

Ferretting Out the Moles

WILDERNESS OF MIRRORS

By David C. Martin,
Illustrated: 236 pp. New York: Harper & Row, \$12.50.

By EDWARD JAY EPSTEIN

WHEN he was Director of Central Intelligence, Richard Helms had a recurring nightmare: the discovery of a "mole" within the

top echelon of the C.I.A. Ever since John le Carré's spy thrillers, mole has been the term used to describe an enemy penetration agent planted in an intelligence service, who gradually burrows his way upward to a position of influence and access to classified information. An adversary power can easily advance the career of its mole by providing him with a series of stunning successes and, at the same time, block the career of his rivals by providing them with cases and information designed to make them look ridiculous. Once established in a high position, a mole can single-handedly paralyze an intelligence service by feeding back to its enemy information that identifies all of its secret sources and agents. During Mr. Helms's tenure, a mole was never positively identified—though there were occasional mole scares and constant suspicion.

David C. Martin, a Washington correspondent for Newsweek, now dramatically presents the mole nightmare in "Wilderness of Mirrors." Even though this fast-paced narrative is only 236 pages long, Mr. Martin manages to cast suspicion on more than a dozen high-ranking intelligence officers and top gov-

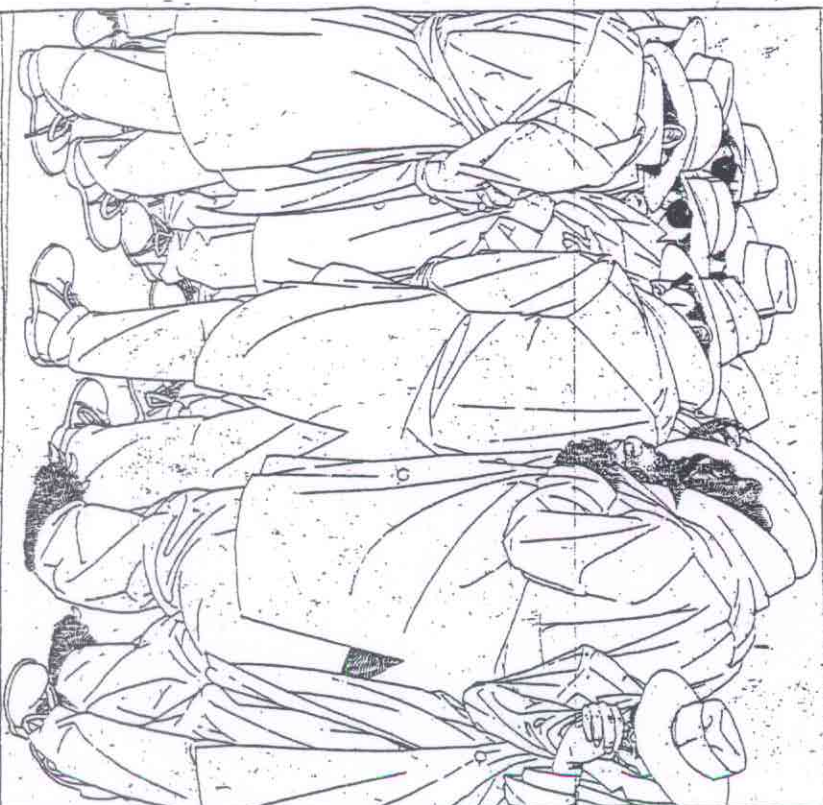
Edward Jay Epstein's most recent book is "Legend: The Secret World of Lee Harvey Oswald." He is currently writing a book on international decep-

ernment officials. The most sensational suspect mentioned is James Jesus Angleton, the very man who was in charge of counterintelligence in the C.I.A. for a quarter of a century. Since Mr. Angleton was responsible for ferretting out Soviet moles in the C.I.A., this charge—which Mr. Martin first raised in Newsweek two years ago—is particularly serious. Not only does Mr. Martin suggest that Mr. Angleton and his loyal staff may have been under Soviet control, but he also mentions in passing that the loyalty of the C.I.A.'s

Soviet Bloc Division, which is the very heart of C.I.A. agent-recruitment and operation against the Soviet Union, was also in doubt in the 1960's. He reports that David Murphy, the head of the Soviet Bloc Division, and Pete Bagley, the deputy head, were considered suspects, along with a number of staff officers who were investigated as possible moles.

