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A REVIEW OF COUNTERINTELLIGENCE LITERATURE, 1975 - 1992

By Cleveland C. Cram

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Introduction

The year 1974 was a watershed in literature about the CIA. Before that time there had been few books critical of the Agency and they had been by outsiders, usually professional journalists such as Wise and Ross. Most books had been neutral or even positive, especially those written by former Agency officials such as Allen Dulles and Lyman Kirkpatrick. But in 1974 a disgruntled former Agency employee, Philip Agee, published his highly critical book, Inside the Company: CIA Diary. He was followed by others in quick succession: J. B. Smith, John Stockwell, Victor Marchetti (with J. D. Marks), and R. W. McGehee--placing highly confidential information in the public domain. These authors usually made their disclosures about subjects of which they had special knowledge, but the cumulative effect was to breach the walls of confidentiality that had protected Agency operations and personnel. Although the net effect was damaging, especially in the case of Agee where his efforts were directed at revealing the identities of officers serving abroad under cover, this general scatter shot approach, while distressing, did not reveal information about the most sensitive operations, namely, those directed against the main target--the Soviet Union and its intelligence organs.

In the mid-seventies this changed with the publication of a series of magazine articles authored mainly by Edward J. Epstein, a New York writer, which culminated with the publication of his book in 1978 called Legend. The articles, but especially the book, publicized for the first time a series of clashes within the Agency (both the CI Staff and the Soviet Division) concerning the bona fides of a defector from the KGB named Yuriy Nosenko. Epstein's articles and his book contained so much detailed information

about sensitive operations by the CIA and the FBI that it was generally agreed Epstein had a willing and knowledgeable source, either a serving officer (which was thought doubtful) or a retired person of a sufficiently senior position that he had wide knowledge of operations against the Soviet target both overseas and in the "U.S." Although from roughly about 1978 onward Epstein admitted that on occasion he spoke with James Angleton, the retired former Chief of the CI Staff, but he never admitted Angleton was his source. In fact, Epstein, wisely perhaps, never sourced his articles nor his book, leaving the reader in the dark as to how he came upon such rare nuggets of sensitive information. Then in 1988, with Angleton dead, Epstein in a new book called Deception admitted that from 1977 onward he had obtained large amounts of highly classified information from Angleton, N.S. Miler, Tennent H. Bagley and others who shared Angleton's beliefs.

When Angleton was dismissed by this DCI William Colby in late 1974, he had no thought of what he would do in his retirement. For the next following six months he spent part of his time at Langley, assisting the new CI Staff by introducing them to such persons as his defector friend, Anatole Golitsyn. After a few months it became clear to Angleton that he really had been dismissed and his future with CIA was finished. The whole matter was a terrible blow; he became embittered and at first withdrew into alcohol. But quite soon people began to seek him out and he began to formulate some ideas about the future. As he got more attention from media people, he began to cultivate a method of playing them off one against another, planting an idea here and there amongst them. He changed his luncheon venue from a local restaurant to the more politically congenial atmosphere of the Army-Navy Club. One idea Angleton developed was to develop a counterattack on the Agency and, in particular, the new CI Staff by which he would prove them wrong in their new approach and indict them

for negligence of duty. This task was given to his loyal aide, N.S. Miler. Miler took on the job but found he was his own researcher as well as secretary. Foreseeing a dim future of virtual servitude, he took his family and withdrew to remote New Mexico.

Angleton's activities in this period, while not neglecting the idea of KGB penetration, focused more immediately on his strong belief in the threat from the KGB of deception and disinformation. To support this thesis he continually raised the issue of Nosenko. It was an idea that caught fire amongst some of his supporters and led to a sort of cottage industry in which many academics and think tank specialists propagated the theory. Oddly, however, Angleton's allies in Great Britain took a different line. There they concentrated on KGB penetration largely because events threw up some exceptional examples, such as Sir Anthony Blunt. Because of the so-called Cambridge "Ring of Five," public attention was more easily caught by the idea of moles in Her Majesty's government. This eventually led to much embarrassment for the Thatcher government, culminating in the "Spycatcher" trial in Australia in 1986.

