

On page 98 he writes: "As secretary of Agitprop, I took an active part in the fabrication of the net that was to catch Prieto ("la fabrication du filet qui devait emprisonner Prieto").

But the main citation is one meant to prove that he knew Orlov, and that Orlov met with him (Hernández) to give him orders. On page 74 Hernández describes the meeting. He writes: "Punctually, Orlov arrived at the rendezvous. . . . He was a man of some forty years, something like two meters tall, elegant, rather distinguished, speaking Spanish quite well." This zeal to give verisimilitude by an exact description betrays a forgery. Two meters would be six feet, six and three-quarters inches. But Alexander Orlov, whom I have interviewed a number of times, is more that a foot shorter than that, much shorter than Hernández, broad shouldered and somewhat corpulent. He is neither elegant nor distinguished looking, nor is his Spanish that good.

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TO THE EDITOR:

In your issue of September 1968 you publish the draft of a letter by George Kennan, and date it to the first months of 1945. The text patently dates from the *last* months of 1945. It mentions a Congressional group, which according to Kennan's memoirs visited Stalin in August. It mentions also the death of Shcherbakov in May, the dissolution of the Soviet State Defense Committee in September, and events at the London Conference of Foreign Ministers late in September.

It is not just this error which inspires me to write, but also my radical disagreement with Dr. Kennan's assessment of his document. He sees value only in its indication that in 1945 "some of us . . . had the impression that Stalin's position was not entirely what it appeared to be. . . ." Actually the document calls scholarly attention to significant but often forgotten historical phenomena. A glance, for instance, at the indices of the *New York Times*, the *London Times*, and the Western periodical literature of the autumn of 1945 will reveal a veritable flood of speculation emanating from Moscow concerning Stalin's political weakness, health, and approaching retirement. Research can suggest that Stalin himself prompted this speculation. It was he who attributed his late arrival at the Potsdam Conference to a "heart attack," and chatted with his numerous visitors about his approaching retirement. It was he who went dramatically on "vacation" just after the London Conference, while coincidentally relaxing the Soviet censorship on foreign press dispatches from Moscow. Stalin even assigned the ensuing speculation political significance in his interview with Harold Stassen in 1947. Hitherto, historians have had to beware of these circumstances, because the speculation came only from journalists and "naïve" Western fellow travelers. Dr. Kennan's document establishes that the experts also responded to some Stalin maneuvers in the autumn of 1945, which were very peculiar indeed. And, of course, the document also shows, as some of Kennan's other reports do not, that there were signs of many-facedness in the Soviet domestic and foreign policies of 1945; and that Stalin's face was far from the most terrible.

Dr. Kennan's document is valuable also because of an error it contains. Writing probably in October 1945, Dr. Kennan suggested that Zhdanov was not dangerous, because his job was in Leningrad, and because he held no important

position at the "scene of . . . palace intrigue." As it happens Zhdanov was transferred from his Leningrad posts in January 1945, and according to educated latter-day guesses replaced Shcherbakov as the CPSU(b) secretary responsible for foreign Communists and for cultural affairs. Though in 1944 and 1945 Zhdanov traveled conspicuously to Finland, where he was head of the Allied Control Commission, anyone who knew Zhdanov's prewar foreign policy and "cultural" record, and who read *Bol'shevik*, should have deduced by October 1945 that Zhdanov was squarely back in power in Moscow. Kennan's document reveals, thus, that even as knowing a Western authority as himself was not, in 1945, doing his Kremlinological homework. The document recalls, indeed, that Kremlinology did not exist in 1945, and that hardly anyone in the West could do the homework which today every specialist in Soviet affairs does as a matter of course.

To sum up, the value of the Kennan document lies in its recollection that the strange goings on in the Kremlin in 1945 were not given proper attention by the outside observers who have molded today's understanding of Soviet politics in the war and postwar era.

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Mr. Kennan has replied that he is sure most of what Mr. McCagg says is justified and that the date should have been 1946. He adds: "I should perhaps have explained, in publishing this fragment, that I had been absorbed for many months, at the time when this draft letter was written, with wartime administrative duties, and had not been engaged in what is now called Sovietology. What Mr. McCagg says about Zhdanov is probably true; but I do not recall that any announcement had been made of Zhdanov's transfer to the center. I believe we still thought of him as occupied primarily with Finland and the Leningrad military district."

TO THE EDITOR:

I read with great interest the well-documented article of Professor Robert C. Williams on "Changing Landmarks" (December 1968). However, certain bits of information seem to me not put in their right light. May I correct them? I hope Professor Williams will not object to this.

1. Writing "Vladimir Nabokov" now is misleading, when speaking about Nabokov Senior, the K.-D. leader. The "conservatives," as Professor Williams labels them, gathered not only around Vladimir Dmitrievich, but mainly around Iosif Vladimirovich Gessen, another leader of the K.-D. and former editor of *Rech*.

2. The "Eurasians" did not come at the same time as the "Scythians." They came at least three if not four years later.

3. *Rossia* and *Novaia Rossia* (in this order) were published in Russia and therefore cannot be labeled *Smena vekh* publications.

4. *Novyi mir* started publication in 1925. In 1922 there was no *Novyi mir*.

5. Aleksei Tolstoy was not a friend of Ehrenburg. They were not on speaking terms at that time. A year before (probably in 1921) at the time when A.T. was a hard-boiled "counterrevolutionary" and lived in Paris, Ehrenburg came to Paris with a Soviet passport, of course, and loyal to the Soviet government. A.T. denounced him to the French police as a dangerous Communist, and Ehrenburg was deported to Belgium. The facts can be found in Ehrenburg's memoirs, but A.T. is not mentioned. As far as I know, Ehrenburg never wrote about the subject