

The Stately 'Cover' of a CIA Agent

London

Two hundred people disturbed the sedate calm of a wealthy London neighborhood yesterday with a new style of tourism — a guided walk to the home of an alleged CIA agent.

It was not a routine demonstration. It was a street theater group entertaining a laughing crowd on what will be a series of tours pointing out London homes of purported operatives of the Central Intelligence Agency.

The "stately homes tours" are being organized by a group called Concerned Americans Abroad.

The group has set up a company registered as "Bonkers Misguided Tours Unlimited," but they say they are using humor to stress a serious issue.

Yesterday, the crowd and one policeman followed the performers and a scarlet-uniformed tour guide through the tree-lined streets of white-painted Georgian houses to No. 24 South Eaton place.

Inside that very posh address, they claimed, lives Cord Meyer Jr., alleged CIA chief in Britain.

Tour guide Ed Berman, 34, an American who has lived here about 13 years, stepped between the police guards placed there earlier and knocked on the black wooden door of No. 24.

There was no reply.

An alarmed nanny leaned from a nearby window, and a resident from an adjacent street blustered in an upper-class English accent as a police inspector tried to calm him down.

After singing and dancing by the group, and warnings but no arrest from the police, the crowd moved off.

Berman, who came here as a student from Lewiston, Me., in 1962 and stayed "because it's more civilized here," said there would be other tours soon to other CIA agents' homes.

The group said in a statement, "The largest concentration of CIA operatives anywhere in Europe is in the United Kingdom. They operate secretly and without the knowledge or welcome of Parliament or the citizens."

The group waved banners reading, "Don't Soil British Soil."

Meyer is listed by the British Foreign Office as a U.S. embassy attache.

He was accused of being a CIA agent when 34 members of the ruling Labor party signed a motion in Parliament in March alleging there were CIA agents at the U.S. embassy. The embassy has declined comment on these allegations.

Reuters