

The CIA at Home and Abroad:

BEHIND THE NEWS

By MAURICE GOLDBLOOM

The Central Intelligence Agency, which usually appears in the press in connection with such foreign triumphs as the Bay of Pigs, has been making news in other ways of late. In recent days it has hit the headlines by asking that the State Department personnel directory be kept secret so that people couldn't figure out which "diplomats" were really CIA agents by analyzing their biographies, by intervening on behalf of one of its agents who was being sued for libel, and by being charged with using Michigan State University as a front in Vietnam.

Lower-ranking State Department officials reportedly agreed to keep the personnel directory a secret. But they were quickly overruled by their superiors when the story appeared in the press and Representative John Moss, chairman of the House subcommittee on official secrecy, went on the warpath. Nobody, however, seems to have raised the question of how the CIA's use of diplomatic assignments as a cover for its agents affects the status of American diplomats in general. Yet obviously it leaves all of them under a cloud.

This, however, is not a new development; it has long been known that the American diplomatic roster included its share of CIA men. Even some ambassadors have been suspected of having more than casual ties with the agency. CIA representatives in a country, like those of other American agencies operating abroad, are supposed to be under the control of the Ambassador. In fact, they usually operate independently of the embassy and sometimes at cross-purposes with it. But the embassy's theoretical supremacy means that it can be held responsible for what the CIA does. The net result is that in many countries U.S. embassies, information offices, and aid missions find their work seriously hampered by an atmosphere of suspicion.

The Michigan State case is an example of the sort of thing that

justifies that suspicion. As part of this country's "non-military" aid to South Vietnam, Michigan State University received a contract under which it was to establish a police training program in Vietnam. Since the university did not have the necessary experts on police work, according to President John Hannah, it had to borrow them from government agencies. (It is hard to see any legitimate reason why, under the circumstances, the government needed the university to handle the project.)

According to President Hannah, the university sought to avoid getting any CIA agents for its staff, and did not know that several of the faculty members it hired from other government agencies were in fact from the CIA. But according to the supervisor of the project, Professor Wesley Fishel, the CIA affiliations of the gentlemen in question were in fact well known.

In terms of the CIA's role and its significance, however, it is relatively unimportant whether that agency planted its men on the university staff or whether the university and the CIA were working together in disguising CIA agents as faculty members. In either case the CIA was hiding under academic robes. And in this respect the case of Michigan State is by no means unique, or even an especially flagrant instance; the CIA's penetration into the academic world has taken many forms, some of them much more dangerous because they involve the secret manipulation of American public opinion.

Legally, the CIA is debarred from a domestic role. In practice, however, it has long disregarded this prohibition. Some of the forms and pretexts under which it has done so may not violate the letter of the law; most of them certainly violate its spirit. Thus CIA agents — and CIA money — play a major part in numerous organizations of refugees from Communist countries.

At least twice in recent years this fact has become public, although it received much less attention than it deserved, when organizations of this type charged that their funds had been cut off because they had refused to adjust themselves to U.S. policy. The theoretical justification for this is the role such organizations play in gathering intelligence and conducting propaganda in the lands of their origin.

This justification was advanced in a statement filed with the

CIA in the currently pending libel suite of Erik Heine, and Estonian refugee living in Canada, against another Estonian refugee named Juri Raus. The CIA asserted that Raus, who had denounced Heine as an agent of the Soviet secret police, was immune to suit because he had done so on CIA instructions in his capacity as an agent of that organization. (Ostensibly, Raus is an engineer for the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads). It said that this had been necessary to protect its "foreign intelligence sources" in the Estonian community in the U.S.

The disclosure that Raus was working for the CIA and the claim of immunity were not made until a fairly late stage of the case; meanwhile two leading Washington lawyers had been employed to represent Raus and had hired detectives to interrogate many of Heine's associates. Neither the lawyers nor the CIA would state whether the CIA was footing the bills for the defense; the lawyers admitted, however, that they had conferred with the agency on defense strategy.

It is obvious that Raus, in attacking Heine, was attempting to influence opinion in the United States, even if only among emigres from Estonia. (It should be noted that most of the emigres in question are American citizens, and that it is in any case not really possible to confine a public discussion to a limited group.)

Moreover, this is only one small case of a general situation. For the emigre groups are all, inevitably, engaged in conducting propaganda within the United States. They seek to influence American foreign policy, American legislation, and even American elections. And they do it with the aid of CIA funds, distributed secretly and without any accounting to Congress. When the CIA was established, with huge secret funds at its disposal, there was an obvious danger that such funds would be used to influence American public opinion and politics; similar funds had been a major source of the corruption which gutted the third French Republic.

The prohibition on CIA activities within the United States was intended to prevent this from happening; it has not succeeded, because the secrecy and freedom from control with which the CIA operates have enabled it to disregard the ban.

A similar situation has developed in the academic community, and to some extent in journalism. CIA money has financed research corporations and institutes, some of them connected with major universities. In theory, these organizations are completely independent, and receive contracts from the government to engage in scholarly and objective research whose fruits will help to solve problems the country faces. In fact, most of them were established on government initiative, have no source of income aside from the government or private money — sometimes from firms doing business with the government, who can perhaps be reimbursed through concealed subsidies in their contracts — given at the government's suggestion, and are an integral part of the defense establishment.

The CIA is not the only government agency engaged in this sort of activity, but it is almost certainly the most important one; when other agencies are apparently involved, the CIA may be the actual principal, since its activities and appropriations are to a large part masked under the name of other parts of the government. (Another device sometimes used by the CIA is the establishment of nominally private foundations which distribute largesse in furtherance of its purposes.)

The staffs of these institutions are continually publishing books and articles, delivering lectures, and otherwise taking part in the public debate on major questions of foreign policy. They present themselves as independent and objective scholars, not as employees of a secret government agency — usually paid at much higher rates than are available

either for genuinely independent scholarship or overt government employment. It is of course legitimate for the government to employ specialists in a field to assist in the formulation of policy, and for those specialists to defend the policy they help to make. But when the government's role is secret, the result is the corruption both of scholarship and of the democratic process.

Not everyone who receives CIA money is necessarily corrupted by it. Sometimes he doesn't even know the source of the money he is receiving for what he regards as a legitimate purpose; sometimes he takes the money as long as it is available for his purposes, but refuses to change these when the CIA's plans change. To some extent, too, the CIA appears to be less than monolithic; thus in one case persons connected with one part of that agency appear to have gone around leveling the charge of communism against persons whose activities were sponsored by another of its divisions.

Moreover it is often true that the CIA can only make effective use of organizations or individuals by respecting their independence and integrity; sometimes it even seems to realize this. But the general effect of its domestic activities is to introduce a dangerous element of deceit and corruption into formation of public opinion, and to undermine the democratic process.



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