

Dallasite debriefed Oswald after return, author says

By EARL GOLZ

After his return from Russia in 1962, Lee Harvey Oswald was debriefed for the Central Intelligence Agency without his knowledge by Dallas petroleum engineer George De Moreschildt, says the author of a new book about Oswald.

Edward J. Epstein, author of "Legend, the Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald," contends the Soviet Union "paid for his (Oswald's) defection" to that country in 1959 and sent him back to the United States on what "could be a very low level mission as opposed to some glamorous spying." The book is due for release April 14.

Oswald, if he did shoot President John F. Kennedy, did not do it with the knowledge of Soviet intelligence, Epstein contends, because "they wouldn't use a man who would trace back to them like this — someone who had lived in the Soviet Union for three years — as their triggerman."

The CIA had stated to the Warren Commission during the assassination investigation that it had not contacted Oswald or debriefed him upon his return to the United States after living almost three years in the Soviet Union.

EPSTEIN SAID he found this "inconceivable."

In an interview here this week, he asserted the CIA asked De Moreschildt to debrief Oswald "unwittingly" about his life in Russia because Oswald otherwise would have been too "hostile" in being quizzed directly by the agency.

Epstein interviewed De Moreschildt last March 29, three hours before De Moreschildt shot himself to death in his daughter's home near West Palm Beach, Fla.

De Moreschildt during the interview claimed J. Walter Moore, CIA head in Dallas who retired recently, "encouraged him to see Oswald," Epstein said.

"He (De Moreschildt) went further than that," Epstein said. "He said he wouldn't have seen Oswald without Moore's encouragement. He said after he had seen Oswald, Oswald gave him a long memo of what he had done in Russia."

DE MORENSCHILDT had testified to the Warren Commission he and his wife had befriended Oswald and his wife shortly after they moved to the Dallas-Fort Worth area from Russia, but he didn't say he had done it for the CIA.

Epstein speculated that "it's just a question of time" before Moore is called before the House Assassinations Committee to testify about the Oswald debriefing and his relationship with De Moreschildt.

Moore said Tuesday he "just had rather not comment. I have talked to the people in authority who have had an interest."

It was Moore who debriefed De Moreschildt after he was sent to Yugoslavia in 1957 to make a study under the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) program on Yugo-

slav oil and gas reserves. The two subsequently became good friends.

"I don't think it's only Moore," Epstein said. "It's finding out who initiated the security check on De Moreschildt."

DE MORENSCHILDT, who was having serious mental problems in the months before his suicide, had a long record of service with government intelligence agencies, including the CIA and other countries.

Epstein's book dwells at length on the defection of Yuri Nosenko, a high-ranking member of Russia's KGB security agency, to the United States in January 1964, two months after the assassination. Nosenko first contacted the CIA in June 1962, the same month Oswald returned from Russia.

He claimed after his defection he

had supervised Oswald's KGB file when he was in Russia. But like the CIA, the KGB had never contacted Oswald or debriefed him, Nosenko told intelligence agents in this country.

While a certain faction within the CIA was suspicious Nosenko had faked his defection so he could mislead the Warren Commission about Oswald's connections with Soviet intelligence, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover apparently bought his story, Epstein said. The Warren Commission believed Hoover.

Epstein maintains Oswald, as a Marine, "had been in contact with the Russians before he went to the Soviet Union in 1959."

"IN OTHER words, while he was in the service in Japan he originally got the idea of defecting," Epstein said. "And that certainly when he went to Russia he got a subsidy from Soviet intelligence. He told the American Embassy he was giving them (Russians) military secrets.

"I think when you give military secrets to the enemy and you get paid for it and you spend two and a half years there you could be called a spy."

A recent report that a former CIA finance officer testified before the House Assassinations Committee his colleagues told him Oswald was a secret operative for the CIA in Japan in the late 1950s "must be a lie," Epstein said.

Oswald's Marine medical record states, however, in September 1958 in Japan he had contacted the venereal disease gonorrhoea "in line of duty, not due to his own misconduct." No further explanation was given.

Epstein asserted Oswald's marriage to Marina, a Russian citizen, in 1961, "was an expedited marriage. It was not a marriage of love. That the Soviets asked her to marry him and that they assigned her a mission when she came to America."

He said he didn't believe "there was a love affair . . . although they might have fallen in love afterwards."

EPSTEIN ALSO said the "evidence



Edward J. Epstein . . . Soviets paid for Oswald's defection.

indicates that someone did drive Oswald away from the scene" of the shooting at Gen. Edwin Walker in his home on Turtle Creek Boulevard in April, 1963, but he saw no reason to suspect De Moreschildt as some investigators have.

The FBI, Epstein speculates, was suspicious Oswald was photographing the names of cities in Russia, Cuba and China while working on secret Army aerial map projects at Jaggars-Chiles-Stoval in Dallas in 1962. The Dallas firm did classified work for the Army Map Service and in the fall of 1962 was setting type for the names of Cuban cities during the missile crisis.

The FBI showed employees of the typesetting firm a small pouch Oswald used for carrying his small camera into the firm, Epstein said, but they never passed on their suspicions to the Warren Commission. He said the FBI apparently didn't turn over matters to the Warren Commission and they were not asked for.