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ASSET UNWITTING: COVERING THE WORLD FOR THE CIA

**Correspondent Tells Of Employment
By Secretly Funded Agency News Service**

Forum World Features overtly owned by John Hay Whitney.

BY RUSSELL WARREN HOWE

In October 1967, a letter arrived at my summer cottage at Godstone, near London, from Georges Galipeau, a Canadian friend then running the journalism school at Dakar University

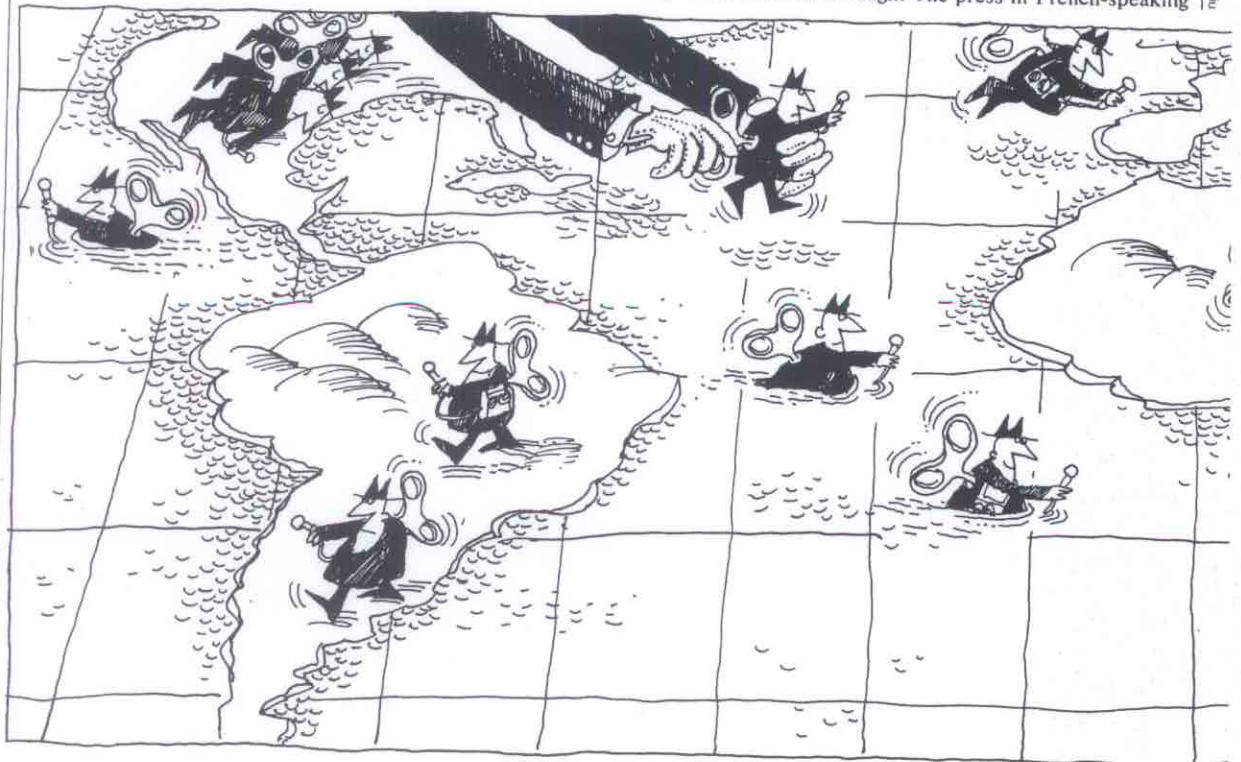
Georges Galipeau is a freelance journalist in Washington, D.C. He was The Washington Post's correspondent in Africa for many years, is the author of several books about Africa, and is co-author of The Power Peddlers: How Lobbyists Mold America's Foreign Policy.

in Senegal. I was about to relocate my family to Dakar, and base out of there for freelance forays around Africa and the Middle East. Several weeks before, Galipeau had asked me if I would be available to lecture to his students occasionally, and I had said I would.

"This is most embarrassing," Galipeau now wrote. A "key member" of the journalism school's board had forbidden him categorically to let me lecture, "because he says he knows you work for the CIA."

My first reflex was to laugh. The press in French-speaking

Illustration by Nicholas Aspin



Africa was far from free, and I could think of obvious reasons why some French and Senegalese officials wouldn't want the former *Washington Post* correspondent in Africa talking at Dakar University, a restless hotbed of opposition to the regime of Leopold Sedar Senghor.

My second reflex was to worry. Galipeau's letter, typed by his secretary, was presumably carbon-copied and in an open file. To how many people had the "key member" of the board spoken of his veto? A *Ramparts* article that summer on CIA penetration of the academic and publishing worlds had thrown a mantle of suspicion over Americans abroad, easily exploited by left-wing forces. What rumors about my alleged double role might be sown in my path, drying up sources cultivated in over a decade of third world reporting? There wasn't much time to lose: the Dakar academic year began in November.

