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'Spy' Activities of the CIA

Says Agency's 'Secret Power' Needs Periodic Checks

By PETER LISAGOR

WASHINGTON—In the demology of our times, the Central Intelligence Agency is an "invisible government," capable of unauthorized mischief on a grand scale. It is engaged in that most disreputable of businesses, spying, and anyone who takes its money is indelibly soiled.

Between the two great world wars of this century, anyone suggesting that the U. S. government should get into the espionage trade would surely be accused of un-American tendencies. In fact, in 1939, Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson put the code-cracking section of the State Department out of business with the genteel explanation that "gentlemen do not read each other's mail."

Stimson's squeamishness was a liberal response to meddling in the affairs of others, whether nations or individuals. But either because the nation was enlightened or coarsened by the cold war, intelligence and its covert handmaiden, espionage, became not only acceptable but essential in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s.

THE ALARUMS of Sen. Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin made anti-communism more than fearfully fashionable. It was a test of patriotism, and the CIA, with its camouflaged funds, was an obvious patron of student groups willing to go abroad and joust with the junior Communist agents at youth festivals.

At the same time, the Federal Bureau of Investigation was subsidizing informers who



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joined Communist-front organizations, the Communist Party itself, and any other suspected group, and these men were surfaced later to become heroes and commercial successes. The moral distinction between those subsidized by the FBI and those paid with CIA funds during that somewhat hysterical period would be the subject of an interesting seminar among those who decry the latter and hail the former.

Fortunately for the peace of mind of a righteous citizenry, the CIA has stumbled just often enough to have its mandate questioned. The danger of "a secret power" with large funds at its disposal should be periodically checked, for the lawyers, linguists, engineers, economists who work at the "agency" are clearly "spies" without the good sense to come in out of the cold.

The disclosure that the CIA contributed to the support of the National Student Association in its anti-Communist activities

for the last 15 years surprised and shocked many because it appeared to strike at the idealism and innocence and integrity of the students. It was, in a real sense, a harsh echo of the ugly, raucous noises of the 1950s.

There can be little quarrel that the CIA was unwise, if not wicked, in implicating the student groups through its financial assistance, knowing that its funds are considered "dirty money" and its purposes nefarious. It is curious that CIA directors of such repute and respect of Allen W. Dulles and John A. McCone didn't seek the funds from the available philanthropists who are always looking for worthy causes and who would have been thoroughly respectable benefactors.

ALMOST lost in the furors over the disclosure is the irony of the CIA investing in a students' association that aggressively opposes many elements of U.S. foreign policy, including the government's position on Vietnam. The Conservative Young Americans for Freedom has called the National Student Association a "left-wing group with consistently radical positions."

Thus it would seem that the kids took the dough, made the trips, stated their piece, and kept their detachment — which makes them less innocent than feared and perhaps qualified them, in John F. Kennedy's phrase, as "idealists without illusions."

(Chicago Daily News Service)