

ARTICLE APPEARED

NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

ON PAGE

28

12 February 1984

Letters

The Pope and Agca

To the Editor:

Edward Jay Epstein's review of "The Plot to Kill the Pope" by Paul Henze and "The Time of the Assassins" by Claire Sterling (Jan. 15) struggles embarrassingly to poke holes in the evidence that the Bulgarian intelligence service and its K.G.B. masters were behind the plot to kill the Pope.

To compare the Texas Book Depository's control or lack thereof over Lee Harvey Oswald and the Darzhavna Sigurnost's control over Mehmet Ali Agca is laughable and unworthy of a man of Mr. Epstein's brilliance.

Mr. Epstein finds it significant that the C.I.A. has not turned up evidence supporting the Henze-Sterling thesis. One wonders how carefully he read Miss Sterling's book. She shows that the C.I.A., like some in the media, has shown far greater interest in trying to undermine the case than in trying to find evidence to support it. The reasons for this are murky, but perhaps there are those in the C.I.A. who share the view of the young Washington reporter who told Miss Sterling, "Even if it was true, you shouldn't have published it." The Italians say that there was an unusual burst of coded communications between the Bulgarian Embassy in Rome and Sofia immediately following the attack on the Pope. Perhaps the National Security Agency has decoded those messages, and perhaps not. They aren't saying.

REED IRVINE

Chairman of the board,
Accuracy in Media, Inc.
Washington