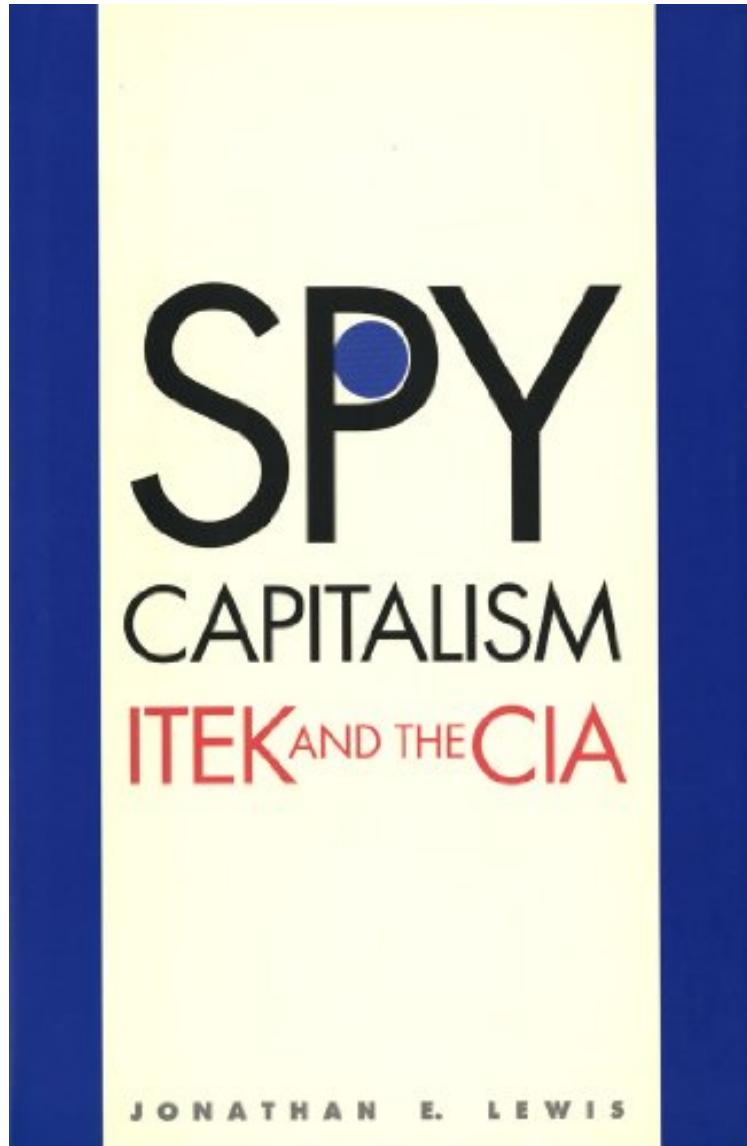


Spy Capitalism: ITEK and the CIA

Jonathan E. Lewis

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Jonathan E. Lewis : Spy Capitalism: ITEK and the CIA before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Spy Capitalism: ITEK and the CIA:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Valuable ContributionBy Tech HistorianSpy Capitalism is a valuable contribution for those of us who follow the history of technology and the development of overhead photo reconnaissance, as well as to the history of the Corona project. Until now, the cameras on Corona were described as designed by Itek, with no details about the company or its relationship to the CIA. This book fleshes out that company's very colorful history and its relationship with the intelligence community. While the book fills an important

gap in history, it does read at times like a Harvard Business School case study. The author sketches an intriguing outline of Richard Leghorn the founder of Itek, but never quite makes the leap to nailing his personality or his weaknesses - that of a visionary entrepreneur in a venture backed startup who was a terrible operating executive - other than just describing them in a narrative. Given 40 years of entrepreneurial hindsight, setting Richard Leghorn in the context of other entrepreneurs and their failure modes would have been helpful. Minor quibbles aside, all in all, a very worthwhile book for those interested in an important part of overhead photo reconnaissance history. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Highly recommended! By CustomerGreat book, highly recommend if you want to understand the root of business and the Cold War...could be foretelling of today's environment. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. American ingenuity at its best. By Mark in IdahoThe story of ITEK and the Corona Project is a classic story of American ingenuity. The distractions of the executives fortunately did not prevent the Corona Program from achieving vast amounts of photographic information of the Soviet Union and other potential enemies of the USA. Its only short coming is the lack of description of the many engineers who worked tirelessly to fulfill the needs of the Corona project. I now have a much better picture of the work my father and his friends did that they could never talk about. A great read.

What happens when the world of venture capital collides with the world of espionage? To find the answer, Jonathan Lewis takes us inside the executive suite at Itek Corporation during the Cold War years from 1957 to 1965. Itek was manufacturing the world's most sophisticated satellite reconnaissance cameras, and the information these cameras provided about Soviet missiles and military activity was critical to US security. So was Itek. This work examines in detail the challenges Itek faced not only as a contractor for the most important national security programme of the time - the CIA's Project CORONA spy satellite - but also as a start-up company competing with established industrial giants. In telling the story of Itek Corporation, Lewis seeks to fill important gaps in the history of American intelligence, business history and management studies. In addition, he addresses a variety of themes such as the compatibility of secrecy and capitalism, the struggle between profits and patriotism, and the workings of power and connections in America. Lewis explores how Itek executives contended with myriad business problems that were compounded by the need to raise capital without revealing the complete truth about the company's highly secret business. He also presents information about Laurance Rockefeller's venture capital operations and his role in financing Itek, based on the financier's private Itek papers. The volume is both a case study of a company at the heart of the American intelligence-industrial complex during the Cold War and an examination of the impact of the CIA on the capitalist system it was created to defend.