

## SPOOKS ON PARADE

by James Otis

The American press has been notoriously slow in following up leads on stories about the CIA. Until RAMPARTS' expose of the CIA's involvement in the National Student Association prodded such papers as the *New York Times* into action, few if any U.S. papers would carry critical pieces on the Agency. Now it appears that the *Times* and other papers have slipped back into their former state of lethargy.

The November 12, 1972 issue of *Parade*, a Sunday magazine which appears in over 100 newspapers, carried a story entitled "CIA Recruiting" in its "Keeping Up . . . With Youth" column. The story, complete with photographic evidence, described how the CIA uses a phony Army cover to recruit students into the Agency.

*Parade* discovered the story when two students from a west coast university contacted its office and told how they had answered an ad in the *Chicago Tribune* for Russian linguists.

The ad listed an attractive salary and gave a post office box in Washington, D.C. The students, who had majored in Russian, wrote in and received a letter from a Lt. Colonel Stratton, commander of the so-called U.S. Army Research Translation Group.

An interview was arranged with Col. Stratton and the students took and passed a Russian proficiency test. When the colonel learned that the students also spoke Spanish, he said that was good because they would probably be posted to Latin America.

Attending a university as cover, the students were to translate tapes of conversations bugged at the Russian embassy in the Latin American country in which they were supposedly attending.

The two prospective student spooks declined the employment opportunity, rightly suspecting that the job really involved working for the CIA. They turned over the record of their correspondence to *Parade* which contacted the government in an attempt to confirm the story.

In response to *Parade's* inquiries, CIA director Richard Helms (who has since become Ambassador to Iran) called *Parade's* editorial offices and suggested that it would not be in the

national interest for *Parade* to expose this CIA cover. Helms said how difficult it is for the Agency to find good young people these days, and asked the *Parade* editors to act "as patriots." One *Parade* editor, to his credit, replied, "Mr. Helms, we'll leave that sort of patriotism to Howard Hunt and Bernard Barker,"—two of the former CIA employees indicted in the Watergate case.

In advance of publication, *Parade* sent copies of the story to the wire services, the *Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and other leading papers. None of these followed up the story or even reported on the *Parade* story. No TV or radio news station reported the story.

It is well known among reporters in Washington that the CIA bugs numerous foreign embassies both in the U.S. and in other countries. But that students are recruited, using a student cover, to help in this work, would seem newsworthy.

Congress has steadfastly refused to investigate CIA activities at home and abroad, which leaves only the press to protect the public interest. And if this latest incident is an example, they are doing the job with something less than vigilance. ■