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Editor at U.S. Radio Reappears in Soviet, Assailing the West

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MOSCOW, April 28 — Two months after he vanished in West Germany, a high-ranking editor of an American-financed radio station reappeared here today and denounced the station as a front for covert intelligence operations against the Soviet Union.

The radio official, Oleg A. Tumanov, who was the No. 3 editor at the station, Radio Liberty, refused at a news conference to discuss the circumstances of his disappearance from Munich on Feb. 25 and his return to Moscow.

Seems Nervous and Agitated

Mr. Tumanov, who was born in the Soviet Union 42 years ago and defected to the West in 1965, said only that he had "lived through a nightmare" for the last 21 years and that "my road back home has been tortuous." He denied that he had been kidnapped and forcibly brought back to the Soviet Union.

When pressed to describe his return to Moscow, Mr. Tumanov said, "You have a right to raise questions, and I have a right not to answer."

Mr. Tumanov seemed nervous and agitated, pausing frequently and breathing deeply as he read a prepared statement and answered reporters' questions at the Foreign Ministry press center.

Radio Liberty and its sister station,

Radio Free Europe, are financed by Congress and are supervised by the semiautonomous Board for International Broadcasting in Washington.

Some of the analysts on both stations are widely regarded as leading authorities in their fields and are often consulted by journalists and academics studying Eastern Europe.

The Soviet authorities have frequently charged that the stations, which broadcast Russian-language programming to the Soviet Union, are a front for the Central Intelligence Agency.

Mr. Tumanov said, "Radio Liberty and Radio Free Europe are a convenient front for covert operations against the Soviet Union and other socialist countries."

He added, "I can say confidently that the radio services' executive staff has invariably included United States intelligence officers."

Mr. Tumanov was last seen in Munich on Feb. 25 after having left work early the previous day complaining that he felt unwell, according to officials at Radio Liberty, which has its headquarters in Munich.

At the time, Mr. Tumanov was acting chief editor of Radio Liberty, the third-ranking position at the station.

He defected to the West in 1965 when he was in the Soviet Navy, jumping ship in the Mediterranean and swimming six miles to the Libyan coast, according to accounts provided this year by Radio Liberty officials.

Mr. Tumanov did not say what his status was in the Soviet Union. De-

serters from the Soviet military can be tried for treason and sentenced to death. Radio Liberty officials said this year that Mr. Tumanov had been tried and sentenced to death in absentia.

Return and Condemn the West

Mr. Tumanov's news conference marked the fourth time in recent years that a prominent Soviet defector had returned to Moscow and condemned the West.

In 1984 Oleg Bitov, a Soviet journalist who defected in Britain, turned up in Moscow saying he had been kidnapped in 1983 by British agents.

Also in 1984, Svetlana Alliluyeva, Stalin's daughter, returned to the Soviet Union after a 17-year stay in the West. Miss Alliluyeva returned to the United States this month.

Last November, Vitaly S. Yurchenko, a Soviet intelligence agent who defected to the West in August, returned to Moscow, charging that he had been abducted by the C.I.A.

Mr. Tumanov said Radio Liberty's

"assets" included "some foreign correspondents accredited in Moscow."

When pressed for details, Mr. Tumanov named two former Moscow correspondents and Serge Schmemmann, the current chief of the Moscow bureau of The New York Times.

Mr. Tumanov said of Mr. Schmemmann: "I don't say he is employed, but he receives material from us. His father worked for many years for Radio Liberty."

Mr. Schmemmann, responding later in the news conference, said the only Radio Liberty material received by The Times's Moscow bureau was a weekly publication, The Radio Liberty Research Bulletin, to which almost every American and Western news bureau in Moscow subscribes.

Mr. Schmemmann's late father, the Rev. Alexander Schmemmann, dean of St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, N.Y., had a regular program on religious and cultural subjects that was broadcast by Radio Liberty.