

Dear Jin,

8/17/89

Thanks for Johnathan Marshall's review of Epsteinker's Deception in The City Paper. I've read the book. Marshall's criticisms are so far short of what is merited they almost amount to praise of a very bad book- bad for all the reasons he gives and for some he avoided. But I'm glad the Epsteinker did this book because it is his own self-characterization.

Worse ~~of~~ for a professional scholar, it is unscholarly in all respects.

It would be bad enough were it his lament over the grave of the Cold War.

It is his call for a renewal of that Cold War.

But what else was his career based on? So why not?

Most scholars have no way of making an independent assessment of his earlier books, but they can of this one and unless they are far to his right or quite ignorant they can't read this book and regard him as either trustworthy or a scholar.

Anything he does from now on has to survive this monstrosity and it can't for honest or informed or impartial people. This book is that bad. He even lies.

Not that he hasn't before!

Best,

The Looking Glass War

By Jonathan Marshall

Deception: The Invisible War Between the KGB and the CIA

By Edward Jay Epstein
Simon and Schuster, 335 pages, \$19.95

Is glasnost just a giant hoax, a KGB fabrication designed to lull the West into complacency? Is arms control a dangerous trap baited with Soviet deceptions that have eluded the CIA's best minds and equipment? Has the Kremlin all but taken control of NATO intelligence agencies, feeding them endless reams of disinformation calculated to make the West self-destruct?

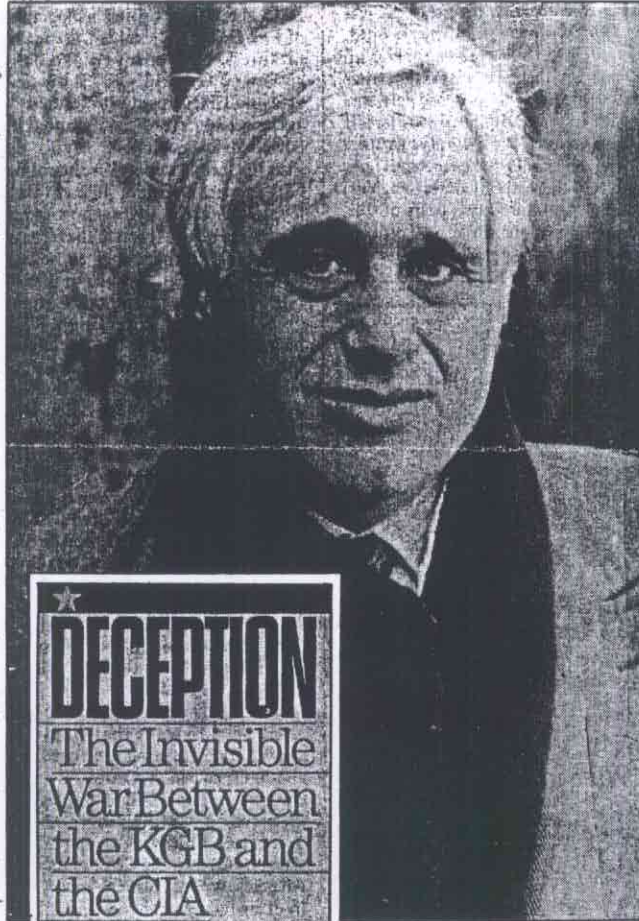
If you believe Edward Jay Epstein's latest book, *Deception*, America isn't suffering merely from malaise, the ill that Jimmy Carter wished he had never diagnosed. It has a fatal case of overconfidence just when it is being lethally entrapped by its chief adversary.

But Epstein is merely the messenger, not the discoverer of this diabolical conspiracy. That honor goes to the recently deceased Cassandra, James Jesus Angleton, who talked with Epstein over an 11-year period and whose spirit informs this entire work.

Angleton—the gaunt, stooped, chain-smoking, ex-CIA counterintelligence chief in charge of protecting the Agency from KGB infiltration—could never have been cast by Hollywood as a seducer. But a shrewd and devious mind can sometimes lure men no less well than a young and nubile body. And no one had a more cunning or convoluted intellect than Angleton, one of the world's leading experts on Ezra Pound, tropical orchids, and KGB spies. As *Newsweek* reporter David Martin once observed, "Angleton seduced with a hypnotic blend of brilliance and mystique."

