



Vicky Pelaez: Agent of Influence Posing as Journalist

On July 8, Vicky Pelaez disembarked from a charter jet flight in Vienna, Austria — accompanied by U.S. Marshals. Pelaez was the only non-Russian among the ten spies deported from the United States in a spy swap with Russia. A Peruvian journalist, Pelaez has been married to confessed Russian agent Mikhail Vasenkov for some 30 years.



She claims, however, that she only knew him as Juan Lazaro, supposedly an Uruguayan, and didn't realize that he is actually Russian. The Russian government of Dmitry Medvedev and Vladimir Putin reportedly has offered Pelaez and Lazaro/Vasenkov sanctuary and a pension, but some news stories report that the couple intend to take up residence in Peru.

Pelaez and Lazaro/Vasenkov moved from Peru to New York in the 1980s, living first in the Bronx, before moving to nearby Yonkers in 1995. They are referred to in the FBI's complaint as the "Yonkers Conspirators."

As mentioned here in an earlier article ([Russian Spy Case Shows Danger Of Amnesty for Illegal Aliens](#)), according to an investigation by a Peruvian newspaper, Pelaez came to the United States under the 1986 amnesty for illegal aliens. However, says the paper, she used false documents and false testimony to obtain her amnesty.

For most of her residence in the United States Pelaez has worked as a writer for *El Diario/La Prensa*, the Spanish-language New York City newspaper, a platform she used to establish her reputation for radical, anti-American, pro-Fidel Castro reporting and commentary. Lazaro/Vasenkov studied at the New School for Social Research in New York and taught briefly (political science) at Baruch College, part of The City University of New York. He also contributed a chapter on socialist transformations in Latin America and Cuba in *Women and Revolution: Global Expressions*, a book published in 1998 and re-released in 2009.

An Associated Press story by Jocelyn Noveck and Jim Fitzgerald ran in many newspapers and online news outlets sporting titles such as "A wife betrayed," suggesting that Pelaez claim to ignorance of her husband's nationality and spying career is credible.

That was the slant adopted by MSNBC, for instance, which titled its story on Pelaez, "Spy mystery: Was columnist a wife betrayed?" MSNBC leaned further in her favor by adding a subtitle that stated: "It's not clear what she knew about her husband's Russian origins."

Could Pelaez really not have known? It appears that some of Lazaro/Vasenkov's friends and colleagues questioned his Uruguayan cover story. The same Noveck/Fitzgerald AP story mentioned above, cites



Written by [William F. Jasper](#) on August 5, 2010

several examples, but MSNBC (and other outlets) left those important sections out of their published version. Here is part of the text discarded by MSNBC:

Delfina Prieto, who worked alongside Lazaro at the Peruvian magazine *Punto*, called him “a magnificent person, a great companion.” ... But she questioned his origin, as did others. “I would always think, ‘This guy has a European accent,’ ” she said.

Cesar Medrano, another photographer who knew the couple, agreed. “He said he was Uruguayan, but he had a European accent. He looked German.” Yet another colleague, Carlos Saavedra, said Lazaro never spoke about his past — “but we never asked.”

Was MSNBC censoring important information that might help its readers come to a different conclusion than the sympathetic one implied in the network’s title, subtitle, and story text? Or is this simply a case of sloppy editing? If it were the latter, one might expect that someone at MSNBC might have at least glanced at the FBI complaint for a follow-up story.

If a reporter or editor had bothered to do so they might have come across the testimony that a court-authorized aural surveillance of the couple’s Yonkers home recorded a conversation in which Lazaro/Vasenkov described his childhood in Russia to Pelaez. The complaint states:

On or about April 17, 2002, acting pursuant to a judicial order, law-enforcement agents intercepted aural communications taking place inside the Yonkers House. LAZARO was heard describing his childhood to VICKY PELAEZ, the defendant. In particular, LAZARO said: “we moved to Siberia ... as soon as the war started[.]”

The FBI document also provides testimony indicating that Pelaez actively engaged in spy activities along with her husband. It states:

On or about January 14, 2000, in a South American country, VICKY PELAEZ, the defendant, received a package containing money from a representative of the Russian government.

The FBI document further charged that the agency had monitored electronic clicking sounds at the Pelaez-Lazaro/Vasenkov Yonkers home that it identified as “the sounds of a radio transmission being received from Moscow Center. In addition, the aural surveillance indicated that, on or about May 6, 2003, JUAN LAZARO, the defendant, told VICKY PELAEZ, the defendant, that he was ‘receiving’ ‘radio’ ‘from over there.’”

