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Charges galore in CIA debate

Chagla promises inquiry

By our Special Correspondent

New Delhi, March 23—A half-hour discussion intended to pillory the Congress for the association of some of its leaders with agencies allegedly receiving CIA funds ended up in a great deal of embarrassment for the Opposition groups as well.

Before the debate concluded, charges that quite a few Opposition leaders had at one time or the other received CIA funds through "conduit" agencies were also heard.

Just as Mr Umanath initiated the discussion, Mrs. Tarakeshwari Sinha intervened to add Mr V. K. Krishna Menon's name to the long list of leaders beginning with Deputy Prime Minister Morarji Desai and ending with Commerce Minister Dinesh Singh and Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit, who the left Communist leader alleged, were connected with institutions financed by the CIA "conduit" foundations.

Mrs Sinha's disclosure that Mr Menon had received \$10,000 from the Asia Foundation for the International Law Institute stung the Communist opposition as sharply as Mr Umanath's charges hurt the Congress leaders. When she insisted that a number of other left politicians had also received the tainted money, an uproar resulted. The names of Opposition and Congress leaders were banded about by the dozen.

Congress member Shashi Bhushan wanted to know the sources of finances which had enabled Jan Sangh leader Bhai Raj Madhok to visit Taiwan. Turning to the Communists, he alleged that a delegation of the Students' Federation, a Communist-inspired student organization, which visited Finland had also visited West Germany with CIA funds. Mrs Sinha alleged that the SSP leader George Fernandes had benefited from CIA sources when he was connected with the Hind Mazdoor Sabha. She conceded, however, that he was no longer connected with the HMS.

Provoked by the attack on Mr Madhok, Jan Sangh member Kanwarlal Gupta and Onkarnath Berwa demanded that the Government should inquire into the activities of the Russian and Chi-

What a Life!



"That tip—are you sure it isn't CIA money?"

nese financed agencies.

This atmosphere of charges and counter charges set the appropriate context for External Affairs Minister M. C. Chagla to agree to a demand by the SSP leader Madhu Limaye that there should be a comprehensive inquiry to find out how foreign money was coming into India and the manner of its disbursement.

Replying to the discussion, Mr Chagla said the Government felt concerned over foreign interference in Indian activities and assured the House that the Government was as anxious as the opposition to get to the root of the matter.

The External Affairs Minister,
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Govt. will act through CIB, says Chagla

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however, refused to commit himself to a commission of inquiry demanded by the Opposition. How precisely the Government would institute the inquiry would be decided after he had discussed it with his Cabinet colleagues, Mr Chagla said.

In his reply, Mr Chagla also made a distinction between intelligence activities which he thought was "a fact of international life one had to learn to live with" and espionage which was reprehensible.

"We will take action through the Intelligence Bureau to unearth any plot, any activity which is objectionable, which is against national interests," he said.

Referring to allegations by Opposition members, Mr Chagla said "the Government would take care to see that under the cloak of cultural exchanges people are not being inducted into a political philosophy or way of life, contrary to what we believe in."

But for these assurances, the discussion brought no new information to light. Mr Umanath's description of CIA activities, based on copious quotations from American newspapers, had all the cloak-and-dagger flourish.

Mr Limaye was more forthright. He paid a tribute to American democracy for having unearthed the CIA operations. Criticising

the Government of India for its failure he alleged that the Central Bureau of Investigation and the CIA had functioned in co-operation with each other. He quoted the former U.S. Ambassador Galbraith in this context.

Mr Chagla's defence against the opposition insinuations smacked of political naivete. He almost seemed to plead for indulgence because Mr Desai and the others, including the Opposition leaders, were innocent dupes as they had no knowledge of the source of the finances of the institutions with which they were associated.

Sihanouk alleges CIA plot

Phnom Penh, March 23 (Reuter)—Cambodian Head of State Prince Norodom Sihanouk said yesterday he had been told of a plot by the American Central Intelligence Agency to eliminate him this year.

But he admitted the story might not be true.

The CIA was at work in Cambodia hatching a plot to depose him during 1967, he said.

"If the intentions attributed to the CIA are confirmed, the result would be to push Cambodia towards Communism," he added.