Epstein, author of such important works as *Inquest*, *News From Nowhere*, and *Agency of Fear*, describes how he first got a glimpse of this unique mind when Angleton led him through the Kensington Orchids greenhouse in Maryland:

"With most species of orchids, it is not the fittest but the most deceptive ones that survive."...Angleton seemed to take particular delight in elaborately



★
DECEPTION
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Edward Jay
Epstein ★

Things Are Not What They Seem: Epstein suggests that glasnost is a commie sham.

describing these modes of deception. "They can play on greed, lust, or fear." He pointed to a tubelike column surrounded by five-inch-long spidery-looking petals. "This orchid deceives mosquitoes."...First, the orchid emits a fragrance that simulates the nectar the mosquito feeds on. Then the mosquito, following the scent, is lured from the flower petals into the narrow tube. Here it runs into the orchid's pollen pod, gets jammed in the eye, and is blinded. Finally, leaving the orchid, the blinded mosquito flies on until it passes another orchid...and gets a whiff of the same false nectar odor. Again, it pushes its way into the orchid's narrow tunnel, only this time it deposits the pollen that has stuck to its eye.

"Other orchids use what is

called pseudo-copulation," Angleton continued, "to trigger the sexual instincts of an insect." He described how the *Tricerus* orchid has on its flower a three-dimensional replica of the underside of a female fly. It even bristles with the hairs—and odors—of a fly. When the male fly sees this replica, he lands on it and attempts to have sex with it. In doing so, he comes in contact with the pollen pod, which attaches itself to his underside. Eventually, he flies off. If he then passes another *Tricerus* orchid, he repeats the frustrating process and delivers the pollen.

How could anyone resist a teacher like that? Certainly not Epstein, whose own savvy simply made him all the more captivated a student of these tales of sex and betrayal. Paraphrasing Angleton, he notes, "The victims are duped because they are keyed to respond to certain information in nature. Insects do not have the ability to discriminate between what is real and what is mimicked." And neither, perhaps, does Epstein, whose love of intrigue, expressed in previous studies of the John Kennedy assassination and federal drug wars, primed him perfectly for Angleton's message: that ever since 1917, the Soviet security services have duped and weakened the West through a series of brilliant intelligence provocations culminating in Mikhail Gorbachev's *glasnost*. In this work, Epstein himself plays the role of fly, flitting from one Angleton associate to another, picking up tidbits and provocative stories that support their ultimately absurd world-view.

At its best, Epstein's book provides an indispensable popular discussion of intelligence deceptions and defenses. As he demonstrates with a host of pointed examples, spying consists of far more than simply recruiting military officers, politicians, or technicians to pass secrets. In its most effective form, it involves an elaborate process of placing "moles" within the enemy's intelligence bureaucracy, "dangling" false information in front of the enemy, often through the use of fake defectors, and then using the moles to report back on the success or failure of these provocations. This "feedback" loop permits fine-tuning of the disinformation for maximum effect.

In its narrowest application, this process can absolutely devastate the enemy's intelligence efforts, as Kim Philby managed to do from his high post in Britain's MI6. Angleton never forgave Philby for duping him—and dedicated the rest of his life to never again being taken in by a Soviet deception.

But this disinformation loop has much greater application, Epstein argues. The Soviets have used this process to deceive the CIA on everything from their technical advances in missile guidance to their economic strength. The Iranians used it to hoodwink the Reagan administration into breaking its arms embargo in order to support a mythical "moderate" faction in Tehran. In WWII, the Germans used it to lull Stalin into disregarding reports of an imminent Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, and the Allies used it to mislead the Germans as to the target of the D-Day invasion. "In the end," Epstein notes of such examples, "intelligence gath-

ering, rather than acting as a remedy for deception, became its unwitting ally."

No one outside the KGB understood these possibilities better than Angleton himself, with the help of a KGB defector named Anatoli Golitsyn. Golitsyn, who came over to the West in 1961, convinced Angleton that every major Western intelligence agency—including the CIA—had been infiltrated and deceived by the KGB. He further reported the existence of a sinister conspiracy on the part of an inner sanctum of KGB puppeteers to dupe the Soviet Union's enemies on a grand scale, using other unwitting members of the KGB, diplomatic corps, and deeply buried moles as conduits of disinformation. Angleton's faith in Golitsyn, already strong because of the defector's valuable information, soared when several other "defectors" popped up in his

wake to contradict his message, just as Golitsyn predicted they would. Analysis of their stories turned up suspicious discrepancies suggesting that they were not bona fide defectors but KGB plants designed to discredit Golitsyn and, most likely, protect Soviet moles within the Agency.

One of these phony defectors, Yuri Nosenko, endured two years of solitary confinement while CIA officials tried in vain to break him. (Nosenko

had a star role in Epstein's biography of Lee Harvey Oswald, *Legend*; he claimed, conveniently, to have reviewed Oswald's KGB file and attested that President Kennedy's assassin had never been recruited by Soviet intelligence.)

