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RUSSIA ACCUSES LECTURER OF SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES

WIFE KEPT FROM SEEING ARRESTED BRITON

CPYRGHT MOSCOW, APRIL 29

A British college lecturer arrested by Soviet security police is being held here on a criminal charge relating to "alleged involvement in subversive activities", a British Embassy official said tonight.

Embassy officials so far have not been allowed to see the man, Mr. Gerald Brooke, aged 26, a lecturer in Russian at Holborn College of Law, Languages and Commerce, London. His wife, Barbara, said tonight that Soviet plainclothes police questioned her for a whole night after her husband's arrest. The Embassy has now been told she is free to leave.

WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN

Mrs. Brooke, aged 25, a librarian, said to reporters that three plainclothes policemen came to the flat where she and her husband were visiting some Russians on Sunday evening. She was taken away to a building somewhere in the city and questioned all night. She said she was not ill-treated but she was allowed no sleep until driven back to her hotel at 7.30 a.m. on Monday. Her interrogation was "courteous".

Soviet police told her nothing of the whereabouts of her husband and she has not seen him since his arrest.

The British official said the embassy had no details of the charge against Mr. Brooke. "We understand that the Soviet authorities' complaints concern alleged involvement in subversive activities", he said.

Mrs. Brooke said she had asked to be allowed to see her husband and the Russians told her they would consider the question early next month.

The Soviet authorities informed the embassy that a meeting between Mr. Brooke and the Consul would be considered by "the competent Soviet organs at the appropriate stage of the investigation of the criminal charge".

Mr. Brooke was the leader of a group of about 30 young tourists, most of them student teachers of Russian, who

arrived here on April 18. Five years ago he took a post-graduate course in philology at Moscow University.

The rest of the group are due to leave for home by train tomorrow. Mrs. Brooke said she would leave by air tomorrow night.

Mrs. Brooke appeared deeply distressed by the ordeal she was going through. She had tears in her eyes when she spoke to reporters.

She said she did not know the Russians they were visiting on Sunday and he declined to say how they came to call on them. She also did not know whether any of the Russians had also been arrested. She said her own interrogation was conducted through an interpreter because she knew no Russian.

There was no information on where Mr. Brooke was being held. Most foreign prisoners are kept in the Lubyanka prison, near the Kremlin. Since the arrest, Mrs. Brooke has been staying with the British Consul, Miss Agnes Wood.—*Reuter*.

FRIENDS SURPRISED

"A man of the very greatest integrity whose politics are probably mildly Labour" was the description of Mr. Brooke given to *The Times* by a friend of his in London yesterday. "He is good at his job, a decent person. This charge is absolutely fantastic." Surprise at his arrest in Moscow was the immediate reaction of friends and colleagues in London and the provinces.

Mr. Brooke and his wife, who is a cataloguer at present employed at the Camden Central Library, Swiss Cottage, have been married for about three years. Both come from Sheffield, where Mr. Brooke's widowed mother still lives.

Born in July, 1938, he went to London in 1956 to start a three-year course at the London University School of Slavonic and East European Studies, taking a B.A. degree in Russian with

honours. He spent a year in Moscow on a British Council scholarship. From 1960 to 1961 he was at Oxford doing a course for a Diploma of Education.

He taught French and Russian at Hele's School, Southam, Exeter, from 1961 to 1963, and acted as scoutmaster of the school troop.

In the middle of 1963, Mr. Brooke took his present job at Holborn College where he has been teacher of Russian to other teachers, mainly from secondary schools and with a command of other languages.

The party of student-teachers past and present at the Holborn College who accompanied Mr. Brooke to Russia are due back in time for the opening of the new term on May 3.

POSSIBLE LINK WITH BRITISH TRIAL

FROM OUR DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENT

The reasons for Mr. Brooke's arrest remain pure speculation. There are various possibilities to explain the Soviet action, perhaps the most likely being that the security police are nervous at the thought of east-west personal exchanges, and wish to make publicly clear that they have their eye closely upon western contacts, and that Soviet citizens who fraternize with them do so at their peril. The whole affair may in fact be a frame-up. It might be significant that he is apparently accused of subversive activities and not espionage.

A possibility is that, as has seemed the case in the past, the Soviet authorities like to have a western subject under arrest when an espionage trial is in process in the west. It has been remarked that the arrest follows soon after the arrest of Frank Bossard, who has been committed for trial at the Central Criminal Court on charges of passing on Government military secrets to the Russians.