I wrote to President Senghor, whom I had known as a *depute* in Paris and who had written the preface for the French translation of one of my books. I explained about Galipeau's letter.

"There's a new McCarthyism around," I wrote. "A few years ago, if we wrote critically of colonial rule, we were all communists. Now, if we write for the American press, we are all CIA agents."

Senghor's response came almost by return mail.

"You are right: a veritable McCarthyism rages everywhere," he wrote. "The other day, someone said to me: 'The CIA station chief in Senegal is the director of Catholic Welfare.' So, I said: 'How thoughtful of them to send me a fellow Catholic!' I am today instructing my Minister of National Education to invite you to be a Visiting Professor at the University."

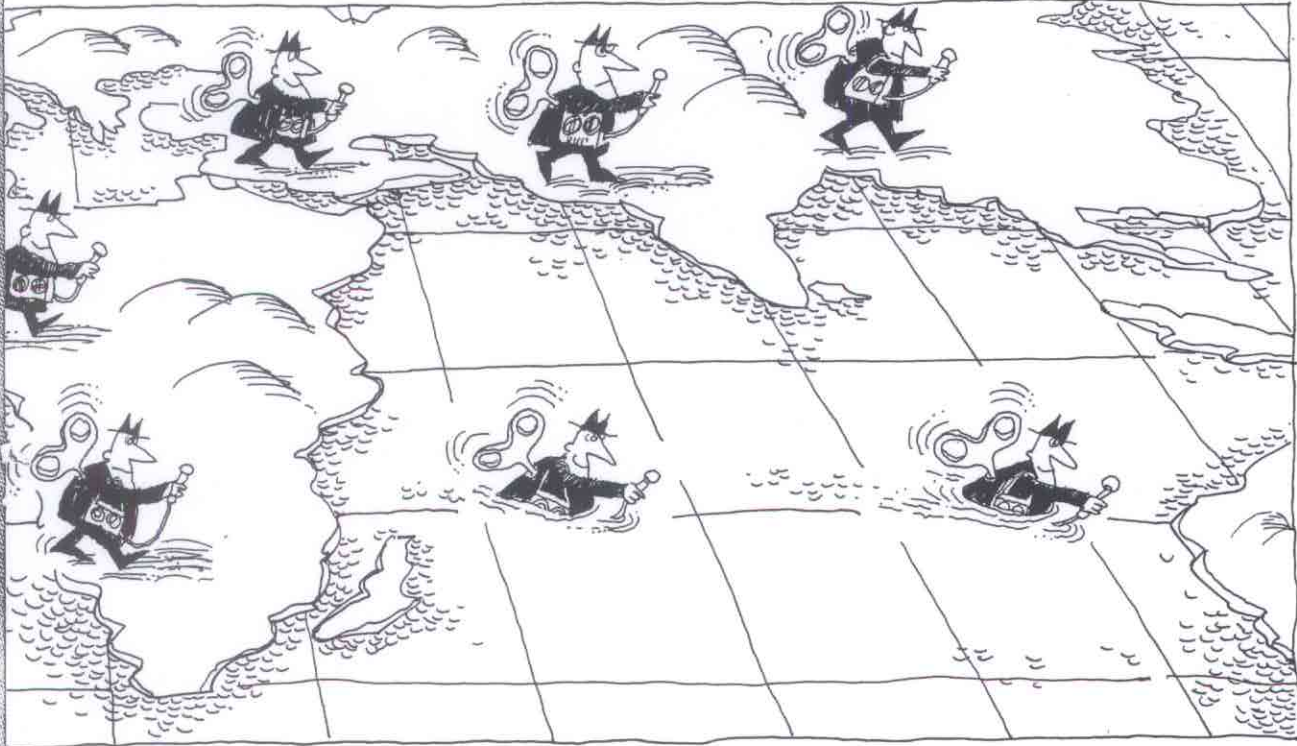
In Dakar, I lost no time in finding out that the source of the

CIA rumor was Philippe Gaillard, Senghor's press secretary and reputedly the head of French intelligence in Senegal. What I did not learn until several years later was that Gaillard was not just engaged in one of the anti-American capers for which French intelligence was notorious. Gaillard knew something which I didn't—and that Senghor presumably didn't believe—about Forum World Features, the syndicate headed by John Hay Whitney which was putting me into over 140 papers around the world.

Signing On

An article in *The New York Times* in December 1977 by John Crewdson described Forum—as the service was always known to writers and subscribers—as "perhaps the most widely circulated of the CIA-owned news services." As the most prolific writer in Forum's stable, I was apparently what was known as an "unwitting asset."