Mr. Martin then suggests that various counterintelligence officers working for allied intelligence services could have been Soviet moles. He does not draw the line at intelligence officers; he also notes, almost casually, that defectors pointed to former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, British Prime Minister Harold Wilson and former Ambassador Averell Harriman as possible Soviet agents. None of these putative mole cases are discussed in more than a few throwaway lines, and the author himself makes it clear that he does not necessarily believe that the surfeit of suspects he mentions are bona fide moles. He claims, in the fashion of many Victorian authors writing about pornography, that he has mentioned this titillating roster of names only to expose the abuses of the counterintelligence system itself.

What is the origin of these extraordinary charges? "Wilderness of Mirrors" has no footnotes, source notes or documentation. The author explains in the foreword that he relied heavily on "retired intelligence officers" who "insisted upon anonymity" in return for telling him their secrets. He then justifies the lack of documentation by stating that "it is hard to say much about them without giving their identities away." Mr. Martin particularly seems to eschew published data. He notes: "The public record is . . . the most fragmentary of all, and in many cases is just plain wrong. The amount of misinformation that has appeared in print . . . is appalling." With these caveats, Mr. Martin leads his read-



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ers to believe that the undocumented portions of "Wilderness of Mirrors" draw on highly secret and therefore unidentifiable sources.

What the author really conceals, however, is the fact that many passages in the book have been paraphrased and most of the quotes have been borrowed almost verbatim from other books and published sources, without any mention of the original works. For example, in a paragraph at the end of chapter nine, Mr. Martin describes the reaction to Mr. Angleton's resignation from the C.I.A. in 1974. The entire passage is taken virtually word for word from pages 284-285 of David Atlee Phillips' book "The Night Watch." Other passages from Mr. Martin's book can be traced to other memoirs of former intelligence officers, such as William Colby's "Honorably Men: My Life in the CIA" and Philippe L. Thyraud de Vorjoll's "Lamia." Besides passages from books, Mr. Martin has also used, without mentioning the published work, the public testimony of numerous C.I.A. witnesses before Congressional committees.

One can only admire the skillful way in which Mr. Martin uses phrases such as "he recalled," "he recounted" and "he said" to create the impression that he himself elicited the story from the various characters in his book. For example, even though Pete Bagley told me that the author never interviewed or even met with him, Mr. Martin is able to state "Bagley thought," "Bagley would still remember," "Bagley continued," "Bagley asked" and at least a dozen other such phrases that lead the reader to believe that he actually was acquainted with Mr. Bagley. The effect of this reportorial legerdemain is stunning: fairly mundane statements in memoirs and Congressional testimony are transformed into what appears to be "investigative reporting."

The problem here is the total deception of readers as to the time, place and circumstances in which a statement was publicly made. The purpose of a footnote is to allow such a determination to be made by the reader. If, for example, Mr. Martin had provided a footnote

for the passage that he took from David Atlee Phillips' book, any reader could determine the context in which Mr. Angleton was described. In this case, Mr. Phillips stated in his book — though Mr. Martin deletes this particular characterization — that Mr. Angleton had "a better understanding of the Soviet intelligence operations than any other man in the West." This runs directly counter to Mr. Martin's depiction of Mr. Angleton as someone who was invariably wrong in his assessment of the K.G.B. Mr. Martin certainly has the right to omit any characterization that he disagrees with, but he does a disservice to his reader by hiding the book that he has quoted from — under the pretext of protecting his sources.

Although he has borrowed liberally from public sources, Mr. Martin has indeed interviewed a number of former intelligence officers. And while some of his named sources, such as Howard Roman, told me that Mr. Martin spiced up the information they provided with his own inventions, Mr. Martin did in fact have an extraordinary secret source. He appears throughout the book under an array of descriptions — sometimes he is a "counterintelligence officer," other times merely "another C.I.A. officer" or a "fellow officer."

This ubiquitous source must have been Clare Edward Petty, who is willing to tell his story to all comers. Mr. Petty joined Mr. Angleton's staff in 1966 and worked there as an analyst until July 1974, when he resigned and retired to Annapolis, Md., to pursue his hobby of sailing a small boat. (His other pastime is polishing glass eyes for the blind.) A few weeks before he left the agency, he walked into the office of William Nelson, the C.I.A.'s Deputy Director of Operations, and put on his desk a completely unsolicited report. When Mr. Nelson finally got to it, he was completely aghast. Mr. Petty had named the chief of his counterintelligence division, James Jesus Angleton, as his candidate for the Soviet agent inside the C.I.A.