endeavor, Angleton was on surer ground. For starters, he had the support of the large number of FBI retirees as well as many from CIA. This was the period when the Pike and Church committees in the Congress were in full cry and a number of ex-intelligence people who believed Congress had gone too far were rallying a defense. (David Phillips was also starting the Association of Former Intelligence Officers.) The drive by Angleton was ~~very~~ successful; over $600,000 was raised and six months after its founding SIF was reported to have more than 17,000 members. Angleton was made chairman with his friends in senior positions. But ~~very~~ soon after, the US Attorney General decided not to pursue the prosecution of the FBI men and the reason for SIF more or less evaporated. ~~However~~ Nevertheless, Angleton converted it into a forum by which he spread information about what he saw as various forms of Soviet deception and it continued into the next decade until, after Angelton's death and the coming of glasnost, it withered away.

The publication of Legend in 1978 provided enormous stimulus to the deception idea by suggesting the Soviet defector, Yuriy Nosenko, had been sent by the KGB to provide a cover story for Oswald. Epstein had made a small reputation with an earlier book on the Warren Commission called Inquest, which was generally well received because it pointed out some obvious inadequacies in the Warren Commission report. In Legend, Epstein wrote what in effect were two books: one focused on Oswald's Marine career in Japan, his time in Russia and then his return to America, while the second portrayed Nosenko as playing a key role in a major KGB deception operation intended to provide cover for Oswald (and the Soviet government) as well as to negate the effects of Golitsyn's revelations. As so much classified information could only have come from a person or persons with intimate knowledge of the Nosenko case, blame for the leakage naturally focused on Angleton and his

supporters. It came as no surprise when ten years later (and after Angleton's death) Epstein admitted his sources to have been Angleton, Bagley, Miler, and other supporters. Despite some negative reviews such as George Lardner's in The Washington Post, which denounced the book as "essentially dishonest," the book sold well and was very important in spreading Angleton's ideas of a super KGB manipulating American society and politics via its sophisticated deception apparatus.

The theme of Legend is extended in a novel which appeared in 1980 called The Spike by Arnaud de Borchgrave and Robert Moss. De Borchgrave, soon to be editor of the new Washington Times and Moss, then editor of "The Blue Economist," were close friends and admirers of Angleton, whose conspiracy theories largely jibed with their own. Moss had been spreading bogus Angleton propaganda in his sheet for some time, an example being his claim Golitsyn had provided the lead to Philby. This caught the eye of then DCI Turner, who inquired of the CI Staff. The latter replied from solid knowledge that Golitsyn could only be credited for an assist on Vassal and none on Philby or Blunt.

The low quality and general crudeness of theme in The Spike exceeds that even of the Latham novel. Briefly, it told the story of a young liberal taken in by leftists who came to realize his error thanks to timely guidance received from an elderly former CIA counterintelligence officer who had been fired by a Director obviously acting on the Kremlin's directions. Moscow's secret designs are revealed by a KGB high level defector whose escape is managed by MI-6 because the CIA is so penetrated it could not be trusted with the mission. The KGB defector then uncovers the Soviet agents in the White House, CIA and elsewhere and the wise old counterintelligence chief, obviously meant to be

but instead he lent it impetus by suggesting the Mounties consult Golitsyn. That sealed Bennett's doom and brought his dismissal from the service although no substantial evidence existed against him and he passed his polygraph tests. The case tore the Mounties apart and furthermore gave ammunition to those who argued that the Security Service should be removed from the RCMP. Within a few years Canada had a civilian security service. Sawatsky's book drew considerable attention in Canada but little in America.

In 1988, one year after Angleton's death, Epstein produced his book called Deception. In the years between Legend and Deception Epstein had become something of a specialist on the subject of Soviet disinformation and deception. These twin subjects, along with "active measures" (to which they are related), much occupied a number of scholars and writers during the 1980s. In this they were assisted by the testimony of several Soviet defectors, including the indefatigable Golitsyn who added his own volume to the field called New Lies for Old, whose turgid prose had to be endlessly rewritten before it was rendered readable.

