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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion Volume 156 Number 8 Issue 2726 February 25, 1967
 Published weekly (except July and August when it is biweekly) and distributed by The New Republic, 1244 19th St., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036. Phone FEderal 8-2494. Single copy 35c. Yearly subscription, \$9; Foreign \$20; Armed Forces personnel or students, \$6. Send all remittances and correspondence about subscriptions, undelivered copies, and changes of addresses to Subscription Department, The New Republic, 381 West Center Street, Marion, Ohio 43302. Copyright © 1967 by Harrison-Blaine of New Jersey, Inc. Item g. Second Class Postage Paid at Washington, D. C. Indexed in Readers' Guide.

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CIA Stooges

CPYRGHT

The Central Intelligence Agency won't voluntarily mend its ways, even though its congressional watchdogs now include Senators Fulbright, Mansfield and Hickenlooper. But its past meddling and blunders continue to catch up with it, and the latest revelation about them calls for a congressional crackdown. This year marks the CIA's twentieth birthday, but any celebrating is rendered out of order by the admission by Eugene Groves, president of the National Student Association, that for about 15 years the association, which also is 20 this year, has been taking secret subsidies from the CIA totaling millions of dollars. The covert financing was handled by private foundations that acted as the CIA's go-betweens. Groves, a 1965 Rhodes scholar, says that "in the past two years" the student leaders "came to believe" that the relationship was "inconsistent with the democratic, open nature of the NSA." However, they were still taking the money last year, when they got the not unhandsome sum of \$50,000. Until recently the NSA leaders in the know apparently were quite happy with their furtive relationship with the big spy outfit, but "conditions have changed," Groves says. Would it be uncharitable to suggest the change of heart was because the money was tapering off anyway and people like Fulbright - and *Ramparts* magazine - were getting too close to the facts for NSA's comfort?

Groves says that "at no time" did the student organization "serve any intelligence function" or provide "information of a sensitive nature" to any government agency. Others say it did, and a NSA president who knew about the link between his association and the CIA and didn't let on has a formidable credibility problem. What is an "intelligence function" and what information is or isn't "sensitive"? Some people now say that for years the NSA has kept detailed files filled with intimate information about American students who go abroad as well as about foreign students into whose confidence NSA leaders, "acting internationally," in the NSA's own phrase, managed to worm themselves. All this information was sedulously collected on the pretext of studying student politics around the world, but it now seems that most of it or all of it was furnished to the CIA, for money received. Much of it no doubt was trivial. Some of the snoopers apparently followed the fashionable interrogative line of probing as far as possible into personal habits, especially sex ones, of their unsuspecting victims. In doing so, presumably they were faithfully carrying out instructions. The subjects' ideological affilia-

tions of course were not neglected. It may be surmised that the CIA now has or thinks it has (amateur spies are notoriously unreliable, even when they forfeit their amateur status for pay) the dirt on past and present student leaders, in this country and in countries abroad, who have been fingered for it by its NSA informants.

Some NSA members not in the plot were beginning to get suspicious of the same old faces, by now practically middle-aged, that showed up at international student conferences year after year, were in regular attendance at Brussels and Leyden and were constantly making trips to Africa and Latin America. Now that Mr. Groves has spilled the beans, suspicion has turned to certainty as far as NSA itself is concerned, and extends to such connected organizations as the US Youth Council, the World Assembly of Youth, the International Student Conference, numerous fraternal and labor organizations, and the foundations with which they have had financial relations.

Once their cover was blown, NSA leaders at anguished meetings in their Washington headquarters (bought and paid for by the CIA) joined the CIA and the State Department in attempted explanations. The favorite apologia is that in the early nineteen-fifties communist countries were very busy financing and controlling student "front" organizations. It was felt that fire had to be fought with fire, and that when competing with communists this country could not safely rely on independent individuals but had to stoop to subsidized spokesmen, though in the case of NSA some students praiseworthily did speak out freely.

But this can be only part of the story. Why a *secret* subsidy? Because, it's said, people wouldn't listen to American students if they knew they took money from the government. This excuse won't wash; NSA gets money openly from many government sources, including the State Department. The United States Information Agency recently offered the same foolish defense of its practice of secretly subsidizing selected books that are foisted on an unsuspecting public, both here and abroad, as free and independent productions. Reed Harris, a USIA director, told the House Appropriations Committee, "we control things from the very idea down to the final edited manuscript." USIA Assistant Director Ben Posner confessed to the committee that "we have not in the past divulged the government's connection with" those books. Asked why, he replied: "It minimizes their value." The governments of other countries, including the Soviet Union, subsidize books for distribution abroad but don't bother to pretend they aren't.

Less than a year ago, the CIA was found to have infiltrated a Michigan State University project in South Vietnam; then it was discovered that George A. Carver Jr., who cozened the highly respected political quarterly

Foreign Affairs into printing an article on the Viet Cong, was in fact a full-time employee of CIA. That affiliation was concealed.

The revelations about NSA, taken in conjunction with other recent happenings, are bound to create a backlash in the rest of the world that will hurt this country. The puritan found rolling dead drunk in the ditch rarely gets much sympathy from those to whom he has been delivering high-minded homilies. A lot of people are going to conclude that bought students are part of a bigger picture that includes corporations which bug one another's board rooms for industrial secrets, and congressmen who are up for sale. This backlash we must live with as best we can, but immediate and thoroughgoing scrutiny of CIA is mandatory if the country isn't to have a serious problem at home, with an outraged student body. American college youths are already deep in cynicism about their society. Now these students must reflect that the same kind of people who have been denouncing radical activities on the Berkeley campus, and demanding loyalty oaths, were busy in the back room calling signals for the biggest organization of college students, almost from its inception. The 1965-66 NSA president admits he was rebuked by CIA for suggesting a Moscow meeting with a Soviet student organization.

"What the country needs most of the university," the former president of Chicago once said, "and what only the university can supply, is intellectual leadership. The university could fashion the mind of the age. Now it is the other way around, the demands of the age are fashioning the mind, if one may use the expression, of the university." Disillusioned students will need some convincing that they are getting an education in order to serve Dr. Hutchins' expressed goal, instead of being the stooges or dupes of the government and the Central Intelligence Agency. They will never be convinced if, in addition to knowing that more than half the income of the universities now comes in the form of federal grants for "research," they have reason to believe that their own student leaders are recruits of the CIA.

The only way to tackle this particular credibility gap is for Congress to intervene. Left to itself, and notwithstanding the integrity of Undersecretary of State Katzenbach, the Executive branch will cover up, not clean up the mess. Congress should take a sharp look at the law which permits tax-exempt foundations to receive funds without publicly disclosing their source. More important it is up to Congress to cut the CIA back to its original size and confine it strictly to its duties as they were first defined in the 1947 National Security Act - to "correlate and evaluate" security information. Thus realigned, the CIA wouldn't have quite so many millions of dollars to bribe the students or any other Americans.