

MAY 22 1967

Sanitized - Approved For Release : CIA-RDP75-00149R000100500022-5

THE CIA:

What Was So Wrong?

For Thomas Braden, it was roughly like sitting through a James Bond movie with everyone else in the audience rooting for SMERSH. He had suffered in silence through mounting attacks on the Central Intelligence Agency for secretly bankrolling a wide assortment of private American groups abroad—a scheme Braden himself hatched during a 1950-54 hitch with the CIA. "I asked myself what was so wrong with what we did," he said last week. So Braden published his case for the defense—and succeeded mainly in reopening the whole messy *scandale* all over again.

Braden, 49, a sometime spymaster, educator, museum executive, newspaper publisher (of The Oceanside [Calif.] Blade-Tribune) and liberal Democratic politician, mapped his strategy carefully. He wanted maximum impact, so he placed his piece ("I'm Glad the CIA Is 'Immoral'") in The Saturday Evening Post, and he tried to limit himself to cases already mentioned in the press. His choice of a mass magazine heightened the splash, all right—but his insider's standing seemed to confirm links



Associated Press

Braden: One for our side

that had only been rumored between the CIA and a variety of clients ranging from a little magazine in London to big labor in the U.S.

Braden's point was that the CIA and its beneficiaries were simply doing their patriotic duty, "defending the U.S. against a new and extraordinarily successful weapon . . . the international Communist front." In the early cold-war years, by his accounting, the Russians were socking \$250 million a year into a miscellany of cultural, labor, student,

peace and agtrop groups; Red-led unions were sabotaging U.S. aid shipments to Europe and threatening to topple friendly governments. The U.S., by contrast, was squeamish about fighting back covertly—and too paralyzed by McCarthyism to navigate overt subsidies for left-democratic groups through Congress. So Braden sold his plan to CIA chief Allen Dulles: secret subsidies to private organizations—even if they did not "support every aspect of official American policy." His argument: "When an adversary attacks with his weapons disguised as good works, to choose innocence is to choose defeat."

Some entries in the Braden casebook:

- The CIA funneled money into some anti-Communist union organizing enterprises run by onetime (1927-29) U.S. Communist Party boss Jay Lovestone, then an International Ladies Garment Workers Union staffer, now the AFL-CIO's Director of International Affairs. Braden said he still has a pseudonymous receipt for \$15,000 he once signed over as "Warren G. Haskins") to one "Norris A. Grambo," a cover name for Lovestone lieutenant Irving Brown. Brown, says Braden, had to have the money "to pay off his strong-arm squads in Mediterranean ports, so that American supplies could be unloaded against the opposition of Communist dock workers."

- Braden also slipped \$50,000 in \$50 bills to United Auto Workers president Walter Reuther for international operations run by his brother Victor—a particularly vociferous critic of Lovestone's long-rumored ties with the CIA. "Victor Reuther ought to be ashamed of himself" for attacking Lovestone, said Braden, since both men were only performing a patriotic service. And, Braden went on, Reuther performed his with "less than perfect wisdom," banking the \$50,000 in some West German unions that had cash enough and were already anti-Communist.

- As long rumored, the CIA had funneled money through the European-based Congress for Cultural Freedom to support the Anglo-American intellectual monthly Encounter. Braden not only confirmed the tale but embellished it by saying the CIA had placed one "agent" in the Congress, while another "became an editor of Encounter."

The over-all program was essential to turn back Communism, Braden insisted—but the people he implicated, anti-Communists all, acted nonetheless scandalized. Encounter's four past and present editors—each suspect under Braden's anonymous reference to an "agent" editor—each denied having known for sure about the CIA link until recently, and two of them (poet Stephen Spender and critic Frank Kermode) quit as a gesture to disown it. (Braden later explained

that the editor in his account had been an "unwitting" agent who was editorially independent but served U.S. ends simply by doing what came naturally.) Lovestone and Brown, too, insisted they never took CIA money, and their boss, AFL-CIO president George Meany, blasted Braden's story as "a damn lie . . . Not one penny of CIA money has ever come in to the AFL or the AFL-CIO to my knowledge over the last twenty years." Only Walter Reuther, of all the principals involved, admitted knowingly taking CIA money—and then only once, in an "emergency situation," to his subsequent regret. Reuther added his own postscript—that Braden had tried recruiting brother Victor as a CIA agent and that Victor had "emphatically rejected" the bid. Braden denied that.

'New Flap': And so the attorney for the defense became an exhibit for the prosecution. The CIA was unhappy. (Before publication, said Braden, "they called me to express their sorrow.") So were the newspapers. (The CIA-labor link-up, said The New York Times, "merely underscores the mischief inherent in clandestine ties between unions and an espionage agency, no matter how virtuous the purposes of the relationship.") And so, in the end, was Tom Braden. "I wanted to get across the message of what we set out to do," he said. "I succeeded better than I intended. I really didn't expect to create a new flap."

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