My association with the organization went back to 1958. American press coverage of Africa was thin. AP and UP (not yet UPI) had bureaus in Cairo and Johannesburg. Some European editors of African papers included the American wire services among their strings. A former Hollywood reporter, the late Thomas Brady, covered the continent for the *Times*. I covered the continent for *The Washington Post*, at the time on a non-staff basis. AP, UP, Tom Brady, and myself were the only U.S. press in Africa. In April 1958, both Brady and I received letters from a group called the Congress for Cultural Freedom in Paris, inviting us to participate in a seminar on "Progress and Representative Government" at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria. The letters were signed by Melvin Lasky, the American co-editor of



Encounter, a London-based magazine, in his capacity as a director of the CCF—the body later exposed by *Ramparts* as a sort of CIA beach-head in the cultural world.

The Ibadan encounter brought together African politicians, labor leaders, writers, and academics, mostly from still dependent countries, and a sprinkling of their opposite numbers from Asia. It was at Ibadan that I first met Patrice Lumumba, then a politically active beer salesman and later first prime minister of the Congo, and Cyrille Adoula, then a labor leader and later to be Lumumba's successor. We were all told that the CCF was supported by U.S. cultural foundations, which seemed believable enough.

Several weeks later, I received a letter from Meir Mindlin, an American in London, Information Bulletin Ltd. Listed as "principal director" of IB was Walter Z. Laqueur, a British academic who frequently wrote on Middle East affairs from an Israeli perspective, and who is now with the conservative Georgetown Center for Strategic Studies in Washington. Mindlin was listed as editor.

Mindlin said he had read my Ibadan paper. Would I write occasionally for him? The *Bulletin* was supported by the CCF, and it was sent to third world editors with free reproduction rights. The idea was to get some "balanced, informed reporting" into the underdeveloped world's press. The pay would be bad—\$50 for 2,000-word articles—but I could rehash material already used in my pieces in the *Post* or in magazines. I was familiar enough with the often dotty interpretations of world events that appeared in African papers to applaud the idea of giving them material by professional correspondents; so I agreed. My days as an asset had begun.

Some time in late 1959 or early 1960, *Information Bulletin* became *Forum Service*.

The "Ltd."—implying incorporation in Britain—was dropped. *Forum* was a Delaware corporation. The newsletter format was replaced by a mailed syndication service of separate articles. The market was still editors in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, and it was still free. Foundation grants, channeled through the "Congress"—as the CCF was always called—would pay the bills. On the new notepaper, Lasky was described as editorial director; Mindlin had become the managing editor. Checks now arrived on the CCF account.

Mindlin was a short, myopic, puckish, twinkling-eyed, eggshaped man of about 30. He was a book editor by training. Judging by our conversations, he objected to censorship in all its forms, and, so far as I can recall, no subject turned down by Mindlin for what might now look like political reasons. He seemed to publish anything a non-communist reporter might want to write.

In 1961, for instance, by which time I was working full-time for the *Post*, I suggested summarizing for *Forum* some of my *Post* reporting on corruption in Adoula's government in the Congo. Adoula was then the Kennedy administration's candidate to govern a reunited Congo; the failings of his collaborators, especially if reported by a U.S. newsman, might be seen as giving aid and comfort to Adoula's Marxist opponents. But I find in my files a carbon of my cable suggesting the piece. Mindlin's cabled acceptance, and a later letter from him praising the piece and enclosing a clip of it from an Indian paper.

From 1958 through 1965, I wrote about 30 articles for Mindlin's service. They were the same sort of stories that I was writing for the *Post*'s "Outlook" section on Sundays, and for magazines: interpretations of crises and coups d'état, profiles of Afri-

can leaders, and so on. It could be that I was included, with my *Post* credentials and free-spirit, liberal, but non-Marxist analyses of African affairs, to give balance and credibility to a service whose basic aim, presumably, was to counter communist propaganda.

Forum Reformed

In 1965, the Congress gave Mindlin funds to start another enterprise, a quarterly magazine called *Censorship*, which investigated overt and covert limitations on free expression around the world. Although most of the articles concerned communist and other authoritarian regimes, these were carefully balanced by pieces on thought control in Japan, or on press taboos in America or western Europe.

ting assets in academe. Giving Mindlin his own magazine on the subject closest to his heart was, it soon emerged, the first step toward putting *Forum* itself under new leadership. That same year, a British journalist, Brian Crozier, was told by Michael Josselson, then heading the Congress in Paris, to plan a reconstruction of *Forum*. This was to exclude Mindlin. According to informed sources, Josselson, who died recently in Geneva, was a CIA staff officer at the time.

I was then a Ford Fellow in Advanced International Reporting at Columbia. The *Post*, seeking to take advantage of the fact that I still held British citizenship, was trying to get me a visa to set up a bureau in Peking. The visa never materialized, but Mindlin, I recall, was greatly excited at the prospect. Assuming that the *Post* would continue to allow me to write for *Forum*, whose markets were non-American and therefore non-competitive, a CIA-run news service would have a correspondent accredited to Red China.

Forum had been limiting it-

self to placing pieces in the third world press. But on December 1, 1965, Mindlin wrote to me in New York saying an analysis I had written of Mobutu's bloodless coup against Moïse Tshombe in Leopoldville was "so good it ought to go into Europe." Someone apparently authorized such a departure from policy, and the piece appeared in the London *Guardian*. From then on, *Forum* began to seek subscribers in Europe, but with limited success—the syndicated column or article is virtually unknown in Europe.

