

STAT

OCT 25 1967

# Finnish Unions and The CIA

By Roland Huntford  
London Observer

Helsinki

The United States Central Intelligence Agency has been drawn into the rivalry within the Finnish trade union movement with the accusation that the CIA has been providing funds for one side. Allegations have been circulating privately for some time, but now a public accusation has been made by a former trade union official, Nillo Koljonen.

According to Koljonen, the Confederation of Finnish Trades Unions (SAJ) has for some time been receiving a subsidy of 168,000 dollars from the CIA. The purpose, he claims, has been to prolong the split in the Finnish Trade Union movement.

The movement has been long divided into two factions. The SAJ is run by members of the Social Democratic Party and belongs to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in Brussels; their rival, the Finnish Trade Union Federation (SAK), is under Communist leadership.

### BREAK

The SAJ broke away from the then Finnish Trades Union Congress in 1958 when the TUC came under Communist influence, and since then there has been a continuous and running battle between them and the SAK.

The division mirrored the enmity between the Social Democrats and the Communists. But now that both belong to the so-called "popular front" government (of which the third member is the Center or Farmers' Party), the antagonism has waned at least on the surface. There have been moves towards a reunification of the trade union movement.

an anti-Communist bastion among the trade unions. He further claims that the general secretary of the SAJ, Jaakko Rantanen, and the organizing secretary, Maunu Alppinen, have been cooperating with the CIA, since they too disapprove of reunification.

### DISGUISE

According to Koljonen, the alleged CIA subsidies have been disguised as originating from the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions or Scandinavian donors. He says that they take the form of both outright gifts and loans. He claims to have written evidence that interest has been paid on the latter.

Understandably, the SAK have made capital out of Koljonen's accusations. There are at present negotiations between them and the SAJ for reunification. But little progress has been made, since each side wants control of the new organization, and a working compromise has not even begun to appear.

SAK spokesmen accept Koljonen's accusations as fact. Some of them apparently want the SAJ ignored and individual unions absorbed into the SAK — an ideal solution from their point of view, since it would give the SAK and the Communist Party control of the whole Finnish trade union movement.

### ARTICLE

Finnish trade union officials are suggesting privately that there may be indirect confirmation of Koljonen's accusations in an article by Thomas Braden in the Los Angeles Times, which claims that the CIA has been paying great attention to trade union movements abroad.

But the whole affair seems a counter-blast to long-standing suspicions that the SAK has been receiving regular help from the Soviet Union. And it seems that the kernel of Koljonen's criticism is that Finnish trade unionists — whatever their camp — take too light a view of accepting financial help from outside.