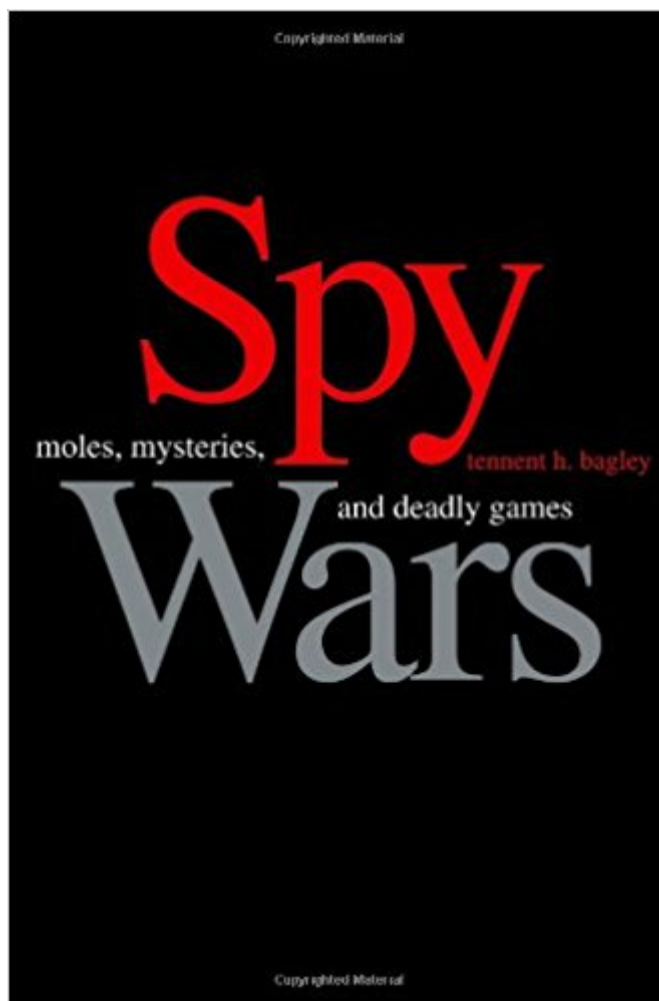


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Spy Wars: Moles, Mysteries, And Deadly Games



Synopsis

Chosen by William Safire in the New York Times to be the publishing sleeper-seller of the year for 2007. In this rapid-paced book, a former CIA chief of Soviet bloc counterintelligence breaks open the mysterious case of KGB officer Yuri Nosenko's 1964 defection to the United States. Still a highly controversial chapter in the history of Cold War espionage, the Nosenko affair has inspired debate for more than forty years: was Nosenko a bona fide defector with the real information about Lee Harvey Oswald's stay in Soviet Russia, or was he a KGB loyalist, engaged in a complex game of deception? As supervisor of CIA operations against the KGB at the time, Tennent H. Bagley directly handled Nosenko's case. This insider knowledge, combined with information gleaned from dozens of interviews with former KGB adversaries, places Bagley in a uniquely authoritative position. He guides the reader step by step through the complicated operations surrounding the Nosenko affair and shatters the comfortable version of events the CIA has presented to the public. Bagley unveils not only the KGB's history of merciless and bloody betrayals but also the existence of undiscovered traitors in the American camp. Shining new light on the CIA-KGB spy wars, he invites deeper thinking about the history of espionage and its implications for the intelligence community today.

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Customer Reviews

Significant Seven, May 2007: Utterly compelling from page one, Tennent H. Bagley's *Spy Wars* documents the strange case of Yuri Nosenko, a KGB agent who approached the CIA in the early 1960s (apparently) ready to divulge a treasure trove of secrets, including information on Soviet

intelligence operations, KGB surveillance tactics, and even Lee Harvey Oswald's time in Russia. But was Nosenko a source of legitimate information, or a KGB loyalist sent to misdirect CIA efforts? It's a controversial question to this day, but one that Bagley, as a scion of a storied Navy family and then supervisor of the CIA's operations against the KGB, is uniquely qualified to dissect. Along the way, he vividly recounts the chess match between the rival intelligence agencies during the opening salvos of the Cold War, and it's as cloak-and-dagger as any LeCarre fan could hope--double-agents, miniature cameras hidden behind neckties, microfilm, and other trappings of the spy game abound in this fascinating and fast-paced real-life thriller. --Jon Foro