Epstein's book Deception, like its predecessor, is really in two parts. The second part in which he describes various deceptions practiced through the centuries can be ignored as it says nothing new. It is the first 105 pages that are of interest, wherein he repeats the old theories about Nosenko, and then in the section "Acknowledgments" names all his sources for the years past: Angleton, Bagley, Miler, Sullivan, etc. He also indicates in this part that his informants understood clearly they were providing him with classified information. It is an astonishing set of revelations. It is difficult to avoid the feeling that this book is Epstein's last hurrah, at least in the world of intelligence. He senses with glasnost the days of the

various reasons, it remains a highly restricted issue. Despite this minor misconception, for which the author cannot be blamed, the Wise book is otherwise factually correct and is another cautionary tale management should bear in mind.

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Legend: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald by Edward Jay Epstein; The Reader's Digest Press/McGraw-Hill Book Company (New York, N.Y.), 1978--382 pages

Epstein is a ~~very~~ bright and able writer who took his MA at Cornell and his doctorate in government at Harvard (1972). He had made a name for himself with his book Inquest: The Warren Commission and the Establishment of Truth, done as his master's thesis at Cornell. As one of the first serious works to expose the shortcomings of the Commission, it sold well and made Epstein momentarily well known. Epstein became aware of the Nosenko case through the Reader's Digest, from which he became acquainted with James Angleton. Their association flourished and Angleton became Epstein's major source on Nosenko and the issues surrounding him. Eventually The Reader's Digest sponsored Epstein's research to the tune of $500,000. The book was a best seller, projecting Epstein into the forefront of those who were popular exponents of the ideas of Angleton. Following the publication of Legend, Epstein wrote numerous articles for New York magazine, Commentary, and other publications, mostly--though not always--supportive of the Angleton theories.

Legend is in fact two books: the first is about Nosenko and the Angleton belief that he was part of a KGB deception operation while the second is about Oswald's service in the Marine Corps in Japan where it is suggested he acquired information about the U-2 flights flown from the airfield on which he was stationed as well as his later

sojourn in the Soviet Union. In brief, Epstein accepted Angleton's conclusion that "Nosenko was a Soviet intelligence agent dispatched by the KGB expressly for the purpose of delivering disinformation to the CIA, FBI and Warren Commission." In this scheme of things, Oswald, the supposed lone assassin of President Kennedy, likely was working for the KGB; Nosenko said this was not true, but, therefore, by the logic in Legend--it is. Oswald the ex-Marine who defected to the USSR in 1959 and returned three years later, had been living a "legend," a false biography concocted for him by the KGB. Amongst these two stories is a central theme, carefully stated but always present, which is that the highest level of the intelligence community, and certainly the CIA, is penetrated by a "mole" working for the KGB. Although by 1978 this "mole" had not been found, the best proof that he existed rested in the assertion of Nosenko that he knew of no penetration, which contradicted statements made to the contrary by a "Mr. Stone," who proves to be Anatole Golitsyn. Epstein thus promoted the Angleton twin beliefs of deception and penetration by the KGB which was enshrined in his concept which came to be derisively called "The Monster Plot." For CIA officers who wish to learn the full story of the Nosenko case, it is recommended they read the Fieldhouse/Snowdon study on Nosenko commissioned by then DCI Casey in 1981.

In his source notes, Epstein is quite frank in stating that his work is based on interviews with Nosenko and retired CIA officers. He then lists a number including Gordon Stewart, Admiral Turner, Richard Helms, James Angleton and members of his CI Staff, William Sullivan and Sam Papich of the FBI, and others connected with the Golitsyn and Nosenko cases. Although Epstein is careful to camouflage his sources by never quoting them verbatim or directly, it is clear that a number of CIA officers had provided an immense amount of classified information to

Epstein. This was leakage about hitherto most sensitive Soviet cases on a scale the CIA had not before experienced. However, because Epstein so cleverly refrained from pin point sourcing, it was impossible to say exactly which CIA and/or FBI officers had leaked what. In 1989 the mystery was resolved with the publication of a second book by Epstein called Deception which dealt with the contentious old cases, including Nosenko and Golitsyn again. But now with his major source, Angleton, dead, Epstein revealed in detail who his informants had been. This will be reviewed in detail in the summary on Deception. Although the presentation of these hitherto highly classified cases shocked most observers, within a year the entire Nosenko case was to be revealed to the public in detail via the U.S. House Select Committee on Assassinations.

