

FIGURE IN INQUIRY: A MAN OF MYSTERY

Liberal Hopeful in 1970 Now
on G.O.P. Albany Payroll

By ALFONSO A. NARVAEZ

Harold J. Relkin, the key figure in the Attorney General's inquiry into possible illicit campaign practices by Republicans in the state, continues to mystify investigators who have been looking into the case for almost four months.

While he currently appears on the Republican Assembly payroll as a research assistant for "special projects" at a salary of \$146 every two weeks and has worked in that capacity as a session employe since 1971, Republican leaders say that they do not know him and are unwilling to disclose who hired him.

And, although Mr. Relkin says he has been a Liberal party county committeeman from Queens, party leaders there deny this and say they do not know who he is and how he came to be working for the Republicans.

His uncle, Charles D. Breitel, associate judge of the State Court of Appeals, says that he knows little about his recent activities and expressed surprise that he had any connection with politics.

Maintains Silence

An investigator for the Attorney General's office said yesterday that the 46-year-old Mr. Relkin, had refused to answer any questions about his background or about the alleged plot to siphon off liberal votes in marginal Assembly districts so that Republican candidates would win. Mr. Relkin would not even acknowledge his identity, the investigator said.

Neighbors in the vicinity of his small, modest, one-family home in Scotch Plains, N. J., know little of him or his activities. They report that he stays pretty much to himself and that he is not seen during regular commuter hours.

Where the works also continues to be a mystery. An investigator for the Attorney General's office said yesterday that Mr. Relkin was employed by the New Jersey State Tax Commission as an accountant. But a check with Jersey officials disclosed that an H. L. Relkin had been employed at the Division of Taxation and had left "more than a year ago."

Data Uncovered

What is known about Mr. Relkin is that he was born on Jan. 5, 1927, probably in Detroit, and later lived at 65-41 Saunders Street in Rego Park, Queens. In 1967 he registered to vote but never voted and was dropped from the rolls. Then, in 1970 he registered, as a Liberal. But again he did not vote and in April of this year was dropped from the rolls.

He reportedly moved to Scotch Plains about four years ago, where he lives with his wife, Vera, at 1198 Maple Hill Road.

On Thursday, Mr. Relkin appeared at the Attorney General's office at 80 Centre Street accompanied by Charles S. Webb, legislative counsel to As-

Research Aid Sought

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sembly Speaker Perry B. Duryea, Henry A. Mund Jr., Mr. Duryea's executive assistant, and Philip J. Bisceglia, the Speaker's executive counsel.

Mr. Duryea said yesterday that he did not know Mr. Relkin. He added, however, that he had heard that the Attorney General's office was looking for him and that he had his aides find him.

Mr. Duryea said that while hundreds of persons are hired by the Republican majority in the Assembly on the recommendations of legislators, county leaders and officials of all major parties, he personally only hired about four or five.

Put on Annual Payroll

Mr. Duryea's aides would not explain why on May 3 Mr. Relkin had been switched from the session payroll—where persons are paid only while the Assem-

bly is in session—to the annual payroll, where they become eligible for admission to the legislative pension system.

Robert Spearman, press secretary to Mr. Duryea, said he did not know why Mr. Relkin was hired in New York, even though he lived in New Jersey. But he added that this was done occasionally when a person's talents as a consultant were needed.

Although he was reported yesterday to have refused to answer questions put to him by the investigators, Mr. Relkin did acknowledge to a reporter late Thursday that he had signed the letters attacking Democratic candidates and extolling Liberal party candidates in what Democrats said was an apparent attempt to siphon off votes so the Republican candidate would win.

He denied, however, that there was any wrongdoing in the preparation and mailing of the campaign literature, which he called a "political ploy."

"This was a legal act," he said. "What I did was legal. That's my signature, I authorized that."

Mr. Relkin said that Mr. Duryea, Assembly Majority Leader John E. Kingston and Judge Breitel had nothing to do with the letters and were unaware of his activities. He described his uncle as being "beyond reproach—a man who walks on water" and added that he felt very upset that Judge Breitel's name was being dragged into the case.

Judge Breitel is the Republican and Liberal candidate for chief judge of the state in the November election.

Mr. Relkin said that he would "rather not comment" on the size of the mailings, the districts they were used in or the nature of his "special projects" job.

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