PS for 9/6/90

News That Wasn't Fit to Print

The **New York Times** recently carried a short obituary of Borris H. Klosson, age 71, who was identified in the headline as an "expert on the Soviet Union." The six-inch obit detailed his lifetime career as an employee of the U.S. State Department, but strangely omitted the most newsworthy event of his life.

The records of the Warren Commission on the John F. Kennedy assassination show that Klosson was U.S. counselor for political affairs in Moscow in 1961. That was the year when Lee Harvey Oswald, who had renounced his U.S. citizenship and gone to the Soviet Union in 1959, tried to get visas for himself and his new Russian wife to return to the United States.

Klosson sent the State Department a three-page report dated July 11, 1961, indicating that Oswald had undergone a major change of heart and was not dangerous. Klosson signed Foreign Service Dispatch No. 49, which stated that "Twenty months of the realities of life in the Soviet Union has clearly had a maturing effect on Oswald" and that "he had been completely relieved of his illusions about the Soviet Union at the same time that he acquired a new understanding an appreciation of the U.S. and meaning of freedom."

This report paved the way for the State Department to grant taxpayer funds to Oswald to pay his passage back to America.

When FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover testified before the Warren Commission, he blasted Klosson's report for misleading government officials. Hoover contended that, if Oswald had been described as a "dangerous person," the FBI would have opposed his return; and if that failed, the FBI would have kept him under tight surveillance in the United States.

So Klosson's mistake led directly to Lee Harvey Oswald being in Dallas on November 22, 1963. The Klosson connection was first discovered by investigative reporter Paul Scott in 1973.

Why was that extraordinarily newsworthy fact omitted from Klosson's **New York Times** obituary? After all, anything and everything connected with the Kennedy assassination is always so eagerly reported by the media to an American public that is forever fascinated with every detail and new revelation.

Let’s go back to Klosson. Wouldn’t you think that such a tragic mistake would have terminated Klosson’s career as a government-paid expert on the Soviet Union?

Further probing into Klosson’s life indicates that his decision about Oswald was not out of character. Klosson’s security file contained information that several of his colleagues reported that he “presented strong pro-Soviet views in every question that came up,” and on Foreign Service officer in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow told how Klosson blocked him from sending a report back to Washington on KGB operations against Americans in Russia.

But neither those files not Klosson’s mistake about Oswald were any detriment to Klosson’s career advancement in the State Department. He soon became part of the inner circle power group that Henry Kissinger set up to carry out his policies, and served as deputy U.S. representative to the Geneva strategic arms negotiations from 1973 until his retirement in 1978.

A pro-Soviet voice in the U.S. SALT II negotiating delegation was very valuable to Kissinger in manufacturing the illusion that the Soviets were conducting a meaningful “dialogue” in Geneva. In fact, the Soviets were stalling any progress toward a new agreement while they raced ahead on six new super-missile programs, and out détente-and-disarmament diplomats needed someone to explain away the Soviets’ outrageous demands.

It is difficult to present a legitimate reason for Kissinger’s selection of Boris Klosson for this sensitive and important position on the team negotiating the SALT II Treaty (which, fortunately, the U.S. Senate refused to ratify). Either Klosson was naïve and incompetent in evaluating Lee Harvey Oswald, or Klosson was assisting a KGB mission.

Oswald had voluntarily defected from the United States to the Soviet Union, attended a KGB school for two years, and married a Russian woman. Then he appeared at the U.S. Embassy one day and put on his act in front of Klosson.

Even if Klosson couldn’t see through Oswald’s charade, Klosson should have known that the KGB would not tolerate this kind of change of heart. Even if the KGB, inexplicably, had been moved with compassion for this double-defector, the KGB never would have permitted his Russian wife to accompany him – unless the KGB had a reason to want Oswald in the United States.

If you were our U.S. National Security Adviser or our Secretary of State, would you have hired Boris Klosson to serve in crucial arms negotiations in a position which required daily judgement calls about Soviet character, intentions and plans? Henry Kissinger did.

Somehow, this vignette of history was dropped down the Memory Hole by the **New York Times**.