As the former deputy director of the CIA's Soviet Division, Tennent Bagley, told Epstein, "Nosenko was not just another case. It was at the heart of everything that happened at the CIA for a decade." The suspicion that he was a fake, that he and other phony defectors were protecting a KGB mole at the top of the CIA, paralyzed the Agency. Angleton's pursuit of moles would continue to tie the CIA up in knots until 1974, when CIA Director William Colby fired him for his destructive obsession. Indeed, as Epstein notes, "almost every intelligence official who had been involved with the Nosenko case had had his career wrecked." In the end, ironically, Nosenko was publicly exonerated by the CIA and his version of history officially accepted. For both Angleton and Epstein, the demise of the CIA's self-healing counterintelligence capability marked the ultimate victory of the KGB.

But Epstein explores only the conspiratorial byways that Angleton showed him. He never even considers another scenario that turns this story on its head: The KGB, having learned the ins and outs of Angleton's devious mind from Philby, who had a close relationship with the CIA's counterintelligence wizard, plans the most brilliant provocation of all time. They send over a high-level provocation agent who claims that every Western intelligence agency is full of moles. His leads are vague enough to point in many directions, causing innumerable, disruptive investigations. But the CIA has faith in him because several other phony defectors, sent by the KGB with the devious intent that they will be unmasked, try to discredit his account. In the end, the KGB succeeds in disgracing and ruining the heads of U.S., British, and French counterintelligence agencies, wiping out the CIA's entire Soviet Division, putting all CIA attempts to penetrate Soviet intelligence on hold, and even

prompting the FBI to break off its liaison with the CIA.

Those disasters really happened. This hypothetical scenario is no more far-fetched than some of Angleton's own, and it has just about as much circumstantial evidence to back it up.

David Martin, author of *Wilderness of Mirrors*, a brilliant study of the CIA's "mole wars," notes that for all Golitsyn's tantalizing allegations, he "produced only limited results." Even more embarrassing to Angleton, but ignored by Epstein, "the simple truth was that for all Golitsyn's alarms about moles and disinformation campaigns, Nosenko had provided the CIA with at least as many confirmed leads to Soviet penetrations as Golitsyn—if not more."

Yet Golitsyn in effect managed to kill all CIA spy operations against the Soviet Union. "David Murphy, head of the Soviet Bloc Division, sent a message to all CIA stations, directing them to pull back from their clandestine Soviet sources," according to Martin. "Since they had all been blown by the mole, any sources still cooperating with the CIA must be under KGB control, Murphy warned." (As a result, one fellow paranoid in the Soviet Bloc division accused Murphy himself of being a KGB agent.) No one would have been

better placed than Golitsyn to wreak such havoc on behalf of the KGB. The defector convinced Angleton to give him personnel files on dozens of CIA officers whom Golitsyn "suspected" of working for the KGB. "This is what I distrust," one CIA division head told Martin. "How the hell could anybody in his right mind give a KGB officer enough information [from CIA files] to allow him to make a valid analysis?"

In the end, even Angleton himself came under suspicion as a mole—for how could the KGB be certain that Golitsyn's message would be believed unless Angleton himself were under KGB control? One of Angleton's own operatives produced a massive, voluminous study demonstrating his boss' suspicious pattern of behavior. In this world of professional paranoids and real enemies, no one was immune. And hardly anyone survived.

If the worst consequence of all these elaborate deceptions had been the loss of a few careers and a few blown operations, the matter would be of mainly intellectual interest. But Epstein, pursuing leads offered by a few other Angletonians, suggests that the United States suffered much greater blows.

He alleges, for example, that the Soviets succeeded in tricking both U.S. spy satellites and missile telemetry analysts as to the accuracy and capability of their ICBMs. "It was a

mistake of such stunning magnitude that we are still reckoning with the consequences today," William Harris, an international lawyer at the RAND Corporation, told Epstein. (Harris also graces *Deception's dustjacket* with high praise for its conclusions: "This is an important book that reflects an epoch in United States counterintelligence operations and philosophy.")

Epstein is somewhat vague as to just when these deceptions succeeded in misleading the United States. At one point, he suggests the problem occurred in the late '50s when the Soviets were just developing their nuclear missiles. Later he implies that the deception carried on into the early '70s and succeeded for a five-year period, whose dates he doesn't give.

The goal, he says, was to make their missiles "appear to be inaccurate" and thus further the Soviet potential "for winning a Pearl Harbor type preemptive war."

No doubt the Soviets did everything in their power to cloak their missile data; a country that issues fake demographic statistics, publishes inaccurate internal maps, and rewrites its own history every few years would hardly give the CIA any breaks. But Epstein relies for his expansive claims of Soviet superiority on an alarmist fringe of the intelligence community led by Gen. George Keegan, former head of intelligence for the Strategic Air Command, which perpetually inflated the Soviet threat in order to justify more appropriations.

