

Why One Newsmen Cooperated With the C.I.A.

To the Editor:

In the Dec. 27 article of its series about the C.I.A. and the press The New York Times spoke of my cooperation with the C.I.A. but unfortunately failed to include the reason for that cooperation.

At the time I had made an overture to Wilfred Burchett on behalf of the C.I.A., I was the Korean bureau chief of International News Service, I took seriously my responsibility and loyalty to my news staff, who were more than colleagues; we had become close friends. Moreover, I.N.S. had suffered four correspondents killed during the Korean War and two captured.

One of the two captives, Donald M. Dixon, had been taken prisoner in March 1953 while on a journey from Hong Kong to Macao in a sailing yacht owned by Richard M. Applegate, a Hong Kong-based correspondent for N.B.C. News, a former war correspondent in Korea for United Press and also a good friend. The yacht had been intercepted by a Chinese patrol boat, and all on board taken into custody and, as later learned, imprisoned in Canton.

During the days, weeks and months following their capture, I unsuccessfully tried to learn about my friends from Burchett and other newsmen covering the Panmunjom truce talks from the Communist side. I also had received a number of anguished letters from Dixon's parents pleading with me to continue my efforts to learn if he were still alive.

I was not "persuaded" by the C.I.A. to cooperate. On the contrary, I saw an opportunity to obtain information about my friends and, in the unlikely event Burchett did defect, get first crack at what would have been a major story. I had set these conditions in exchange for my cooperation.

Given a similar set of circumstances today, I again would cooperate with the C.I.A. I place a high value on friendship—a point I emphasized repeatedly to your reporter.

EDWARD HYMOFF
Falls Church, Va., Dec. 29, 1977

A News Agency Responds

To the Editor:

In the Dec. 25, 1977, issue The New York Times, referring to the original publication of the famous Khrushchev report in June 1956, states that "another text containing precisely 34 paragraphs of material on future Soviet foreign policy was put out by the

C.I.A. over several other channels around the world, including the Italian news agency Ansa."

This assertion is not supported by the facts. A careful examination of the Ansa archives for the 4th of June, 1956, clearly shows: (1) that on that occasion Ansa did not put out a version of its own, but only circulated to its clients a short summary distributed by the French agency Agence France-Presse and later a longer summary distributed by United Press. Both texts clearly indicated the U.S. State Department as the source of the document; (2) not even one paragraph in the A.F.P. and U.P. texts circulated by Ansa is devoted to "future Soviet foreign policy," which, according to your paper, was the subject of the paragraphs manipulated by the C.I.A.

A photocopy of all relevant material in our archives was sent to Mr. Crewdson, immediately after the publication of your article. He will thus be able personally to check the truth of the above-listed facts.

It can only be regretted that the authors of your article failed to check the facts with us before publication, to avoid giving out misinformation about our agency.

SERGIO LEPRI
Executive Editor, Ansa News Agency
Rome, Jan. 4, 1978

The Times welcomes letters from readers. Letters for publication must include the writer's name, address and telephone number. Because of the large volume of mail received, we regret that we are unable to acknowledge or to return unpublished letters.