

Ford Appointee's Link to CIA

Washington

A private humanitarian organization headed by Leo Cherne, one of President Ford's appointees to a new committee that will investigate possible abuses of authority by the Central Intelligence Agency, reportedly received some \$15,000 of CIA funds in the mid-1960s that were channeled through a New York City philanthropic organization.

Frank Weil, president of the Manhattan-based Norman Foundation, said in a telephone interview yesterday that he was approached by "a mysterious gentleman" from the CIA in 1963 or 1964 and asked to

pass about \$15,000 in government funds to the International Rescue Committee, of which Cherne was then chairman of the board.

Weil recalled that the funds had been earmarked for a medical services project in what was then the Belgian Congo that was being supported by the rescue committee, but said he was uncertain whether Cherne or anyone else there had been told that the money was from the CIA and not from the foundation's endowment.

Cherne, reached at his New York City office, said that neither he nor any official of the committee had the slightest knowledge

that any of those funds were CIA funds."

He said that the committee, which he has headed since 1951, had "never sought CIA funds" and would not have "welcomed" them if they had been offered overtly.

Mr. Ford announced on Tuesday that he was naming Cherne to the newly established intelligence oversight board—set up as part of Mr. Ford's reforms of intelligence community operations—to monitor the CIA's activities for possible illegalities.

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