Legend sold better than might have been expected, and the conspiracy buffs found it a welcome addition to the growing literature on the Kennedy assassination. Many, however, found the book confusing and its claims extravagant and unsupported by factual evidence. One of the chief critics was George Lardner of The Washington Post who wrote, "What Epstein has written...is a fascinating, important, and essentially dishonest book. Fascinating because it offers new information about Oswald, about the KGB, and about the CIA. Dishonest because it pretends to be objective, because it is saddled with demonstrative errors and inexcusable omissions, because it assumes the KGB always knows what it is doing while the CIA does not. It is paranoid. It is naive."

However, there is no question but that Legend set the tone for the debate which was to ensue in the media about the Nosenko affair. It gave the Angleton and Bagley forces an advantage by putting their argument adroitly if dishonestly before the public. It was not until David

DECEPTION: The Invisible War Between the KGB and the CIA by Edward J. Epstein; Simon and Schuster (New York, N.Y.), 1989--335 pages

It is ironic that Edward J. Epstein should have published his book called Deception in mid-1989 just as the Soviet Union was undergoing massive changes, which would by autumn 1991 result in its total demise. So also has its major intelligence arm, the KGB, vanished, which according to Epstein and his principal source, James Angleton, was responsible for many mind-boggling feats of deception. A little heralded result of these events has been the disappearance almost overnight of what once was a burgeoning cottage industry employing hundreds of academics and self-appointed experts around in the country in universities and think tanks devoted to the study of Soviet deception, disinformation, active measures and subversion. This already antique field of academic endeavor now has, like Epstein's book, the smell of attic dust.

This book, rather like its predecessor Legend, is really two books; the first book in 105 pages explains Angleton's theories developed largely from the defector, Anatole Golitsyn. The second part--the remainder of the book--is devoted to various forms of deception. As this subject has been better covered in other works, it is of no concern here except to note that one chapter is devoted to the Soviet defector, Vitali Yurchenko, designated by Epstein as an obvious KGB provocation similar to Nosenko. Epstein concludes the book with a long chapter on glasnost, which he dismisses as simply another massive KGB deception.

The most arresting information imparted in Deception is Epstein's confession regarding his sources for both Legend and this book. With Angleton now dead, Epstein apparently

feels free to admit the former chief of CIA counterintelligence was his major source since 1976 when they first met. It was Angleton who passed Epstein on to his assistants, Miler and Rocca, as well as providing introductions to William Hood plus FBI officers William Sullivan and Sam Papich. Angleton sent Epstein to Europe to see Stephen de Mowbray, the former MI-6 officer and a devoted disciple of Golitsyn, in England and to Tennent ("Pete") Bagley in Belgium. That the latter understood he was passing on classified information is revealed by Epstein's amusing description of the clandestine circumstances under which they met. All down the years, Angleton remained a constant and prolific source for Epstein; the latter showed his appreciation by taking Angleton with him to Israel when he went there in 1982 to do research on his book about the diamond trade (later published as The Rise and Fall of Diamonds). Although it was obvious to most astute observers that Angleton was leaking classified information to Epstein and others, nothing was done to caution him. On the other hand, when it was agreed Clare E. Petty had been leaking classified material to the press, he was sent an official warning letter by CIA. Thus, in retirement, as when he was a CIA official, Angleton enjoyed a protected and special status.

