailed description concerning these

individuals was requested and provided in an expanded version of

the original list. This machine listing included the following infor-

mation where ^{relevant or available} ~~available~~ for each individual: name, date and place

of birth, 201 file number, ^{date} arrival in Soviet Union, departure

from Soviet Union, employment in Soviet Union, most current address,

and other miscellaneous information compiled from the individual's

201 file and for third agency documents regarding this individual.

("Expanded Computer List of U.S. Defectors...")

The Committee compiled a list of persons who appeared, from

the information available in the Agency's expanded list, to be U.S.

citizens born in the United States, who defected or attempted to defect

to the Soviet Union between the years of 1958 and 1963 and who re-

turned to the United States within the same period of time. ^{In addition,} ~~Also in-~~

the committee included ~~cluded in the list~~ were individuals from an October 1960 State

Department ^{request for} ~~information~~ information from the CIA regarding ^{these} persons whom

they considered to be defectors to the Soviet Union or Soviet bloc countries.

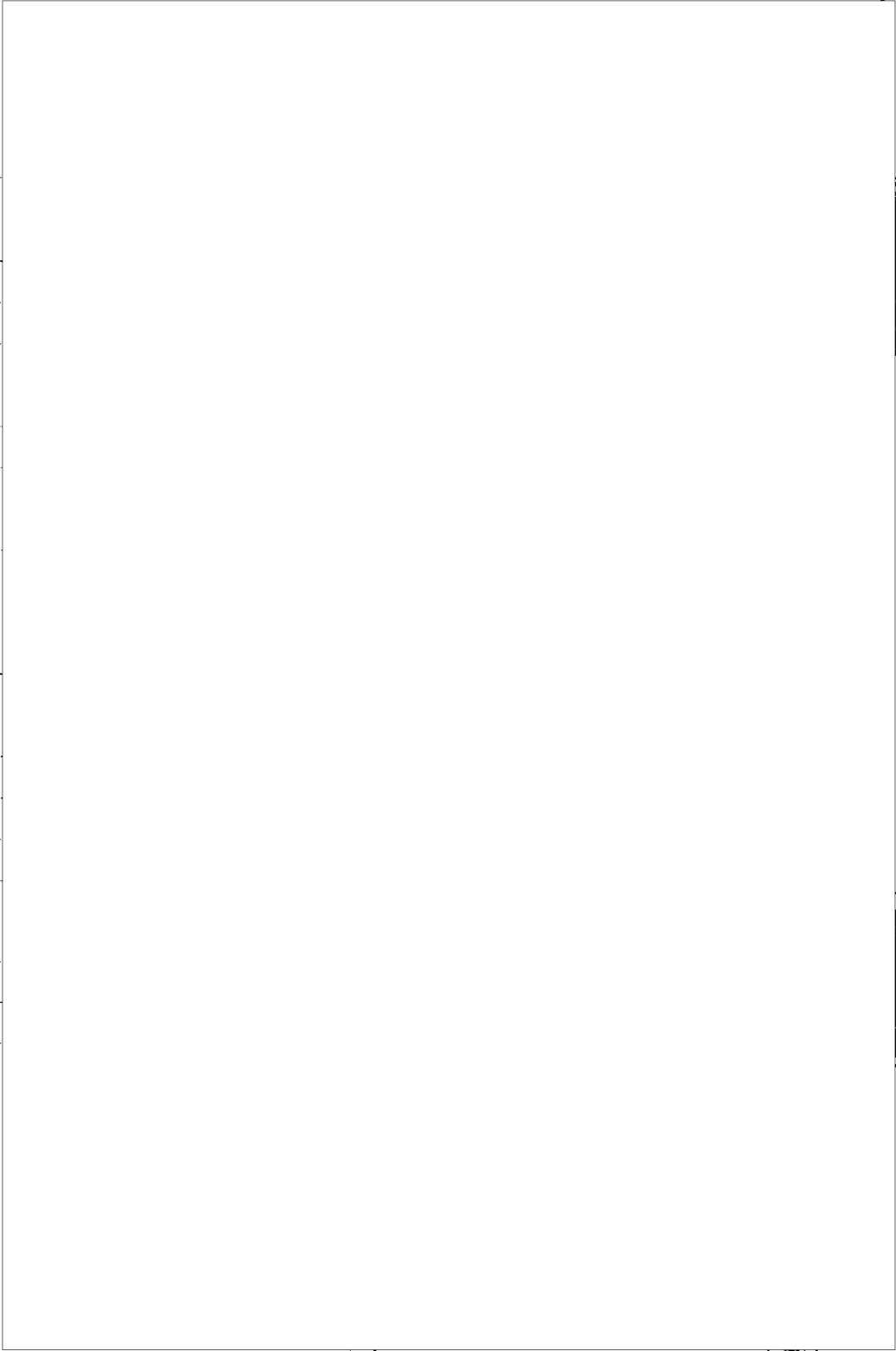
(25 letters from CIA concerning the list)