Most of *Forum*'s writers, however, were European, predominantly British. Mindlin must have mentioned some names to me on the few occasions we met, but they were unfamiliar, and I remember none. When Crozier came aboard, he ordered articles from two conservative writers—Anthony P. Hartley of *The Economist* and Henry Fairlie of the London *Daily Mail*.

December 1965 was clearly a watershed month in *Forum* activities. The people directing covert press programs must have decided that, with sharper management and editing, *Forum* could move out of Asia, Africa, and Latin America and might even become self-supporting, as a few other agency proprietaries were. Free service was gradually dropped, except for three-month trials for new subscribers who requested them. Third world editors would pay modestly; the European press, as clients were acquired, would pay the going rates.

These were decisions that arrived in London from Congress in Paris. Did Mindlin think the Congress was just a private-foundation program, or did he actually know it was a CIA front? Interviewed in a London hospital bed in 1976, he told me, "I should have guessed." He claims that he was successfully duped, but he says it with a suspicious absence of bitterness or irrita-

tion.

He was more bitter about being fired, which he attributed to Crozier. At the end of 1965, Mindlin was suddenly replaced by Robert Gene Gately, who has since been identified in numerous press reports as having been a CIA officer under cover as a publishing executive. He was to have the new title of managing director. Gately's unannounced arrival clearly came as a shock to Mindlin. He wrote to me in New York that he would now just be editing *Censorship* and "one or two other Congress publications."

On January 1, 1966, Forum Service became Forum World Features, with a trendy new logo and one floor of embassy-sized offices in Sardinia House, an old but prestigious office building within walking distance of Fleet Street and Whitehall. I was still in New York. When I went to London a little later, the staff—formerly Mindlin and a secretary—had grown to over 20 people.

Gene Gately was a handsome, friendly man who, in the late 1950s, had been *Newsweek's* number-two executive for the Pacific area, based in Tokyo, handling promotion, circulation, and advertising. He denies any CIA link at all, and contests *The New York Times's* recent assertion that he lost his *Newsweek* job because of poor performance brought on by the drain on his time of Agency work.

In London, Gately clearly ran the show, with Crozier helping select and screen the mostly British staff. John Tusa, a young BBC radio producer, came in as editor. Tazie Vittachi, a distinguished editor from Ceylon, who had been forced into exile by the Bandaranaike regime, became "Asian director."

Vittachi says he was unwitting, and he sounds convincing. In retrospect, his usefulness was probably similar to mine, but at a higher level. I was a drinking buddy of many

of the new African editors, who would probably publish anything I wrote which Forum sent to them, and who therefore might read—and perhaps publish—some of the other articles in the package. Vittachi was well thought of in the Asian press—Forum's biggest market.

A new Chinese-language service for papers in Hong Kong, Taiwan, and elsewhere was started, as was a Spanish-language service for Latin America. So far as I know, this expansion did not raise suspicions in any minds. With foundations then apparently bursting with money, investing some of it in a service that would improve the contents of mostly third world papers seemed like a good idea to me, and no doubt to others.

According to a senior U.S. diplomat who was familiar with the Forum operation, the syndicate was run—because of its British headquarters—in cooperation with British intelligence. Brian Crozier, a rather quirky right-wing writer—tall, gray, thin-lipped, stocky—gave himself the decidedly MI-5-like title of "director-general."

Crozier, of course, publicly denies all actual links to intelligence. But he admits today to being privy to intelligence secrets in the 1960s and not writing about them: he told me he knew of the Congress-CIA tie as far back as 1964, when he claims he was asked to run Forum, but refused until the connection was broken. He presumably means "overtly broken." When Crozier accepted his director-generalship in 1965, Forum now had its own bank account with which to pay its bills and (at better rates) its correspondents.

The Whitney Connection

Although the overt link with Congress was supposedly cut in 1965, it was not until mid-1966, shortly after Vittachi came aboard, that Forum

got a new ostensible source of funds—John Hay Whitney, former publisher of the *New York Herald-Tribune*, part-owner of the *International Herald-Tribune*, and a former U.S. ambassador to the Court of St. James.

Crozier told Bernard D. Nossiter of *The Washington Post* in 1975 that he joined Forum in 1965 when he was told that Whitney had bought it. But he told me in 1976 that it was he who "brought in" Whitney the following year. Vittachi, now a senior UN official, says Whitney was brought in by Josselson, but agrees that it was 1966, and that Crozier misled Nossiter. It was certainly not until 1966 that contributors were told that they were now on the Whitney payroll. Thus, when Crozier joined Forum, it was still directly under Congress.