In Part One Epstein recites again, as in Legend, the Angleton belief in the KGB program of deception and penetration, which over the years he had absorbed from the defector Golitsyn and had then embellished further with special embroidery of his own. These theories came to be described by Angleton's critics as "The Monster Plot." As Epstein never seems to have grasped the real meaning of how the theory was supposed to have operated, the reader is advised to read the appropriate section in the CI Staff official history or the special chapter in the CI Staff study done by Fieldhouse on the Nosenko case.

One of Golitsyn's major claims, made almost immediately after his defection, was that another defector would soon be sent by the KGB, as Angleton invariably put it, to "mutilate" Golitsyn's leads (which in another oddity of terminology, Angleton always called "serials"). In 1964 Nosenko defected to the CIA. Angleton, who by now had complete control of Golitsyn, instantly viewed Nosenko as the predicted plant thereby ensuring that Golitsyn would maintain his primacy as the CI Staff's resident expert. When Nosenko did not confess to his role as a false defector, he was incarcerated for three years under severe conditions. Epstein blames this action entirely on Soviet Division management, while portraying the powerful Angelton as agonizing helplessly on the sidelines. This rendition is not only wrong, but patently absurd. Angleton knew all the legal inquiries concerning such action, was kept informed of the construction of the prison quarters, and never once raised an objection. If he had, as Epstein claims, genuinely opposed Nosenko's imprisonment, one word from him to Helms would have been sufficient to stop the program instantly.

The foregoing is but one of many errors of fact and/or misinterpretation in this book. Like Legend it is propaganda for Angleton and is essentially dishonest. The errors are too many to document here, but one more example will give the flavor of this work. This error tends to confirm what an exasperated senior FBI officer wrote to Director J. Edgar Hoover: "Golitsyn is not above fabricating to support his theories." On page 85, Epstein cites Golitsyn's assertion that, to support the KGB deception program, it was necessary to divide Soviet intelligence into an outer and an inner KGB. Epstein then explains what Golitsyn allegedly reported about this, but nothing remotely resembling this can be found in any of

Golitsyn's debriefings. It seems likely this fiction was developed by Golitsyn after his visit to England, when there is much evidence he began to embroider and fabricate. The idea of the two KGBs has never been reported by any other Soviet source or defector, including the most senior defector of modern times, Oleg Gordievsky. Thus it is suggested this statement should be treated with great reserve. It also suggests that Epstein, who makes considerable pretensions to scholarship, should have been more conscientious in checking such stories with more responsible sources before labeling them as fact.

In summary, this is one of many bad books that appeared during the period after Angleton's dismissal which were inspired by him and mostly have no factual basis. Just as Angleton gulled the British and Canadians with fake stories about an alleged highly secret source of his in Moscow who on occasion produced startling, if mostly historic, information, so for over fifteen years Angleton and his cohorts gulled the public via such writers as Epstein with books like Legend and Deception. It is difficult to believe that a writer as obviously intelligent as Epstein could believe the stuff he wrote.

An interview with Epstein in the magazine Vanity Fair in May 1989 suggests Epstein is having second thoughts about Angleton and even about his pet defector, Golitsyn. In the interview, Epstein admits Angleton's views were shaped by Golitsyn--but how reliable was he? "Possibly Golitsyn was a liar," admits Epstein, "but Golitsyn is very interesting because he is a museum of Angleton's mind. What I believe happened is that Golitsyn listened to stories Angleton told him and then repeated them to British intelligence and vice versa." This suggests that the great confidence writers like Epstein put in Golitsyn is being eroded (witness the article William Safire wrote in The New York Times after his

visit with Golitsyn). And as a result, has Epstein's confidence in Angleton's veracity been equally eroded? It appears this may be the case as Epstein concluded the interview noted above with the remark: "Actually, I don't know whether to believe Angleton at all!"

Postscript

Two books concerned with counterintelligence history have been added to the group reviewed here. They are Robert Lamphere's The FBI/KGB War: A Special Agent's Story, published in 1986, and Gordon Brook-Shepherd's The Storm Birds: Soviet Post-War Defectors, published in 1988. Although they appeared in the period when many books dealing with CIA and British counterintelligence issues focused on the Golitsyn-Nosenko controversy, these two works concern themselves entirely with providing an historical account of the counterintelligence benefits flowing from defectors and from such other exceptional events as a break into the KGB cyphers achieved at the end of World War II.

