

# STUDENT RECALLS C.I.A. RECRUITING

Says Many at Free University  
in Berlin Were Enlisted

*The following was written by Leslie R. Colitt, a news assistant on the picture desk of The New York Times, who studied as a graduate student at The Free University of Berlin from October, 1959, through August, 1962. He remained in Berlin as a free-lance journalist through February, 1964.*

The Free University of Berlin in the American sector of West Berlin was used both by the Central Intelligence Agency and Army intelligence to recruit American and foreign students for members of the agencies often called "part-time work."

Only a week after my arrival in Berlin, I was approached in my room in the city by a man who identified himself as "from the C.I.A."

He knew everything about me, even details that I had only mentioned on my scholarship application form. After talking with other American students who were also approached, we agreed that the information could only have come from copies deposited in the registrar's office of the Free University.

Student records in the office were, according to university regulations, to be opened only for the West Berlin political police and the security agencies of the Western Allies in order not to endanger thousands of students from East Berlin and East Germany who attended the university prior to the erection of the Berlin wall in 1961 and whose personal and academic records were filed in the registrar's office.

A favorite locale for establishing C.I.A. contact with American and foreign students in West Berlin was the Studentendorf, a dormitory complex of the Free University in the Schlachtensee suburb of the city. The ultra-modern student village, completed in 1959, was wholly financed by the State Department.

## Almost Everyone Knew

After only a few weeks in the new Studentendorf, it was common knowledge among American students which of their compatriots had been approached by "the spooks" as C.I.A. and Army intelligence employes were half-jestingly called.

Stories about the similar initial approach used by the C.I.A. and Army intelligence were exchanged, and a number of students admitted that they had gone past the "point of no return."

After being given a superficial test of their knowledge of German ("they tossed over a copy of 'Der Tagesspiegel' [a West Berlin newspaper] and asked me to read a couple of paragraphs," one young woman related), the students were invited to a first-class restaurant, often the same one.

If they showed interest in "doing a few things for their country" or, as one young C.I.A. man put it, "helping us while we help you," the students were told to report to an address, often a private villa in the Zehlendorf suburb of West Berlin's American sector. There, they were given more tests and the process of recruiting was completed.

In September, 1961, less than a month after the building of the Berlin wall, American students in West Berlin nervously discussed reports in local newspapers describing the fate of Marvin W. Makinen, one of their fellow students at the Free University.

## Arrested in Soviet

They learned that he was arrested in the Soviet Union in July and had now been sentenced in Kiev to eight years' detention on espionage charges.

Only a few months earlier, the 22-year-old chemistry student had told some of his friends, with a hint of pride in his voice, that he was working for American intelligence. Few of the students were surprised, since most of them had already been approached by either the C.I.A. or military intelligence and had accepted or rejected employment.

Mr. Makinen was subsequently released in a prisoner exchange in 1963, but the news of his sentencing less than a month after the building of the Berlin wall caused the young Americans in West Berlin to think hard about their involvement with intelligence agencies.

Most of them readily acknowledged, however, that their part-time intelligence work was far less dangerous and dramatic than Mr. Makinen's foray into the Soviet heartland.

Typically, they were asked to write reports on certain students and student organizations at the Free University and Technical University in West Berlin. A number of these students and groups had come to the attention of the intelligence agencies because of "unusual relations" they had with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

## Access to Mail

Such contacts often consisted of vacations spent in those countries or correspondence with individuals or organizations there. All Allied intelligence agencies in West Berlin had access to West Berlin mail bound for the East and Eastern mail entering West Berlin. This was the source of many of the assignments given the American students.

Students were paid from 200 marks (\$50) to 400 marks (\$100) a month for this kind of work, depending on their experience and the results their work produced.

"It was almost impossible to get a raise," one former student

reminded. "None of us were going to threaten to go to the competition and these guys knew it."

Students were sometimes given assignments in East Berlin and East Germany. They were asked for example, to visit a Government agency in East Berlin and express their scholarly interest in its workings.

In spite of increasingly frequent doubts as to whether what they were doing and what they were getting for it was worth the inherent risk, most of the Americans at the Free University found it difficult to end their work in intelligence. They had become dependent on the extra money and, in the instances where they finally decided to quit, they were subsequently visited and telephoned innumerable times and asked to reconsider.

## Few Precautions Taken

Few precautions were taken by either the C.I.A. or military intelligence in their dealings with students. Often, meetings were arranged at the same place and the same time each week.

One student politely suggested to his regular contact that they change the place of meeting since they had been seen together in the same cafe at the

same hour for the last six months.

Another student, issued an intelligence identity card under a given name, made a trip to Czechoslovakia with the card in his wallet. While registering with the authorities in Prague, the card slipped out and fell to the floor under the gaze of two officials of the Ministry of the Interior who stooped down to pick it up. The student quickly mentioned that it was one of his credit cards and the men apparently believed him, for the rest of the trip went without incident.

At the next meeting with his regular contact man in West Berlin, the student said nothing of what had happened in Prague.

He experienced "strange sensations in the mind and stomach," he later recalled, when the man said that he had forgotten to tell him never to take the identity card along on trips to the East.

In recent years, the intelligence agencies have turned their attention to African and Asian students, who might be less suspect in the East.

"Maybe it was a good thing the wall put an end to most of this dangerous nonsense," one American who studied at the Free University said not long ago.