like
Tennyson's
"Brooks"
and
and
and

17

18

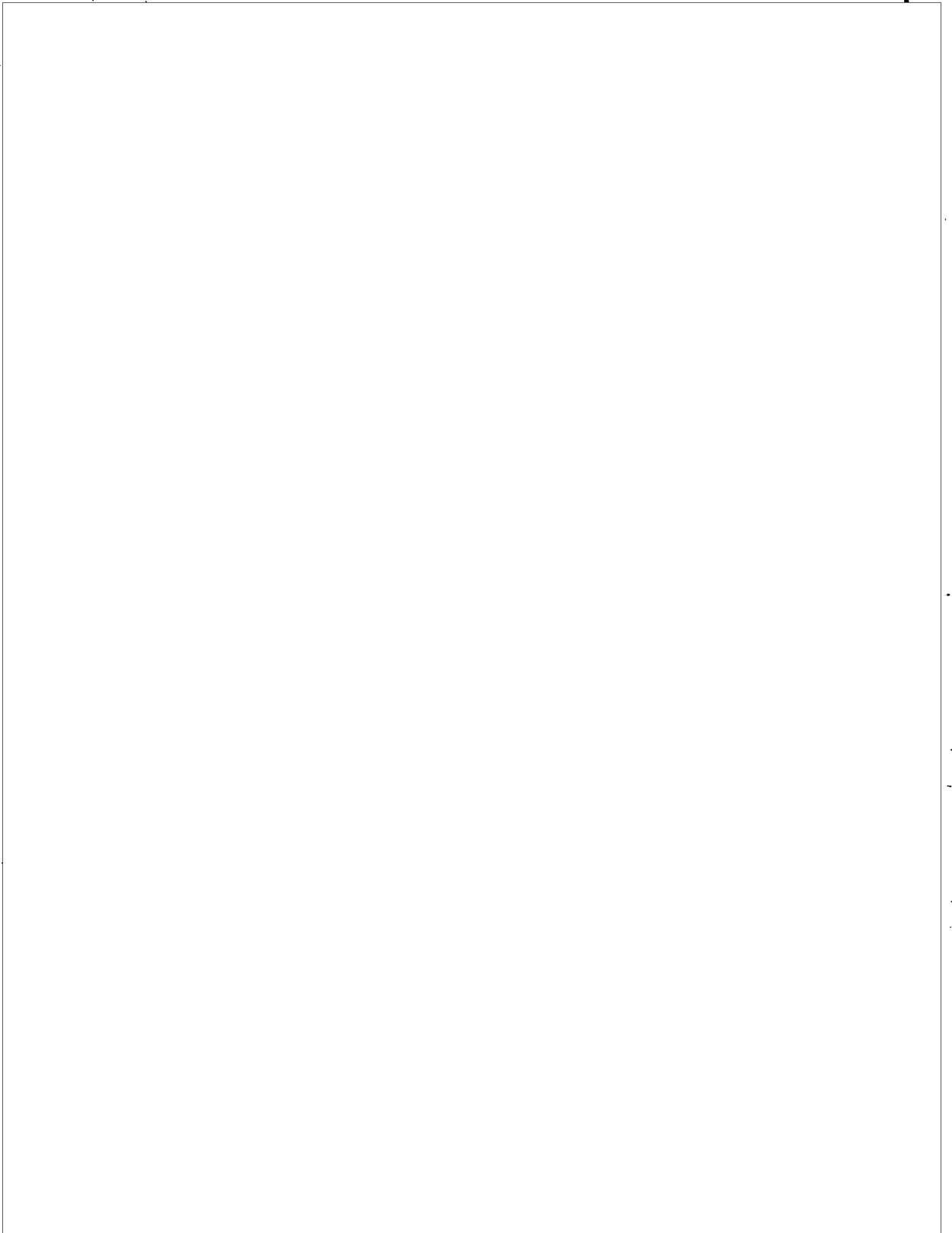
The HSCA requested files on twenty-nine individuals who fit the
above-described criteria and the CIA provided files on twenty-eight individuals
in whom they maintained records. ^{These} Both 201 files were reviewed as well



