

Disputing the Source of a 'Spy' Story ^{Post} 12/21/77

Apropos the Rowland Evans and Robert-Novak column ["The CIA: Harassing the Spy Who Never Was," op-ed, Dec. 23]: Robert Novak telephoned me early last week in the evening to ask me, hastily, about "the sources" of a story I wrote for The New York Times concerning Elias Demetracopoulos. I told him that I had talked to State Department and Central Intelligence officials, among others. He writes: "Binder told us he received CIA material on Demetracopoulos years ago in Athens." Wrong.

Not only untrue but ludicrous. I didn't know anyone from CIA when I was a correspondent in the Balkans (1963-67), including Greece, and I never received any information in those years or long after from the CIA on Elias Demetracopoulos or anyone else.

I told Mr. Novak that I had been aware of Mr. Demetracopoulos in the early 1960s, and anybody who paid attention to Greek affairs would have been aware of him. He was very prominent.

Letters should be signed and must include the writer's home address and home and business telephone numbers. Because of space limitations, those published are subject to abridgment. Although we are unable to acknowledge those letters we cannot publish, we appreciate the interest and value the views of those who take the time to send us their comments. Letters intended for publication should be addressed to Letters to the Editor.

Ludicrous, too, for Mr. Novak to suggest that Mr. Demetracopoulos is a "relatively obscure foreign national" or "an insignificant expatriate" after he himself had devoted more than a dozen of his nationally circulated columns to the life and times of Elias Demetracopoulos. You could look it up, Bob, also in The Washington Post, over the last 10 years.

The fact is that Elias Demetracopoulos has played a large and, I think, strange, role in Greek-American relations—by his own testimony—for many years. I would be inclined to hail a congressional, or any other, inquiry, concerning him, with or without testimony by Robert Novak. Then, maybe, we would see whose evidence refutes whose.

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Evans and Novak reply: *Our notes reflect that when he was asked if he had received information from the CIA, Mr. Binder first said he had originally received information from government sources—State Department and CIA—in Athens. Mr. Binder might have misspoke himself on the telephone. However, there is no doubt, and Mr. Binder does not deny, that he told us, as he did, that he currently has received information about Mr. Demetracopoulos from the CIA. That fact, together with our contention that the CIA information is erroneous, is the whole point of our column. It is not addressed in Mr. Binder's letter.*