Lamphere's book concentrates on the FBI's work against the Soviet intelligence services' operations in the United States, which although suspected for some time was proven beyond doubt with the defection in Canada of Igor Gouzenko and in America of Elizabeth Bentley and others who had been involved in the Soviet spy apparatus. Their astounding revelations were in turn supplemented by an unusual accomplishment in the cryptographic field. Lamphere arrived in the Washington field office around the time the cryptographic wizard, Meredith Gardner, had achieved a break into the KGB cypher system and had the good fortune to be assigned to the National Security Agency (NSA) as Gardner's principal FBI liaison. Using the fragmentary but very valuable information from this breakthrough, Lamphere participated in uncovering some of the major Soviet espionage rings then in operation. His work included dealing with Philby, the ace spy for the Soviets, as well interrogating the atomic scientist Klaus Fuchs, pursuing Harry Gold, assisting in the Judith Coplon trial, and many other memorable cases of the immediate post-war period. A

series of conflicts with J. Edgar Hoover led to Lamphere's early resignation from the Bureau. His excellent memory was supplemented by access to FBI records, and NSA, after considerable pressure was brought to bear, gave Lamphere permission to describe in elementary detail Gardner's magnificent achievement against the KGB cypher system. It is altogether a gripping story well and accurately told.

Brook-Shepherd's excellent history of the post-war Soviet defectors also benefited from assistance given the author by the British intelligence and security services and the CIA. As a result, he has produced a highly accurate and complete story about most of the major Soviet defectors all of whom but one (Shevchenko) had served with either the KGB or GRU. He has eschewed the controversial issues upon which many of the other books in this collection are concerned, although he devotes a chapter each to Anatole Golitsyn and Yuri Nosenko. Each of these men is given objective and fair consideration. Brook-Shephard's two summaries are probably the most accurate evaluation available to the public and go far to make the two men and the issues connected with them comprehensible.

* * *

These two histories are largely accurate and together constitute a mine of important information on the early defectors, both American and Soviet, as well as detail on later defectors such as Gordievsky, who provided inside information at critical periods in history. The two books also illustrate how important the defectors were not only in helping the Western intelligence and security services but also in alerting the public to the Soviet threat. Both books deserve reading by counterintelligence officers.

The Storm Birds: Soviet Post-War Defectors by Gordon Brook-Shepherd; Weidenfeld and Nicolson (London), 1988--303 pages

Gordon Brook-Shepherd, a British foreign correspondent turned historian, has with publication of this book done the best work of his long career. As intelligence history dealing with Soviet post-war defectors, it is not only an exciting read but is factually accurate in almost every respect. Compressed within its 303 pages is the story of how the Western intelligence services, largely denied the possibility of obtaining information from within the Soviet Union, came to realize the enormous intelligence value of those Soviets who risked their lives to make the leap to freedom. More importantly, the author has immersed himself thoroughly in the voluminous detail about the defectors so that he comprehends the events which influenced the secret world of intelligence, with the result his judgments are objective and fair. The author likely achieved this kind of professional knowledge partly from work on his earlier book, The Storm Petrels, which recounted the story of pre-war defectors from the Soviet Union. With this experience plus generous help from CIA and the British intelligence services, Brook-Shepherd has written a fascinating account of how and why so many senior Soviet intelligence officials defected and their impact on the West.

The author deals with his complex subject in chronological fashion starting with the first post-war defector, Igor Gouzenko, in Canada. It is difficult today to comprehend how little knowledge the West, governments as well as people, possessed about Soviet espionage and subversive activity prior to Gouzenko's defection in September 1945. This event and the revelations that flowed from it stunned both statesmen and the public. It had an enormous effect in America where it was coupled with defections of Americans such as Elizabeth Bentley, Louis