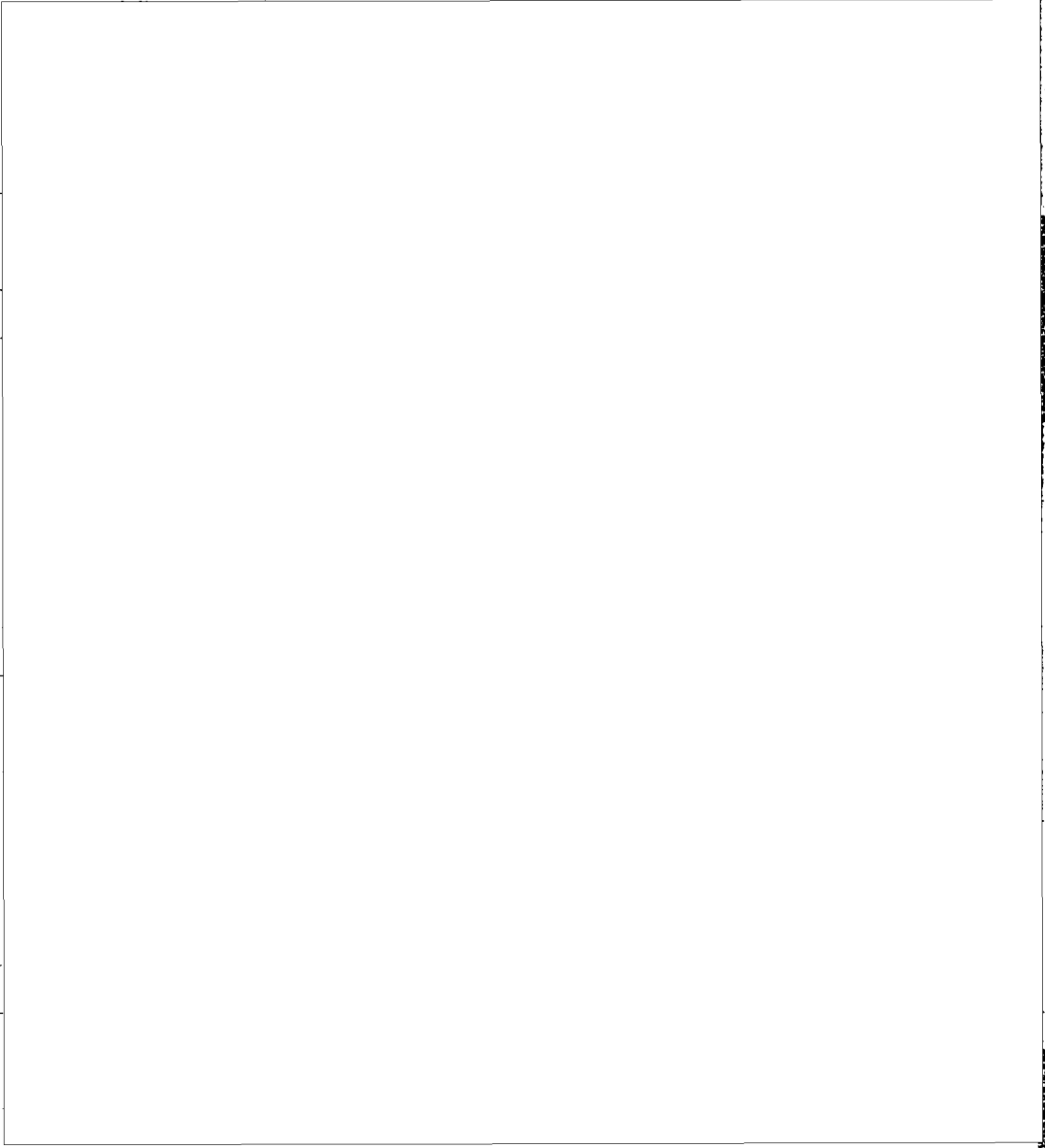
21

~~20~~

($\frac{2}{BR}$)



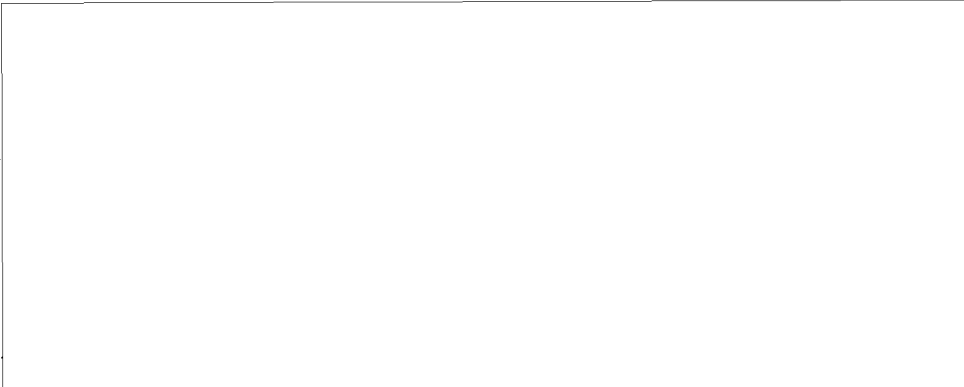
26 - 21



23

~~22~~

It appears from an examination of all available materials, that Lee Harvey Oswald was not interviewed by the CIA following his return to the United States from the Soviet Union. Although persons in a branch of the Soviet Russia Division expressed an interest in interviewing Oswald, they never followed up on this interest. There is also no indication that the ^{Collection Division} ~~Committee~~ of the Office of Operations interviewed Oswald.



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.

HSCA was advised that at time of Oswald's return, there were many Soviet citizens leaving USSR & debriefing program probably concentrated on them.
2423-