



How Closely Was Leftist Institute Tied to CIA?

By VIRGINIA PREWETT

THE very reddest among a legion of red faces created by revelation of the CIA's support of a wide variety of politically active organizations must be those of people who have consistently accused the U.S. of supporting only reactionary forces in Latin America.

The current flap confirms that the CIA from 1961 till last year materially helped New York's Institute for International Labor Research, which had the sponsorship of longtime Socialist leader Norman Thomas as its chief recommendation to Latin American leftists. It was actually run by the Secretary-General, Sacha Volman.

Mr. Thomas denies he knew his organization was a channel for the CIA. Mr. Volman vehemently denied it to me a few years ago. But somebody had to know and Mr. Volman is the most likely.

DIRECTION, TOO?

The question today is whether Mr. Volman simply used CIA funds or whether he also received CIA direction. For he has played a key role in the internal affairs of the democratic left in Latin America.

Mr. Volman's relationship with former President Juan Bosch of the Dominican Republic was extremely close thru the years. Mr. Bosch was sustained during part of his exile by teaching in the Costa Rican school for left-of-center Latin American leadership to which the Volman-run organization channeled funds.

Indeed, when Mr. Bosch visited the U.S. as Dominican

president-elect, you had to "go thru Sasha" to see him — and some of Bosch's oldest friends did not get thru.

The question of the CIA role is fascinating because the Volman-Bosch axis, while funding the Costa Rican school, for leftist leadership, actually split Latin America's democratic left.

SHIFTED SUPPORT

After Mr. Bosch became Dominican president, the CIA-backed and Volman-run New York organization shifted its economic support from the Costa Rican school to one founded and run by Mr. Volman in the Dominican Republic.

In the political spectrum, the Volman-Bosch group at this time moved considerably to the left of the democratic-leftist movement sparked by former President Jose Figueres of Costa Rica and the then President Romulo Betancourt of Venezuela.

A major difference arose at the time of Bosch's inauguration, when Betancourt, under heavy pressure from pro-Castro guerillas, asked Bosch to crack down on simular organizations in his own country. Bosch refused, as he did later, on the grounds that the pro-communists had fought Trujillo's dictatorship.

Bosch and Volman then obviously set out to capture a continental leadership of Latin America's democratic left, and to create one considerable more radical than the Figueres-Betancourt movement. The pertinent question is: Did they try to build their personal political empire while accepting CIA backing, but without CIA connivance? Or was this done with the knowledge and consent of the CIA?