Bagley, who oversaw the CIA's operations against the KGB in the 1960s, takes us deep inside the cold war spy game. He focuses on a notorious case, one he was intimately familiar with: Yuri Nosenko, the KGB officer who approached the Americans in May 1962, offering to divulge secrets to the CIA. Over the next few years, Nosenko supplied the U.S. with plenty of information, including some interesting tidbits concerning Lee Harvey Oswald's time in the Soviet Union. But Bagley, who directly supervised the Nosenko case, eventually became suspicious of the Russian agent and began to suspect that Nosenko, rather than a turncoat, was a KGB plant, spying on the Americans in the guise of a traitor (the debate rages to this day). Bagley doesn't pull any punches here, and readers expecting the usual KGB-as-villain, CIA-as-hero story are in for a whole lot of surprises: Bagley reveals that the good guys were just as duplicitous, traitorous, and nasty as the villains. The spy game has never seemed quite so dirty nor the CIA so villainous. David Pitt Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

The main thrust of this book is to analyze the bona fides of Yuri Nosenko, possibly the most famous Soviet KGB defector in the long history of the CIA-KGB conflict. Nosenko first appeared as a "walk in" who just wanted to give information to the CIA in exchange for modest amounts of money. After the Kennedy assassination, Nosenko defected permanently, and claimed that he had first-hand information concerning Oswald, and that Oswald was not, in any way, shape or form, a Soviet agent. Given the fact that Lee Harvey Oswald, JFK's assassin, had the unusual distinction of being an American citizen who had defected to the USSR and then returned, there were suspicions in that direction. Controversy raged in the CIA for decades as to whether Nosenko was an authentic defector or a CIA disinformation agent. Well-documented books on both sides of this subject abound. James Jesus Angleton, the CIA's long serving Director of Counter-Intelligence, together with this book's author "Pete" Bagley, was always convinced that Nosenko was under KGB orders

and control. Others chose to believe that Nosenko was a genuine defector. The thesis of this piece is that Nosenko was a disinformation agent, hastily prepared by Moscow in order to deflect suspicion from the Soviet Union concerning Oswald's motives in the Kennedy assassination. The author is extremely persuasive, and writes with authority and conviction. I have read widely on this subject, and in my opinion this piece is the definitive work on the subject of Nosenko. There is so much detail here that the casual reader, myself included, has trouble following all the threads of the author's thought. In fact, this piece is really aimed more at CIA insiders than the general public. I came away completely convinced that Bagley was correct and that Nosenko was a disinformation agent. (To be fair I had already reached that conclusion which I derived from other readings.) Author Bagley goes into considerable detail to describe the KGB's main approach to espionage, which it terms frankly to be "aggressive" tradecraft. Put simply, the KGB is not content to infiltrate a target country and steal its secrets. It seeks to insert agents within the target country's own intelligence service in order to control the foreign agency as well as to protect the KGB by destroying the target agency's counterespionage apparatus. Further, the Soviets (now the Russian SVR) will produce false defectors to provide carefully tailored disinformation to divert attention away from authentic KGB/SVR moles. This is, in fact, how Aldrich Ames and Robert Hanssen, two arch-traitors within the CIA and FBI respectively, were able to operate for decades, doing incalculable damage to American security. I deprived this one of five stars due to its chaotic and confusing organization. However, the writing in this book is quite good, and the subject matter is rivetting. If you are interested in the CIA-KGB cold war, this one is for you. Recommended. RJB.

Just finished this book today. I would give it 5 stars but for the occasionally difficult presentation - note to author: add a series of timelines with people/ops in any future edition. The bottom line is this - if you take the author at his word concerning the interviews and documents he was involved in, as well as those of others, there is no way one can see Nosenko as anything but a false defector. However, the question in my mind is why they would willingly send someone so blatantly unprepared - certainly they thought better of CIA than that? I have to wonder if the actual decision to 'defect' was in fact Nosenko's - he was a drunk and womanizer and going nowhere fast at KGB. His 1962 Geneva trip was probably a real KGB operation, but the subsequent trip could have seen Nosenko go off reservation figuring he had a ticket to a better life (ultimately) in the US if he defected rather than work in place as a 'double' as per KGB orders. This would have put KGB in quite the difficult situation. Anyone interested in intelligence operations, especially those of the cold war period should read this book. We can only hope now that Nosenko is dead that the CIA will

release *all* the files, at least those that were not destroyed in the late 1960s.

This is an intriguing behind-the-scenes look at what the title promises. But there is a deeper lesson: the largely Keystone-Cop incompetence in our intelligence battles with the Soviets, and the snow blindness of persons who should know better. This snow blindness also explains why we were caught flat-footed by the 9-11 tragedy, and the subsequent inability to fix the very real blame--beyond the cliché of "institutional problems

Excellent first half or 2/3rds. But the author seems to have an axe to grind, so the last 1/3 seemed to go over the same points again and again. This is not to say that the author isn't correct--just that the narrative falls apart near the end. Still it's such a great glimpse into cold war spying, and the politics of the CIA, that it's worth a read. Could even be a good movie--with a good editor's help.

Interesting book

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