

By Art Buchwald

THE NEWS that the CIA had been supplying under-cover funds to the National Student Association has caused another furor in educational circles. The Association, with 300 chapters on campuses throughout the country, may have been compromised by accepting money from the Central Intelligence Agency, yet it's hard to believe that the CIA would do anything illegal or immoral to achieve its goals. I'm sure the intelligence people have a good cover story to explain their infiltration of the student organization, and when they present it, we'll all be satisfied that they did nothing wrong.

As a matter of fact, there are several cover stories explaining the CIA's involvement with the NSA making the rounds at this very moment, and, while it is impossible to separate fact from fiction, all of them make sense.

ONE IS that while the NSA was a cover for the CIA, the CIA was, in reality, a cover for the Ford Foundation. The Ford Foundation has to dispense millions and millions of dollars a year, and sometimes it prefers to do it without publicity. So it gives the money to the CIA, which is always on the lookout for worthy causes.

But the CIA is in a terrible spot because if it denies that it gave funds to the National Student Association to subvert it, then it will have to admit that it gave the money at the request of the Ford Foundation, and everyone will start asking, "What the hell is the Ford Foundation messing around in education for?"

Another cover story making the rounds of Washington is that the CIA has been terribly worried about the educational situation in California and would like to do something to help the colleges out during the present crisis.

If the CIA gave the funds directly to Gov. Reagan, other states would demand

similar subsidies to get them through financial crises. Therefore, the CIA decided to use the National Student Association as a means of slipping the dough to California without anybody finding out about it.

It has been no coincidence that many students from Berkeley have been seen leaving CIA headquarters at Langley with large satchels of cash. When questioned about the satchels, the students always replied, "We're going to use it to buy pot." But everyone now knows that the money was going directly to the board of regents to improve the California school system.

THERE IS another story circulating that the CIA people had no intention of supporting the National Student Association. They thought the initials NSA stood for the National Security Agency. When the CIA top dogs discovered that they were giving money to the wrong organization, they had to cover up their mistake by pretending that they had the National Student Association in mind all the time.

Someone said that the National Student Association officers also had made a grievous mistake because they thought the initials CIA stood for the "Committee for Indigent Alumni." When the board discovered its error, it was too late to explain to its members where all the money was coming from, so they decided not to talk about it, either.

The CIA has been reluctant to discuss the matter, but I did manage to corner a high official in a restaurant who gave me the best explanation for the whole affair I've heard so far.

"Why did the CIA get involved with the National Student Association?" I asked him.

"Because," he replied, "it was there."

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Pull Up the Cover

**There Are All Sorts of Excuses
For the CIA Priming the NSA**