As would be expected, far-left bloggers came to Pelaez’ defense, claiming she is being railroaded. A communist-backed [Committee to Defend Vicky Pelaez](#) has sprung up, proclaiming her innocence and claiming that the espionage charges are “political persecution based on the criticism that she made in her columns against the erroneous policies of the United States.” According to the Committee, Pelaez “is a serious, honest, professional journalist, loyal to the truth,” and she and her husband Lazaro/Vasenkov “are faithful fighters for truth.”

Castro Groupie

Pelaez has indeed written many columns attacking the United States and supporting its sworn enemies, but claims that she is a victim of “political persecution” are about as credible as the claims by her supporters that she is a champion of honesty and truth. And how credible are those claims? She is more a Castro groupie and propagandist than “professional journalist,” going so far as to place Fidel, the atheist mass murderer, next to Jesus Christ in her pantheon of gods and demigods.

“Fidel Castro is already immortal!” wrote Vicky Pelaez in the Castro regime’s house organ, *Granma*,



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back in 2006. She continued:

He is a man who inspired and demonstrated the fertile path of truth for other leaders!...

We had the moments of Christ, Mohammed, Confucius, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Newton, Pascal, Bolivar, Marti, Che Guevara, etc. They all left the scene, yet unlike us mere mortals, they remain immortal.... they were rebels like the very angels of God who did not resign themselves to a sad destiny of mere mortals but instead valiantly challenged the very heavens to steal its glory!

Fidel Castro Ruz belongs to that glorious group of rebels! With his towering intelligence, discipline, drive, and persistence he launched his heroic struggle and gained his people's support to fight for new and sovereign Cuba! But his fight is not over...!

(Credit goes to [Humberto Fontova and Babalublog.Com](#) for digging up that Pelaez column.)

In 2005 Pelaez wrote a column for *Granma*, the official newspaper of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party, attacking the U.S. prison system. Although some of her points are legitimate — and have been made also by conservatives and anti-communists — the whole point of her article, and the point of publishing it in Castro's press, was to bash the United States and capitalism. That particular Pelaez article was so highly regarded by Marxist-Leninists that it was reproduced in many communist publications, including *Political Affairs*, which for decades has been the official theoretical journal of the Communist Party, USA.

On May 8, 2010, Fidel Castro showed his approval of Vicky Pelaez' years of propagandizing on his behalf by [quoting extensively](#) (and approvingly) from her column during his weekly rant. (Another hat-tip to Humberto Fontova for the link). The Pelaez column that struck Castro's fancy on this occasion was one condemning Arizona for passage of S.B. 1070, an attempt to deal with the illegal migration crisis on the Arizona-Mexican border. Typical of communist argumentation, Pelaez and Castro try to cast the Arizona law as a racist attempt to enact Nazi-style legislation.

Fellow "Journalist" Agents: Duranty, Stone, Louis, Burchett

Is Vicky Pelaez a Russian agent? Since she elected to take the Obama administration's deal for a quick exit from the U.S., we won't have the benefit of a trial to view all of the evidence that might have been produced in court proceedings. However, based upon what is already available in the public record, it is difficult to see how any reasonable person could be disposed in favor of her improbable defense that she didn't even know Lazaro/ Vasenkov is a Russian.

The Kremlin has always put a premium on placing and recruiting agents in the western media. It's not difficult to see why; a journalist can greatly influence public opinion and public policy in favor of communist objectives. Some of them have accomplished far more than a division of the Red Army. Walter Duranty and his bosses at the *New York Times* were invaluable assets to Soviet dictator Stalin's, most infamously in their persistent cover-up of his mass-murder-by-famine in Ukraine. (See [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#).)

Liberal-left icon I.F. Stone is another celebrated "journalist" who has been [exposed as a KGB asset](#). This publications and others that recognized his role as a disinformation agent years — or even decades — earlier, were dismissed by the mainstream media (MSM) as "McCarthyites." Of course, none of those MSM voices offered apologies or *mea culpas* when the charges against Stone were proven true.

The same could be said for the MSM response to revelations that "journalists" [Victor Louis](#), Wilfred Burchett, and Oleg Tumanov were conscious agents for Moscow. But they represented just the tip of the



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proverbial ice berg.

According to a 1941 internal KGB report, twenty-two American journalists were then working as agents for Soviet intelligence. There is no good reason to believe that those numbers have decreased — and many reasons to believe they have greatly increased. And there are likely to be many that are more important and influential than Vicky Pelaez.

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*Photo: A combo of undated booking photos provided by U.S. Marshals on July 29, 2010 shows from top left, Tracey Lee Ann Foley whose real name is Elena Vavilova, **Vicky Pelaez**, and bottom, from left, Donald Howard Heathfield whose real name is Andrey Bezrukov and Juan Lazaro whose real name is Mikhail Vasenkov: AP Images*



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