Vittachi recalls a luncheon meeting at London's fashionable Brown's Hotel that summer, hosted by Josselson and Lasky. Whitney was the guest of honor. The two Congress representatives, according to Vittachi, "sold Forum across the table" to the wealthy conservative Republican. Whitney told all those present that he was buying Forum because he was convinced that it had promise, and because buying it was something which was "worth doing." What he seems to have decided to do was to lend his name and some of his time—and perhaps give money—to a CIA venture.

Although Forum was now officially "commercial," at least some of the Whitney money was to come, Forum staffers were told, from the John Hay Whitney Foundation. The rest of the annual losses—\$325,000, according to one account—would come from other foundations. At least one of these was the Dearborn Foundation, later exposed as a CIA front.

In short, Forum was "commercial"—thanks to Whitney—but with philanthropic assistance (from the CIA).

Whitney appointed Crozier as chairman of the new corporation, the name of which was changed to Kern House Enterprises in 1969. Forum World Features was now a subsidiary of Kern House Enterprises.

Vittachi got along badly with Crozier from the start. Indeed, the choice of Crozier to run a news service oriented toward the third world seemed strange all along. His views of dark-complexioned people varied from Kipling-esque at best to South African at worst, and he saw the world in the most simplistic of cold war terms.

Crozier had had an undistinguished career at *The Economist*, eventually being shunted off to the editorship of its newsletter, *Foreign Report*. His three main books have been sympathetic biographies of Francisco Franco, Chiang Kai-shek, and Charles de Gaulle, mostly written on Forum time. None were great successes.

Under Gately, the service was considerably more professional. But Crozier, having schemed to remove the studious little New Yorker, Mindlin, with his lunatic commitment to free expression, now set his sights on getting rid of Gately and ridding Sardinia House of all things American except the money.

In April 1966, Gately sent me on an 18-country, 63-day trip through Africa. Forum picked up all the expenses—over \$6,000—and bought a score of articles. I was free to do what I wished for the American press. Gately asked me, whenever I talked to African editors—as I was sure to do almost every other day—to tell them about Forum, if they were not already subscribers, and to invite them to write to him for favorable terms or a trial service. For me, faced with the usual freelance problem of how to pay the overhead costs and still make enough to support a family, the arrangement with Forum was ideal.

In late 1966, I made another long African trip for Forum. Gately was exploring the possibilities of syndicating a cartoon-strip version of my two-volume history of black Africa. I had suddenly become the syndicate's most-published correspondent. Forum activities were taking up nearly half my time. But the Gately era was nearly over.

Crozier Takes Control

Early in 1967, a new face appeared: Cecil Eprile, a stuttering Scottish editor who had run two black publications in Johannesburg. He was to replace Gately. I knew Eprile, a humorous man with a hang-dog look, only slightly from my African travels, and was surprised that someone from such a parochial background should be put in charge of a world syndicate. Everyone else at Forum was equally surprised.

Gately was obviously displeased, but he made no fuss. Crozier now had a Briton with fewer qualifications than Gately, somebody he could control. From then on, if Forum was, in fact, the principal CIA media effort in the world, the man who believed in Franco and Chiang Kai-shek was its program manager. But Eprile, behind his interminable scoutmaster jokes and his speech defect, had a steely Scottish tenaciousness. I have little doubt that Crozier, by choice, would have replaced me with some suitably British equivalent of Ray Vicker, the cold-warrior Africa correspondent of *The Wall Street Journal*. But Eprile knew what African readers read. Thanks to him, my own little province in the Forum empire was to be left undisturbed.

Since Crozier and I were unlikely to get along, Eprile was to ensure that we rarely met. The right-wing Crozier pressures of which Tusa and Vittachi now speak never reached me then. There was nothing to make me suspect

that this was anything but a straightforward syndication service, owned by one of the best-known newspaper publishers in the United States, who had put in a "heavy" as chairman in order to keep the troops in line.

Two weeks after Cecil Eprile arrived, Gately gave a farewell party. He was, he said, going to Santa Barbara, California, to work for his father-in-law. A year later at 37, he "joined" the U.S. foreign service.

The Eprile era began. Was the shuffling, stuttering Scot a witting asset? On the broad principle that all those who are frightened to talk at all were witting, Cecil was witting. (Those who are now prepared to talk were presumably either unwitting or now anxious to appear so.) Eprile, in poor health today and living reclusively in Silver Spring, Maryland, has merely denied in the past that Forum was connected with the CIA in his time. Now, he refuses to talk at all. But, when he left Forum only four years after joining the organization, he was made a U.S. citizen by special bill and given a "Whitney" pension.

Certainly, by the time Eprile joined the staff at Sardinia House, Forum looked like the sort of syndicate that Jock Whitney would not be ashamed to own. Competing in Europe against a myriad of established agencies, was, however, not proving easy. Papers like *The Guardian* and Copenhagen's respected *Politiken* were now regular addressees, and Eprile persuaded Harold Evans, editor of the London *Sunday Times*, to take Forum also.

