

Book Ties JFK's Assassin To Downing of U-2 Plane

By JOSEPH VOLZ

Washington (News Bureau) — Lee Harvey Oswald, President Kennedy's assassin, may have provided the Soviet Union with secret information about the high-flying U-2 spy plane, which the Russians shot down in 1960, according to author Edward Jay Epstein.

Oswald, a Marine radar operator, was stationed at Atsugi Air Base in Japan, where U-2 flights took off for China. Epstein spent two years researching his new book, "Legend: the Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald."

Epstein contends that the FBI failed to investigate thoroughly the two years that Oswald spent in the Soviet Union.

The author further charges that the Soviet duped FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover into thinking that a Soviet UN official, "Feodora," had actually defected, in 1962. For 15 years, the Russian misled the FBI and the White House by providing false information about Russian intentions, Epstein charged.

Dedicated Marxist

Epstein portrays Oswald as a dedicated Marxist capable of divulging the technical secrets on the U-2 needed to shoot down the spy plane. The plane, flying at 90,000 feet, was thought invulnerable to Soviet attack. Francis Gary Powers was the pilot.

Epstein raises the possibility that the Soviet was worried that Oswald's espionage activities, which might have continued when he returned to the United States in 1962, would be uncovered by the Warren Commission.

The FBI paid little attention to Oswald's Soviet years — even though Oswald's wife's uncle was a high-ranking Soviet KGB intelligence officer.

CIA Is Curious

It was a different story at CIA headquarters across the Potomac in Langley, Va., the author contends. The top CIA counterspy, James Angleton, was trying to figure out whether another so-called Soviet "defector," Yuri Nosenko, who "defected" shortly after the assassination, declaring that he was Oswald's supervisor, was a phony.

Perhaps the Soviet deliberately sent Nosenko to deceive U.S. officials, Epstein writes. Perhaps Nosenko, who insisted that the Soviet was never much interested in Oswald, had actually been Oswald's espionage boss.

The FBI had heard Nosenko downgrade Oswald and reported it to the Warren Commission, the book reports. But the CIA, with permission from Attorney General Robert Kennedy, gave Nosenko the "third degree" keeping him in prison for months.

CIA officials never did reach a clear

determination on Nosenko's motives. But they did persuade the Warren Commission not to take any testimony from Nosenko, Epstein says. The CIA had also failed to tell the commission about its eight attempts to kill Cuban Premier Fidel Castro, he adds.