

Gibney Defends Penkovsky Papers

On two separate occasions the Soviet Government has attacked the authorship and the authenticity of *The Penkovsky Papers*. Both the Soviet Foreign Ministry and the press department of the Soviet Embassy in Washington have commented predictably.

Such terms as "anti-Soviet invention and slander," "provocative character," and "crude forgery" are commonplace in most efforts of the Soviet regime to discredit anyone who disagrees with it. It is typical of this approach that *The Washington Post* and other newspapers running the *Papers* were threatened by unspecified forms of Soviet retaliation, if publication continued.

Actually, there is no better evidence of the *Papers'* honesty, accuracy and authenticity than this loud, almost unprecedented protest from Moscow. As I said in the introduction to the *Papers*, the continuing power of state security apparatus over Soviet citizens is the greatest problem in the way of any real rapprochement between the West and the Russians.

Penkovsky felt this strongly himself, as the *Papers* reveal. The sharp protest of the Moscow leadership suggests that his arrow struck home.

A further charge of "forgery"—or partial forgery, if I interpret his article correctly—was made by Victor Zorza, of the *Manchester Guardian*. His comment relies on conjectures about what Penkovsky would or should have done. It abounds in phrases like "would hardly write," "it is curious that," "it is conceivable that," or "he is hardly likely to have produced."

This is understandable. I am sure that if Mr. Zorza had been in Col. Penkovsky's shoes, he would have behaved differently; and if a panel of Western Soviet experts had written the papers for Penkovsky, they would have undoubtedly written them differently. The fact is that Col. Penkovsky was very much his own man. He was a zealot and an individualist who lived with risk and whose desire to have his views known

drove him to take even more risks.

Mr. Zorza does have one point of factual criticism, which he interpreted incorrectly, however. He asserts that the account of Col. Penkovsky's movements which I gave in my introduction to the *Papers* and "the record of his trial" show that he was in London on Aug. 9, 1961, the day he found out about the proposed erection of the Berlin Wall. Mr. Zorza understandably questions why Penkovsky did not warn his Western contacts then about the building of the wall, since he had free access to them in London. From this he somehow concludes that *The Penkovsky Papers* are not genuine.

I owe him and other readers an apology for this confusion. In the process of editing, I incorrectly gave the date for Penkovsky's arrival in Moscow at that time as Aug. 10, 1961. Actually, it was Aug. 8—and I have since asked the publisher to correct this error in subsequent editions.

If Mr. Zorza rereads the Oct., 1963 transcript of Penkovsky's Soviet trial (page 24)—one of the principal sources of this book—he will discover that the correct date was Aug. 8. Hence, Penkovsky was in Moscow at the time he found out about the Berlin Wall—and unable to communicate immediately with the West.

Mr. Zorza points out that Penkovsky's writings were "often discursive, verbose, almost conversational." I am sure any expert on Russian-English translation would have his own pet way of rendering them into English—just as Mr. Deriabin, the translator, and I have ours. But this discursiveness hardly detracts from their authenticity.

On the contrary, I deliberately held all editing down to an absolute minimum. Neither Mr. Deriabin nor I felt we had the right to add any literary or factual embellishments to the words of a brave man, who wanted to get his own language out to the world.

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