Keegan's briefings in the late '50s created the infamous "missile gap" (successor to the equally overblown "bomber gap") that Sen. John Kennedy pummeled Vice President Nixon with during the 1960 campaign. It was Keegan, according to Fred Kaplan's authoritative history *The Wizards of Armageddon*, who postulated the existence of a vast Soviet missile force hidden "in barn silos, medieval monasteries, mysterious-looking buildings out in the middle of nowhere." Experts at RAND, under contract to the Air Force, bought this line and passed it on, years later, to Epstein.

Trouble is, the missile gap didn't exist. When the United States finally scrutinized the Soviet Union with photo reconnaissance satellites in late 1960, it discovered a total of four, count 'em four, operational missile silos. Yet the United States had been building its own arsenal on the assumption that its adversary had as many as 100 silos and was planning a pre-emptive nuclear strike. In short, the greater deception was that perpetrated on U.S. policy makers by partisans within America's own intelligence community.

Even worse is the conclusion Epstein draws from his sources' accu-

sations of Soviet strategic deceptions. The Soviets never had a chance of pulling off a nuclear "Pearl Harbor." Even today, in the age of superaccurate missiles, America's dispersal of nuclear forces on land, sea, and air makes a knockout strike impossible. U.S. submarine forces remain invulnerable. If the Soviets launch their missiles against U.S. silos, which are

at least theoretically vulnerable, American bombers will have time to scramble and U.S. commanders always have the option of launching their own ICBMs on warning. Even the Reagan administration dropped its talk of a "window of vulnerability" after the Scowcroft Commission nailed it shut. Epstein nonetheless concludes that arms control is a dangerous fraud, an illusion he blames for the U.S. decision to withdraw from Vietnam "instead of attempting to isolate the Soviet bloc."

These technical controversies merely whet Epstein's appetite for more sensational charges that popular conceptions of Soviet economic weakness and of increasing openness under Gorbachev are simply products of disinformation, designed to erase the Western image of Soviet hostility, dismantle the U.S. alliance system, and produce an "accommodation" with the Soviet Union.

Not even Epstein buys Angleton's conviction, first peddled by his star defector Golitsyn, that the Sino-Soviet split was a monumental hoax. But

Epstein's suggestion that the Soviet economy is robust (tell that to people waiting in line for toilet paper) and that Gorbachev's actions (presumably including the withdrawal from Afghanistan) are all part of a master plan of world domination carries Angletonian logic to absurd lengths.

Epstein offers not a shred of real evidence to suggest that current changes in the Soviet Union are "a powerful instrument of deception" foisted (by whom?) not merely on the outside world but on millions of Soviet citizens as well. He recites several other flip-flops in past Soviet policy, from periods of relative liberalism to harsh repression, as if every shift were part of a master KGB plan unknown to the many Soviet leaders, heroes of the revolution, who lost their lives because no one bothered to let them in on the secret. Epstein's version of Soviet history is stunningly ahistorical.

Whatever one makes of his thesis, Epstein at least asks the reader to admire his open and candid use of sources. By naming names and

eschewing anonymous tipsters, Epstein claims to uphold the worthy principle that an "author's client is his readers, not his sources."

• Actually, one of his key sources, a "staffer on the Senate Intelligence Committee" who describes alleged Soviet missile deceptions, goes unnamed. More importantly, many of his allegations contain no source citation whatsoever. How does he know that former Czech President Eduard Benes was a Soviet agent? What is his source for alleging that "U.S. Communications Intelligence" confirmed Golitsyn's claim that the KGB reorganized itself in the late '50s to run long-term deception operations against the West? And why does he think—what both the Navy and CIA emphatically deny—that Soviet satellites "appear capable of spotting the signatures of U.S. submarines"?

Epstein's book is further marred by errors, some large, some small. They range from misspelling the name of former CIA officer Victor Marchetti and getting wrong the resignation date of CIA officer Ted Shackley to a

more serious blunder involving what CIA defector Edward Howard could have told the Soviets about one of their own traitors, Adolf Tolkachev. Sometimes his sloppiness is breathtaking, as when he speculates that Angleton's own counterintelligence staff developed information on KGB complicity with a North Korean terrorist operation in 1983—nine years after Angleton was forced out of the agency.

Epstein's book arguably amounts to a deception in its own right, an innocent one made possible by his negligence as a critical reporter. In this book he has become the channel for peddlers of a warped and ultimately bogus version of history. Like any good deception, Epstein's account of the KGB-CIA wars is mostly truthful and therefore plausible. Yes, deception is rampant in both intelligence and politics. Yes, it is a powerful tool of KGB operations. Yes, it can have a dramatic effect on the outcome of wars. But no, Americans do not see and understand the Soviet Union only as the KGB sees fit to let us. CP