Eprile's arrival in London, Tusa recalls, had been preceded by a key meeting in New York, in December 1966, under the chairmanship of Whitney. Crozier, who had been away from the office for some time, took leave of General Franco and flew in from Madrid. Gately jetted in from London. Crozier ousted Gate-



Forum World Features sent stories to newspapers around the world in the national Herald-Tribune, sold Forum to millionaire Richard Mellon Scaife

ly and complained about Vittachi and Tusa, seen as too liberal. Unless Tusa shaped up, he would have to go. On his return to London, Crozier gave both Vittachi and Tusa stern lectures about the threat of world communism.

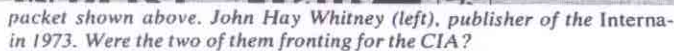
On one occasion, Tusa recalls, he was about to send out a positive piece about Soviet rural clinics. Such innocent objectivity might have enabled the Soviet ambassador in, say, Lagos to offer to set up an eye-catching program of Soviet medical care in Nigeria, using a U.S. press service as his "reference." Eprile, Tusa says, "hit the roof," insisting on cuts, and leaving in nothing which suggested that the Soviet system had any merits. Whitney, Tusa was told, wouldn't publish "plugs for the Soviets."

"Cecil must have been witting," Tusa concludes. Indeed, it would have been difficult for the CIA to "run" Fo-

rum without the managing director's knowledge, and Eprile today shows none of Crozier's naive hope of "clearing his name." Eprile's ostensible boss, Whitney, does not return calls or answer mail if Forum is mentioned. (The same is true of Richard Mellon Scaife, the Pittsburgh multimillionaire who "bought" Forum from Whitney—at least, formally—in 1973.)

At the New York meeting of December 1966, it was also apparently decided that Forum should tell the "U.S. side" of the Vietnam story. Until then, despite the Johnson build-up, the service had carried little about the war and not much about the United States. The explanation had been that these were areas in which we could not hope to compete with the established wire and syndicated newspaper services.

A few months later, Tusa



The 'Ramparts' Expose

link. *Ramparts* concentrated on CIA infiltration of student organizations and on how the Congress ran several prestigious magazines, most of which were named. The most important was *Encounter*—whose British co-editor, the poet Stephen Spender, resigned in a show of anger on learning of his “unwitting” CIA association. (Lasky assured me later that Spender had always known “as much about the Congress as I did.”) Also in Britain, the Congress had financed *Survey*, a Soviet affairs quarterly run by an ardent cold warrior, Leo Labedz. In continental Europe, it had run Francois Bondy’s *Preuves* in Paris, Nobel Prize-winner Ignazio Silone’s *Tempo Presente* in Rome, *Der Monat* in Germany, *Vision* in Switzerland, and *Forum* in Vienna. Other Congress publications included *El Mundo Nuevo* in Latin America, and *Thought* and *Quest* in India.

After I read the *Ramparts* piece, I called on Lasky in London. He said the U.S. government had merely been doing what other countries' cultural bureaucracies did. It had been done through the CIA instead of the U.S. Information Agency so that know-nothings in Congress would not quibble about a budget for financing foreign eggheads. The Congress, Lasky said, had been privately founded in response to a Soviet-financed conference of socialist writers in Berlin in 1950. The notion of government help in those

I never asked Lasky, or anyone, if Whitney was just a front. It was not just that Lasky, or Crozier, or Epile, could never have answered in the affirmative, but the thought itself never occurred

to me. On reflection, it seems naive, but when Gaillard branded me an "agent" later that year, I never even considered that Forum might be the reason.

In the light of present knowledge, Gaillard could have had several reasons for thinking of me in CIA terms. I had been friendly with Mercer Cook, the U.S. ambassador in Dakar at that time, who had been a senior Congress official in Paris in the late 1950s. My African history had been published in New York that year by Walker and Company, which was later revealed as having sometimes published books at the request of the CIA. I had written often for *Africa Report* and once for *Survey*, both of which had been funded by the Congress. As far back as 1954, shortly after leaving a staff job with Reuters in Paris, I had become the French correspondent of a new New York weekly publication, *Business International*. Managing editor Elliott Haynes admitted to *The New York Times* in 1977 that on four occasions his father, Eldridge Haynes, gave "BI Correspondent" credentials to CIA officers who wanted cover.

Putting two and two together, Gaillard could well be excused for assuming that I belonged to some arcane network funneling secret information to the United States.

Domestic Penetration

Once established in Dakar in November 1967, I continued to write prolifically for Forum, which occasionally still picked up some of my travel expenses, though these were mostly now paid by American newspapers and magazines.

There was talk of Forum creating a "confidential" African newsletter for me to edit, but nothing came of this. It was presumably deduced that if I became involved with Forum's administration, I just

might penetrate the CIA links. Indeed, the whole question of who was "witting" at Forum probably comes down to just that: there was no point in making anybody "witting" who was not a full-time spook, since anyone else could leave at any time and blow the gaff.

In the summer of 1968, Forum sent me through the Middle East. In September and October, Eprile sent me round the world, with stop-offs in Washington and New York on the return to interview Presidential candidates Nixon and Humphrey on their foreign policies.

