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Exposing A Lie

With the two superpowers approaching cold war, the Soviets are waging a disinformation-campaign that has been curiously immune from political and media attention. Considering that its recent victims include U.N. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick, famed foreign operative Irving Brown of the AFL-CIO and numerous American diplomats abroad, this indifference is damaging to the West, and feeds the rising tide of Soviet deceit.

A confidential letter from a Jewish emigrant who miraculously escaped the death sentence of a Bulgarian court may end that indifference. Now an Israeli citizen, Dr. Henry Spetter wrote a letter on Aug. 31 letter to Zbigniew Brzezinski, Jimmy Carter's national security adviser, that closes the circle on an ugly series of events. It also exposes exactly how the wheels of Soviet disinformation turn, crushing innocent targets to create a false picture of Soviet purity.

Writing from Tel Aviv, where he is an economic consultant, Spetter said that he had read a recent article in Izvestia, the Soviet government's newspaper, under the head: "The 'Bulgarian Trace' of Zbigniew Brzezinski." The article alleged that during a visit to Sofia as a guest of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences in the early 1960s, Brzezinski "contacted a Bulgarian citizen with the nickname 'Andrew' whom he instructed to collect information on behalf of the CIA."

"Since I am the person [Andrew] in question," Spetter wrote, the "following facts" should be understood: that on one occasion, some 20 years ago, he had been asked to drive Brzezinski in Sofia from the academy to his hotel—because he could speak English; that "this was my only meeting" with Brzezinski; that, as a result of the brief encounter, he had been arrested by the Bulgarian secret police in 1973 and tortured to "confess" his recruitment 10 years earlier by Brzezinski, who was then an occasional consultant to the State Department.

Spetter was sentenced to death by a Bulgarian court, then released from the trumped-up charges and allowed to emigrate to Israel in the summer of 1974. There the matter rested—until the assassination attempt on Pope John Paul II in 1981 and the ensuing allegations charging Bulgarian complicity in the shooting.

Only after those charges of a "Bulgarian connection" with the attempted assassination of the pope did Izvestia dredge up the old smear against Brzezinski, using Spetter as the foil. Both Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger had publicly raised questions about the Bulgarian connection and the complete control of Bulgarian intelligence by the Soviet KGB. One way to convince the world that neither the Bulgarians nor the Soviets had a hand in the shootout in St. Peter's Square was to portray Brzezinski as a longtime conspirator for the CIA inside Sofia.

The Soviet disinformation net is cast wide. Early this year a bogus speech reputedly made by Kirkpatrick was printed in far-left Indian newspapers. According to the speech, Kirkpatrick advocated a policy of "Balkanization" of India. Communist members used it against the United States in their speeches in the Indian parliament.

Irving Brown, for decades the top AFL-CIO operative abroad, was the victim last March of a forged letter carrying his signature and published in an Italian newspaper. The letter implicated Brown in the secret use of AFL-CIO money to finance the outlawed Solidarity movement in Poland through an Italian labor official known to be an agent of Bulgarian intelligence. The object was to stigmatize the United States and cleanse both KGB and Bulgarian intelligence services.

Spetter's dramatic rebuttal—"Since I am the person in question"—was an unusually swift knockdown of the false Izvestia charge against Brzezinski. But other Soviet disinformation, scattering poisoned seeds against the United States, flourishes undetected in a campaign that has become a prime policy instrument of Moscow, growing every day in boldness and intensity.