



Editor Tatiana Trofimova on Martha Peterson's book *The Widow Spy*

Corpus

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Martha Peterson, Widow Spy

In the 1970s, Martha Peterson was sent to the USSR to obtain documents on the spot for American intelligence. In her book, she shares her impressions of the life of Soviet Moscow, reveals details of operations, tells the story of exposing their key informant codenamed Trigon and speaks candidly about what it is like to be a CIA agent and lead a double life.

We asked editor Tatiana Trofimova to tell us about the book.

"In fact, the central plot of "The Widows of The Spy" by Martha Peterson is already well known to the Russian reader. But it doesn't make it any less interesting, even the other way around. This is the story of uncovering CIA agent Alexander Ogorodnik codenamed *Trigon* (or, as it was previously thought, *Trianon*), who for many years worked in the Foreign Ministry and handed over valuable documents to CIA officers in Moscow. The plot

formed the basis of the novel by Julian Semenov, and then the eponymous television series "*TASS Is Authorized to Announce ...*".

Formally, Martha Peterson's "The Widow Spy " is a memoir, but as she herself says in the thank-you section, she tried to find a new form for her text. As a result, the book is more like a documentary novel, which when reading constantly raises the question: is it true?

And although Peterson describes in great detail each package and the circumstances of all the contacts with Trigon that she carried out in Moscow (after reading this book, everyone will be able to easily find in the city all the designated places and walk through the spy routes), the presence of the photos in the book still comes as a surprise.

Here is Martha's car (a classic Zhiguli), here is her Moscow driver's license, here she is having fun at an ambassadorial party among friends, but she sits with a studiedly indifferent expression at Lubyanka after being detained by KGB officers. It is the ordinary life of an unusual woman. When American newspapermen interviewed Martha's neighbors and acquaintances in the hope of finding out details, all as one said that they could not imagine that this sweet cheerful woman works in intelligence at the CIA. It must be said that when reading her memories this feeling of improbable also does not go away.

So if you plan to take on this book with an absolutely gripping plot in the manner of *The Americans* series, immediately be aware that it is worth keeping the whole evening free."