But now, over chauteaubriand and Mouton-Rothschild in London from time to time, Eprile's conversation turned more and more to money—to making Forum pay. We needed more Japanese, European and, if possible, North American clients.

I asked why Forum had such luxurious offices, why the operation wasn't leaner.

"Apparently that was Brian's idea," Eprile said. "He likes show."

"Why does a struggling syndicate need a four-person research service and library?"

"Brian persuaded Whitney, apparently."

"Then why the hell don't we sell in the United States?"

"Whitney doesn't think we're quite ready to challenge King Features and UPI."

Gately had said much the same when I had quizzed him about the U.S. market. I urged Eprile to keep after Whitney. When I returned from the world trip, he had good news. Whitney himself had persuaded *The Washington Post* to take the service, and the *Post*'s distinguished masthead appeared prominently in the montage on the trendy new packaging for the service adopted that year. The *Post* did not actually subscribe, but it agreed to buy the pieces it liked at regular *Post* rates.

Eventually, according to the Church committee report,

about 30 U.S. papers took Forum on those terms. Whitney, we were told at the time, opposed approaching other major papers beside the *Post*. However, the Church report said that "major U.S. dailies" which took the service were informed that Forum was "CIA-controlled," implying that there were other "heavies" beside the *Post*. An intelligence source, who declines to name the U.S. papers which took Forum, says there were five major dailies, including the *Post*. Drew Middleton recalls Eprile trying unsuccessfully to sell Forum to *The New York Times*.

By its charter, the CIA was not supposed to undertake covert operations inside the United States, such as penetrating domestic media. Were the *Post* and other papers persuaded to take the service simply to help give Forum more credibility and thus aid its sales clout overseas? Or was Eprile arguing that excluding the U.S. on the unconvincing argument that the service wasn't good enough might lead writers and others to suspect the truth—that the equivalent of Congress links had not been cut, and that Forum was, in fact, a front for an agency obliged by charter to operate only overseas? In either case, selling a CIA-funded news service to the American press was clearly a violation of the agency's charter.

In 1968, then-CIA-director Richard Helms had asked for a report on Forum from Cord Meyer, the London station chief. Meyer's answer, procured from a U.S. government source, said:

"Forum World Features (FWF) is an international news feature service located in London and incorporated in Delaware whose overt aim is to provide on a commercial basis a comprehensive weekly service covering international affairs, economics, science and medicine, book reviews and other subjects of a general nature. In its first two

years, it has provided the United States with a significant means to counter Communist propaganda and has become a respected feature service well on the way to a position of prestige in the journalism world. Begun as a commercial entity in January 1966, FWF was created from the residue of Forum Service, an activity of the Cong. for Cultural Freedom (CCF), from which CIA withdrew its support in 1966."

Handwritten across the bottom of the dispatch are the words: "Run w. the knowledge and cooperation of British intelligence." Perhaps the most curious feature of Meyer's response is that it contains no mention of Whitney, the ostensible owner of FWF.

Calling It Quits

In the summer of 1970, Eprile left for the United States. Crozier brought in Iain Hamilton, a former *Spectator* editor, as Eprile's replacement. A South African, Alan Brown, became editor. Reading the Forum package every week, I could see that it was now taking a decidedly conservative slant—pro-Nixon, hawkish on Indochina, with articles urging "caution" on South Africa. There were frequent pieces by Crozier's highly conservative *Economist* friend, Robert Moss (whose book on Chile, the Church committee found, was subsidized by the CIA) and Lynn Price, a former Foreign Office man with a cold-warrior stance.

By this time, I was the Baltimore *Sun* staff correspondent in Africa and was making plans to return to the United States. It was time for me to call it quits with the syndicate.

Richard Mellon Scaife bought Forum on January 31, 1973. Crozier says today that it was he who "brought in" Scaife. Whether it was a true purchase or just a continuation of a front is not clear. At all costs, Scaife relieved fellow tycoon Whitney of Fo-

rum. He closed Forum down in May 1975, just days before a story in *Time Out*, an alternative London weekly, broke the news that Forum was and always had been a CIA front.

Crozier left Forum in 1974, handing over the top job to Iain Hamilton. Over the years, the large library I had remarked on had become the Current Affairs Research Center. Then, with "Whitney" approval, it had become the Institute for the Study of Conflict, under Crozier's direction, with a book-publishing program. The ISC still exists, although reliable U.S. sources say it has no direct CIA—only British intelligence—links.

Both Crozier and Hamilton deny that Forum closed because its cover was blown. Crozier shows a 1974 exchange of letters with Scaife "proving" he resigned because of pressure of work and because Hamilton could easily replace him, and showing that Scaife "reluctantly" accepted his resignation.

The CIA has never stated publicly that it owned Forum or the Congress, although it no longer denies either assertion. The Church committee report does not mention Forum by name, but committee sources confirm that the news service to which the report referred was in fact Forum.

