

C.I.A. Asked Newsman to Be Informant

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 22—The Central Intelligence Agency once approached an American newsman with a request that he keep the agency advised on "anything interesting" he encountered in the course of his reporting, a C.I.A. spokesman said today.

But the spokesman denied an assertion by the newsman, Sam A. Jaffe, that the C.I.A. had offered to arrange for him to be hired by the Columbia Broadcasting System and assigned to Moscow if he would agree to "undertake certain assignments" for the agency there.

The spokesman, who did not want to be identified, maintained that the approach to Mr. Jaffe, by an officer of the C.I.A.'s Domestic Contacts Division, had been made in 1956 or 1957 after the agency learned that he was scheduled to visit Peking.

The message conveyed by the C.I.A. officer, the spokesman said, was that if Mr. Jaffe "saw anything interesting where he was going, he might like to report back to his Government."

He added that the Domestic Contacts Division was a "perfectly overt" side of the agency's operations that, over the years, had "approached a lot of guys," possibly including other reporters, to solicit in advance their impressions of areas they were about to visit.

Official Identified

Mr. Jaffe said in a telephone interview that the C.I.A. man, who he said identified himself as Jerry Rubin, visited him in Atherton, Calif., in late 1955, after he had applied for a job with CBS but before the network accepted his application.

The C.I.A. spokesman confirmed that Mr. Rubin was the agency official who had visited Mr. Jaffe, but insisted that the visit had occurred a year or two later, and in connection with the Peking trip.

Mr. Jaffe termed the spokesman's contention "an absolute lie," and said that Mr. Rubin had told him during the Atherton visit that he was "not only going to join CBS, you're

going to Moscow if you're willing to undertake certain assignments for us."

He declined Mr. Rubin's offer, he said, and was nevertheless hired by CBS and assigned to the network's New York office, where he worked on the assignment desk and covered the United Nations for the next five years.

In 1956, Mr. Jaffe recalled in the interview today, he and 14 other American journalists were invited to Peking by the Chinese Government, an invitation that he initially accepted and then declined after the Eisenhower Administration publicly urged the 15 journalists not to make the trip.

Mr. Jaffe said that he never saw Mr. Rubin after joining CBS and was not approached by anyone from the C.I.A. in connection with his prospective visit to Peking.

Informant for F.B.I.

Mr. Jaffe left CBS in 1961 to join the American Broadcasting Company, for which he reported from Moscow and Hong Kong until resigning in 1969. The New York Times reported today that Mr. Jaffe had maintained an informant relationship with the Federal Bureau of Investigation during that period, voluntarily reporting to the bureau on Soviet activities here and abroad.

Mr. Jaffe said that he had been unable to find a full-time job in journalism since then, a difficulty that he attributes to an allegation made by Yuri Nosenko, a Soviet intelligence officer who defected to the United States in 1964, that Mr. Jaffe had himself been a Soviet intelligence operative.

However, William E. Colby,

the Director of Central Intelligence, wrote to Mr. Jaffe late last year with the assurance that the C.I.A. had "no evidence that you have ever been an agent of the Soviet or other foreign intelligence services."

Although Mr. Jaffe has confirmed his previous status as an informant for the F.B.I., he has maintained that he never worked for either Soviet or American intelligence while stationed overseas.

He did question, however, whether some of his activities while with ABC in Moscow might have been financed, without his knowledge, by the C.I.A.

Before leaving for Moscow in 1961, Mr. Jaffe recalled, he was asked by ABC to open an account at the Chase Manhattan Bank in New York City that would be used to transfer expense money from the network to a Soviet bank.

Mr. Jaffe did open the account, and produced a final statement showing that when he was recalled from Moscow in 1965, the account contained a balance of \$1,811.27—funds that, he assumed, had been paid into the account by ABC during the previous three years.

But he said that when he discussed the matter with network auditors in New York, they expressed no knowledge of the account and could find no record of having paid money into it.

William Sheehan, the president of ABC News, said today that he could offer no explanation for the mystery, except to say that the early 1960's were "a very loose period in terms of accounting methods" at ABC.