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Money in Secret: The CIA Funds

By Marquis Childs

COINCIDING with the storm over the CIA came a significant announcement. The next World Youth Festival will be held in Sofia, Bulgaria, in September. No crystal ball is needed to predict a major theme of that rally.

Perfidious American youth corrupted by the American spy agency seeking to subvert the true spokesmen of democracy will be roundly denounced. For the deep-seated anti-American forces in Western Europe as well as the professional anti-Americanism of the Communist bloc the Youth Festival should be a walkaway.

This is a measure of the damage done by the disclosures of the relationships between the CIA and the National Student Association and a host of other liberal and moderately left organizations. Barry Goldwater's reaction was as predictable as that of the World Youth Festival. He had no objection to the subsidies as such. But the CIA was caught subsidizing socialism and he demanded to know why the Young Republicans and Young Americans For Freedom had not got some of the money.

Predictable, too, was the outcry in the Soviet press. "All progressive America is boiling with indignation over this shamefully scandalous business with the Agency . . ." one newspaper in Moscow reported. This can be translated as: The CIA has been unmasked and with it those middle-ground liberal organizations that believe they could use CIA money to oppose Communist aims.

BEHIND the sensational headlines in the American press there is revealed the confusing and, in a sense, self-defeating dualism of this Nation's posture in the face of the worldwide Communist movement. The CIA subsidies began in 1951 and 1952 as the McCarthyist attack was mowing down anyone and everyone to the left of center with even the slightest suspicion of pro-Communist sympathies.

The directives of the National Security Council authorizing the CIA payments were based on the belief that what had to be done to insure that the American viewpoint was expressed in youth and other world organizations — could be done by secret subsidies. Certainly, Congress at the time would never have sanctioned help for the Student Association, the American Newspaper Guild or the American Friends Service Committee no matter what valid purpose they might serve overseas.

This was the fundamental error — to

believe that since what should be done could not be done openly it must be done by subterfuge. The secret could never be kept in an open society. And in view of the reputation of the CIA, enhanced by such tragic blunders as the Bay of Pigs and a constant stream of propaganda out of Moscow and other Communist capitals, the disclosure when it came was bound to be disastrous.

Britain in a quiet and understated fashion with an appropriation of \$30 million a year has given encouragement to student, artistic and other groups functioning overseas through the British Council. A semi-independent body with a majority of its 30 members chosen outside of government, the Council is one of those British compromises that seems to work.

BUT OUR self-defeating dualism goes deeper, in the view of those now trying to appraise the damage, than the flaw of secrecy through an intelligence agency. Negotiating with the Soviet government to try to get a standstill agreement on antiballistic missiles has basically no relation to trying to get adequate representation for the American view at an international student rally. They are two different problems that must be met if they are to be met at all, in different ways.

Here is the larger question. Is there any real interest, particularly in view of what appears to be a growing neo-isolationism, in confronting the second problem and insuring that a free exchange with the American viewpoint fairly presented takes place? If the answer is no, the rally in Sofia will be a solo exercise for those who mean to control all such forums.

In the uproar over the CIA subsidies are echoes out of America's age of innocence. The voice of a conscience long silent could be heard. With the encroachment of big government and the vast military expenditure, a large part of the budgets of most universities is in research for the Department of Defense, including such unmentionables as biological warfare. This is so taken for granted that many educational institutions keep lobbyists in Washington to get projects. What this does to the independence of institutions of learning, with, in effect, subsidies on a far greater scale than those of the CIA, is a troubling question.

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