This sensational allegation proceeded from Mr. Petty's frustration during his eight years of searching for the Soviet mole. He first presumed that the mole was in the Soviet Bloc Division, since the K.G.B. had successfully uncovered all of the C.I.A.-recruited agents in the Soviet Union during the 1960's. He worked on the theory

that the Soviets had dispatched defectors to the United States to advance the career of their mole, and specifically fastened his suspicion on the deputy director of the division, Pete Bagley, who was then attempting to force a Soviet defector named Yuri Nosenko to confess that he had been dispatched to the United States by the K.G.B. Mr. Petty suggested to anyone who would listen that Mr. Nosenko's true mission was to appear to break under Mr. Bagley's questioning and thereby help Mr. Bagley rise in the ranks to a higher position. Unfortunately for Mr. Petty, Mr. Nosenko did not follow his scenario and break.

Mr. Petty next suggested that another officer in counterintelligence who had served with him in Switzerland was a Soviet agent. Again, however, no one would take the case seriously. Instead, his superior complained that Mr. Petty was merely trying to derogate a rival in the service. Mr. Petty then turned his suspicious eye toward foreign intelligence services and wrote short reports suggesting that the head of the Canadian and French counterintelligence services were Soviet agents. Once again, his reports were not given weight, and he suspected that this was because both men were friends of Mr. Angleton's.

The final straw for Mr. Petty came in 1973. A former high-ranking Polish intelligence officer who had defected to the United States in 1961 now reported that Henry Kissinger might have been recruited by the Soviet Union in 1947, under the cryptonym of "Colonel Boar." The defector claimed that he had seen a document with Mr. Kissinger's name on it in Warsaw in 1966. The fact that the defector had waited some 12 years before revealing this tidbit — and that he also now claimed to be the Czar of Russia — led Mr. Angleton and most other people in counterintelligence to ignore the revelation. Not Mr. Petty, however. In scrutinizing the defector's story, Mr. Petty found a single detail about Mr. Kissinger's career, not in the public record, which the defector seemed to be aware of. So Mr. Petty recommended to Mr. Angleton that the F.B.I. be called in to investigate the Secretary of State.

When Mr. Angleton refused to countenance his suspicions, Mr. Petty began thinking that perhaps Mr. Angleton himself was a Soviet agent. On his own, Mr.

Petty began "overlaying one troublesome case on top of another," as he explained to me. He found that Mr. Angleton had also refused to investigate his suspicion that the counterintelligence chiefs of the French and Canadian services were Soviet moles. (Mr. Petty developed the theory that practically all Western counterintelligence chiefs were Soviet agents on the basis of the Kim Philby case in England and the Heinz Felfe case in Germany.) Moreover, he realized in his review that all the defectors that he had suspected of being double agents had been handled by Mr. Angleton and his staff. Suddenly, Mr. Petty found a way of explaining all the frustrations that had plagued his career: his superior was the premier mole among moles.

As with all his previous accusations, Mr. Petty found that his charge against Mr. Angleton was not immediately acted on. The C.I.A. did not even order a routine security check of Mr. Angleton. Instead, Mr. Petty's rambling report was filed away. Four years later, however, the retired Mr. Angleton became involved with his former C.I.A. colleagues in a hit-and-run battle of leaks, and one counterintelligence officer decided to leak to Newsweek the existence of the Petty report.

Little of Mr. Petty's own story actually appears in "Wilderness of Mirrors," since Mr. Martin prefers to protect his source rather than expose the motives

for these incredible charges. In presenting the mole story, Mr. Martin skillfully weaves into the Petty affair the threads of other counterintelligence adventures. The Philby conspiracy, the Berlin tunnel, code-breaking and even the assassination plots (taken from the report of the Church Committee) all become part of "Wilderness of Mirrors." With a few strategic embellishments, and a clear and highly charged narrative style, Mr. Martin even manages at times to transform Mr. Petty's frustrations in Mr. Angleton's office to moments of high drama.

In the end, however, Mr. Martin never even attempts to resolve the swirl of suspicions he deftly dishes out. Instead, he simply notes his feeling: "There was a certain poetic justice to be found in suspecting Angleton of being the KGB's mole. It was nothing more than he had done to others." With less poetic rationalization, he also dangles the names of a plethora of other suspected traitors. (How all this passed the scrutiny of Harper & Row's libel lawyers is another question.) He casts a pox on everyone's house, at least in American, British, French, Canadian and German intelligence; he has oddly little to say about the K.G.B. Mr. Martin concludes that the logic of counterintelligence, as personified mainly by Mr. Angleton, is a "wilderness of mirrors" — a phrase he borrowed from Mr. Angleton. ■