

EDITOR RESIGNS OVER C.I.A. FUNDS

Spender, the British Poet,
Says Disclosure Led Him
to Quit Encounter

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By SYLVAN FOX

Stephen Spender, the British poet and author, said yesterday he had resigned as contributing editor of Encounter magazine because Central Intelligence Agency money had helped to finance it for more than 10 years.

Mr. Spender said he had heard rumors for several years that the magazine, a British-American intellectual monthly, was being supported by C.I.A. funds, "but I was never able to confirm anything until a month ago."

At that time, he explained, the Congress for Cultural Freedom held a meeting in Paris at which it was revealed that the intelligence agency had used the European-based anti-Communist organization as a conduit to finance Encounter.

The Congress for Cultural Freedom had supported Encounter from 1953, when it was

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Encounter Editor Quits His Post Over Disclosure of C.I.A.'s Role

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founded by Mr. Spender and Irving Kristol, an American editor. The first issue of Encounter was financed by a \$30,000 grant from the Congress for Cultural Freedom, and support from the congress continued until 1964.

Article by Publisher

In the May 20 issue of The Saturday Evening Post, Thomas W. Braden, a California publisher who headed the C.I.A.'s division of international organizations from 1951 to 1954, lists Encounter as a recipient of C.I.A. money.

Mr. Braden said in The Saturday Evening Post article that money for the publication of Encounter "came from the C.I.A., and few outside the C.I.A. knew about it."

"We had placed one agent in a Europe-based organization for intellectuals called the Congress for Cultural Freedom," Mr. Braden wrote. "Another agent became an editor of Encounter. The agents could not only propose anti-Communist programs to the official leaders of the organization, but they could also suggest ways and means to solve the inevitable budgetary problems."

Mr. Braden did not identify the agent who he said "became an editor of Encounter," nor did he reveal whether, as suggested by his words, the editor had been a C.I.A. agent before joining Encounter.

A British Writer

Mr. Spender said he "can't imagine anyone believing that I was a C.I.A. agent, and I am absolutely sure that Mr. Kristol was in no way involved."

He said that Frank Kermode, a British writer who had been co-editor of Encounter with Melvin J. Lasky, an American, could not have been involved with the intelligence agency because he joined the magazine two years ago. By that time Encounter had severed its links with the Congress for Cultural Freedom. Mr. Kermode also has resigned from the magazine.

Mr. Lasky, reached by The New York Times in London, charged that Mr. Braden's statements were "absolutely ridiculous" and "grievously mistaken."

Mr. Lasky has been a co-editor of Encounter since 1958, when he replaced Mr. Kristol. Mr. Kermode has replaced Mr. Spender as co-editor.

Issues a Statement

Since learning of the intelligence agency's link with En-

counter, Mr. Spender said he, Mr. Lasky and Mr. Kermode had been attempting to "prepare a satisfactory editorial position," but were unable to agree on a snafu.

Mr. Kristol is now an editor of The Public Interest, a quarterly published by Freedom House, an organization formed in 1941. He said he knew nothing of the intelligence agency's links with Encounter while he was its co-editor. He said he had heard rumors of such connections, but "we were reassured" by the backers of the magazine "that these rumors were false."

"I regard the article in The Saturday Evening Post, in so far as it cast doubt upon the integrity of all editors of Encounter, past and present, as irresponsible and defamatory," Mr. Kristol said. "As for myself, I have never been, am not and have no intention of ever becoming a C.I.A. agent."

In the statement he issued yesterday announcing his resignation three days ago from Encounter, Mr. Spender said that "in view of the revelations that have been made and allegations which may still be made about past sources of Encounter funds, I feel that any editor who was knowingly or unknowingly involved in receiving these should resign. I have done so." The resignations of Mr. Spender and Mr. Kermode left only Mr. Lasky at the magazine's helm.

Encounter was founded in London by Mr. Spender and Mr. Kristol, who had been managing editor of Commentary magazine, to provide an organ for "an interchange of views among intellectuals of the whole English-speaking world."

It has a circulation of about 40,000 each month and is read by Government leaders and intellectuals throughout the world. Although it pays modest rates for its articles, it has drawn such major writers as Christopher Isherwood, C. Day Lewis, Dame Edith Sitwell, Arthur Koestler, Bertrand Russell, W. H. Auden, Aldous Huxley, Arnold Toynbee, Sidney Hook, Lionel Trilling, H. R. Trevor Roper, Nancy Mitford and Katherine Anne Porter.

Saw British Publisher

In 1964, after rumors spread that the intelligence agency was backing the congress, Mr. Spender approached Cecil H. King, head of The Daily Mirror group of newspapers in Britain, and proposed that he take over the financing of the magazine. He agreed and Encounter severed its connection with the Congress for Cultural Freedom.