

A Newsmen Left Out in the Cold

A Commentary

By Nicholas von Hoffman

Why can't Sam Jaffe hold a job in the news business? Is he a Russian spy or is he being blacklisted? "I keep applying for jobs," says the former CBS and ABC correspondent. "Everybody's happy and then something happens and suddenly they're turned off."

Jaffe has had the misfortune of being called a KGB agent by one Yuri Ivanovich Nosenko, a Russian secret police official who defected to our side some years ago. Or did he? Nosenko, who is the principal and sole source for the CIA's contention that Lee Harvey Oswald wasn't a Red hit man, is himself suspected of being a phony defector sent westward to cause chaos in our spook apparatus. Tovarich Nosenko, thanks to the CIA, is presently living a disguised life somewhere in the U.S.A. and is thus not readily available for an interview. (For more on this see the March 28, 1976, article in the Los Angeles Times by Jack Nelson.)

Jaffe's association with all this murkiness goes back to the early '50s when he got out of the Marine Corps and went to work with the U.N. as a news writer. "I found the Russians fascinating," he says, and started to pal around with some of them, an activity that attracts FBI agents. "The FBI made contact with me and said you're seeing a lot of Russians and we'd like you to tell us what they say. I cooperated with them. I did so not for patriotism, not for money, but basically to protect my tail."

Somewhat later, when he was apply-

ing for a job as a news writer for CBS in New York, Jaffe says he was approached by a chap named Jerry Rubin (not the famous Vietnam era Yippie) who identified himself as an overt CIA agent and produced credentials to prove it. This Mr. Rubin said he knew that Jaffe had applied for the CBS job and that he was in a position to inform him he would get the job and a prestigious assignment as Moscow correspondent if Jaffe would agree to sing along with the C I and

ers, the American spy pilot shot down over Russia.

From here on the narrative is so complicated it needs a John Le Carre to tell it. Suffice it to say there were many suspicious comings and goings and coincidences, all of which are beyond Jaffe's fathoming since he says he didn't cooperate. Subsequently, the FBI and the CIA have said that they have no evidence the man was ever a spy.

Whether Jaffe did or didn't, we know from the Church Committee report that many in the clergy, in the foundations, in the universities and in the news business, probably from reporters up to corporate executives, did.

In 1964, I was approached by Roy Moore, the head of the FBI in Mississippi, to help the G-men smash the Ku Klux Klan. I would have done it too, if it hadn't been for my boss, the late Larry Fanning, editor of The Chicago Daily News, who explained to me my job was to be a journalist, not a cop and not an avenging angel.

But in the news business, at least, the knowledge that some of us were spies, spooks and snitches has poisoned the atmosphere and filled our professional relations with sordid rumor and ignoble suspicion.

The Russians are the only winners unless the air is cleared. So, since the government isn't going to release the names, let everybody step forward and volunteer what they did. Let there be no reprisals, no firings; let Jaffe earn his living.

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Poster

A. Jaffe says he turned the chap down and had to content himself with the lower-status New York job.

This, by the by, isn't the first time someone has popped up alleging facts that would lead one to suspect top-level CBS executives have had some sort of working arrangement with powers and principalities of spookdom. But Jaffe's enmeshment really seems to have begun when he did get his Moscow assignment, not with CBS but with ABC. Again, he says he didn't cooperate when invited to lunch at a small New York Italian restaurant with a CIA person he says was named Jay Reeves. They were joined by another man, whose name Jaffe can't recall—this was back in 1960—a person who was introduced as a CIA psychologist from the center of spookology in Washington. This man said he wanted some kind of help from Jaffe in regard to the forthcoming Moscow trial of Gary Francis Pow-