

A Hidden Liberal

Cord Meyer Jr.

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WASHINGTON, March 29 —In Washington social and intellectual circles, Cord Meyer Jr. has been well known for many years. To the liberals of this college generation, his name means nothing.

These young people might be impressed to know that 20 years ago he founded and headed the United World Federalists to "achieve peace through a world federation." But if they knew what he had been doing for the last 16 years, they might also assign him a high place in their current demonology.

During those years, Mr. Meyer has been submerged in the anonymity of the Central Intelligence Agency. His name has surfaced again because he has been the "spook" in charge of covertly subsidizing the overseas activities of the National Student Association and other youth groups, labor and professional organizations and charitable institutions.

At age 47, Mr. Meyer seems no less dedicated to the C.I.A. than to world federalism. But the contrast puzzles even some of his friends.

"He was one of the most promising guys," one of them said recently. "Very sensitive, very intelligent. His whole spirit was one of great humanity. He got cold warized."

Panel's Recommendations

The uproar, particularly in the press and the academic community, set off by the recent disclosure of C.I.A. subsidies to private organization, led President Johnson to appoint a committee to study the matter, the committee, headed by Under-Secretary of State Nicholas deB. Katzenbach, recommended today the creation of a "public-private mechanism to provide public funds openly for overseas activities" of private organizations.

The President has accepted this recommendation. If Congress underwrites it, Mr. Meyer will have to turn his talents to other work in the intelligence community, for presumably his job will be abolished.



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"Schoolled and skilled in the art of indirection."

In the late 1940's and early 1950's many liberals who wished to serve their country found in the C.I.A. not only a personal haven, safe from the onslaughts of McCarthyism, but also an opportunity to bring to bear on the problems of the cold war a realistic and liberal understanding of the pluralism of emerging countries. Mr. Meyer and many high officials in the C.I.A. are cases in point.

Cord and his twin brother Quentin were born Nov. 10, 1920, in Washington, where his father, Cord Meyer, a Long Island real estate developer turned diplomat, was between overseas assignments. His mother was the former Katharine Blair Thaw. His grandfather, also named Cord, who had developed large sections of Long Island, had once served as Democratic chairman.

The twins went to St. Paul's preparatory school and then to Yale, where Cord was a big man on campus—goalie on the hockey team, member of the best clubs, a brilliant student (Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude in English literature). The wartime class of 1943 was graduated in the fall of 1942, and Cord graduated ahead of the class. Two weeks later he enlisted in the Marines.

From the Pacific he wrote a series of intensely moving war letters that were published in *The Atlantic Monthly*. In June, 1944, the war came to an end for him on Guam, when a Japanese grenade exploded in front of him and destroyed an eye.

Aide to Stassen

In April, 1945, he married Mary Eno Pinchot, daughter of Amos Pinchot, lawyer and publicist, and niece of former Gov. Gifford Pinchot of Pennsylvania, the conservationist. Then he left for San Francisco, where he was an aide to Harold E. Stassen at the founding of the United Nations.

An autobiographical short story—"Waves of Darkness"—won for him the O. Henry Prize in 1946 for the best first-published story. An article, "A Serviceman Looks at the Peace," was included in an anthology, "Essays for Our Time."

He became deeply concerned with the fragility of the peace and the seeming inevitability of world-consuming nuclear warfare unless the United Nations was given the power

to impose disarmament by its own forces.

In 1947, while on a junior fellowship at Harvard, he put his plan and timetable for avoiding Armageddon in a book, "Peace or Anarchy," which sold more than 50,000 copies. Meanwhile, he became a member of the national planning board of the American Veterans Committee and founder and president of the United World Federalists.

Then, in 1951, he joined the C.I.A.

"It was a great surprise to his friends," said one of them the other day. "He was not the C.I.A. type. He was a world government man."

Why did he do it? Probably only Mr. Meyer knows, and he does not discuss it, even with friends. One who knows him well speculated that he was deeply affected by the battle he waged against Communist infiltrators of the veterans committee planning board. Another former associate said: "He was always very apocalyptic, sort of Dostoevskian."

On two things there is agreement. First, that he was personally recruited by Allen W. Dulles, former C.I.A. director, and second, that Mr. Dulles stood stanchly by his decision when the late Senator Joseph R. McCarthy attacked him for hiring a "world federalist."

To those who know Mr. Meyer only professionally, he gives the impression of being almost the caricature of a C.I.A. agent.

"He is totally gray," said one official, "gray hair, gray suit, gray look, and he gives you the gray answer. He is schooled and skilled in the art of indirection."

But to friends who see him socially, he presents quite another aspect—a gracious host who slips out of his gray suit into a red-lined blue blazer, talks avidly about modern art, listens to recordings of poetry for hours on end and plays a combative game of tennis. He is also an ardent trout fisherman.

But his friends also say he can be extremely trying. "He is an unrelenting advocate for his own ideas," one of them said. "I'm not sure he really listens," said another. Others use the words "intense," "arrogant," "argumentative," "bellicose," "Teutonic."

"It is very difficult for him to understand that it isn't necessarily the duty of the citizen to support the C.I.A.," one friend said. "He feels the nation must support the C.I.A."

He was particularly irate over the disclosures of the subsidies to private organizations. Yet he himself advocated some time ago that the agency begin to disengage itself from some of these connections.

His recommendation, however, was not based on any recognition of the obsolescence of the subsidy program in a changing climate, but upon the likelihood that it was about "to blow."

Mr. Meyer's personal life has been shadowed with tragedy. His twin brother Quentin was killed on Okinawa. The second of his three sons was struck by a car and killed in 1959, and shortly afterward he and his wife were divorced.

In 1964, Mary Pinchot Meyer was shot and killed by an unknown assailant as she walked along the tow-path of the old Chesapeake and Ohio canal in Georgetown. The murder has never been solved.

Mr. Meyer is now married to the former Starkey Anderson.