

Soviet, Retaliating, Publicizes Case Against Woman Linked to C.I.A.ⁱ

By David K. Shipler; Special to The New York Times

- June 13, 1978

MOSCOW, June 12—The Government newspaper Izvestia said today that an American woman assigned to the United States Embassy here had been arrested last July as she planted a cache of spy equipment, including ampules of a lethal poison, on a bridge over the Moscow River.

The packet, containing miniature cameras, gold, Soviet currency, and written instructions, was hidden inside a hollowed-out stone for pickup later by a Soviet citizen working for the Central Intelligence Agency, the paper said.

Izvestia accused the American, Martha D. Peterson, of complicity in the poisoning and murder of an unidentified Soviet citizen. It said she was an agent of the C.I.A. but had been allowed to leave the Soviet Union because she had diplomatic immunity. An embassy spokesman said that Miss Peterson, who arrived in the fall of 1975, had worked for the embassy's economic section and then as a vice consul, before being expelled, but he declined further comment.

Izvestia said the publicity, in the form of an article with a picture of Miss Peterson in interrogation, behind a table covered with alleged spy paraphernalia, had been authorized because of "the new round of anti-Soviet hysteria" in the United States, specifically in response to the arrest in Woodbridge, N.J. of two Soviet employees of the United Nations caught in the act of picking up Navy documents on antisubmarine warfare. The two did not have diplomatic immunity and are in custody on \$2 million bail awaiting trial.

Izvestia identified several other American officials as C.I.A. agents, including Robert M. Fulton, who worked in the political section from July 1975 to July 1977, according to the embassy spokesman, and Jay K. Gruner and Serge Karpovich, who had been in Moscow on temporary duty in November 1975, the spokesman reported.

According to the Izvestia account. Miss Peterson drove toward the center of Moscow on a warm evening last July 15, parked her car in a dimly lighted area. changed from her white dress into a black jumper and slacks, locked her car and got into a city bus. After two stops she transferred to a streetcar, then went down into the subway, and only after that took a taxi, the paper said.

"What then?" Izvestia continued. "The vice consul left the taxi on the river embankment, walked along an alley near a tennis court, waited until no one was around who could somehow be alerted to her, and hurried to the bridge."

There, the paper said, she put her cache into a chink in the stone of the bridge. She was caught in the act and seized.

The American consul, Clifford H. Gross, was summoned to the interrogation, Izvestia said. He is shown in the published photograph seated next to the young woman.

A subsequent Soviet protest listed the cache, contained in a milk carton, as including “spy instructions, a miniature camera, various valuable articles, a large sum of Soviet currency, two ampules of deadly poison and special instructions for its use.”

Izvestia said that Miss Peterson had refused to say for whom the poison was destined, and that similar poison had been passed on by her previously to an unidentified Soviet agent.

“In the process of the investigation it has become clear that the poison conveyed to the spy earlier was used by him against an innocent person standing in the way of his criminal activity,” the paper said.

“The question arises.” Izvestia said,. “who will answer for the death of this person? Only the spy to whom Peterson gave the poison? Or the C.I.A.? And, if that is the case, who precisely?”

U.S. Embassy Used as a Cover

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON. June 12—Administration officials had no formal comment today on the Izvestia report, but they said privately that Miss Peterson, 33 years old, was a C.I.A. employee who had used the United States Embassy in Moscow as a cover.

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