Gately says today: "If the Congress had anything to do with the Agency, I knew nothing about it." But, he adds, "I have never seen a document from the CIA which says: 'You can say all you want.' And until I see it, I'm just not going to talk about Forum." He insists Forum had no link to the U.S. government; but, in declining to discuss it, he also says, "I'm not going to say anything to harm my country."

All the U.S. citizens closely involved—Mindlin, Gately, Eprile—keep resolutely buttoned lips. The two most involved Britons, Crozier and Hamilton, have handled press queries with all the acumen of

John Mitchell talking to Carl Bernstein. Hamilton, for instance, asked *The Washington Post's* Nossiter cantankerously, "Why don't you write about the KGB?"

Crozier admitted to me that Congress retained a seat on Forum's board after he himself joined, but says he finally abolished it, that he refused to do stories suggested by Congress, and that he threatened to resign in 1966 if Congress didn't get off his back.

A senior British official confirms that British intelligence had approved of the CIA "running" Forum. This official described Crozier's present Institute for the Study of Conflict as an arm of British intelligence. *The New York Times* quoted CIA sources as saying that Crozier also was a "contract employee" (an agent not a full-time officer) of the CIA.

Looking Backward

So, if Forum was a CIA front, how much of what we wrote was censored? Only in the post-Eprile years, with Crozier and Hamilton in full charge, did it take on a manifestly conservative slant. Eprile, it is true, discouraged me from writing about South Africa, on which his views were less liberal than mine; but I accepted this because he came from there, wanted to write about it himself, and also wanted to be able to return to the country.

I was urged to play down guerrilla stories. On March 4, 1969, Eprile wrote to me: "We would be interested in a 'personal' story of how you went into Rhodesia with ZAPU guerrillas, but please be careful not to over glamorize them." Out of about 250 articles which I wrote for Forum, this was one of the three or four paid for but never used. I assume now that the CIA was interested in reading it, not publishing it.

A 1969 article on corruption and discontent in Kenya, a U.S. protege, was also paid

for but not used, ostensibly because of inventory pressure. In 1970, I wrote a story in the *Sun* saying that Mauritania, always considered a French puppet state, was aligning itself with Marxist Algeria to defend itself from Moroccan territorial claims. I said Algeria was about to invite Mauritania to join the Maghreb Union. A few days later, Algiers made it official. I suggested to Forum that I do a "left turn in the Sahara" piece. Again, I was paid but not circulated. In both cases, I think now, the pieces were ordered solely to be read by Cord Meyer's people, but were unpublished for policy reasons because they were "good for the other side."

Similarly, in 1971, I did a long radio interview, for ABC, with Eldridge Cleaver in Algiers. Forum, informed of the interview, asked for 2,000 words—twice the length of their average pieces. This was paid for at special report rates but never circulated. It would have been cheaper for the CIA to tune in to WMAL-AM, the local ABC affiliate.

In its articles supporting Nixon and the Vietnam war—notably by the former *Newsweek* writer, Yorick Blumenthal—Forum may well have published planted, untrue material, with or without the writer's knowledge that it had come from the Agency. The only clearly false propaganda story I recall seeing in Forum material was in June 1966, when Crozier ordered a piece from Czeslaw Jesman, a right-wing Polish exile, on Soviet influence in Somalia. Jesman's Forum story, which appeared in *The Guardian*, said Moscow was supplying the little country with 150 MiG-17s. I wrote Gately saying the story had to be "bullshit." The true number of planes turned out to be 12. *The Guardian*, but not Forum, ran a correction.

A House committee report says that in its heyday the CIA spent 29 percent of its budget on media and propa-

ganda programs. What links between the CIA and the press are justifiable? Obviously, some are—and more were once. In the Cold War atmosphere of the forties and fifties, no one would have published the Pentagon Papers, and it would have been unthinkable to "burn" a CIA cover. As Mindlin complained to me in 1976: "People just don't take account of the fact that those were different times."

Correspondents cultivate CIA contacts just as they cultivate diplomatic and defense sources—including foreign sources. In the Congo, I once had lunch with two Russian correspondents, at least one of whom was almost certainly KGB, and recounted what I had written in *The Washington Post* about Katanga, where the regime would not let them in. They learned nothing that the Soviet embassy in Washington had not already read, but it enabled them to look good in the eyes of their editors and others in Moscow. In return, I figured that one of them might help me one day in Guinea or Somalia, if only by telling me how to spell the local Soviet general's name. Instead, one of them later gave me a 24-hour beat on the arrival of Soviet aircraft to help Lumumba put down a provincial rising. I passed on the information to the U.S. ambassador, whom thereafter I could call on almost whenever I liked. This is how correspondents work.

What is legitimate in all this is that the journalist is witting about his source and is free to evaluate the material. At worst, he may be deceived into thinking that a CIA man is actually a diplomat, but overseas the difference means little. What was totally unethical about Forum World Features was that the agency duped both Forum's clients and correspondents, and did it by prostituting a few professional journalists who consented to dupe their colleagues.