

Orig Freedom House



CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

PUBLIC AFFAIRS
Phone: (703) 351-7676

8 February 1978

Leonard R. Sussman
Executive Director
Freedom House
Wilkie Memorial Building
20 West 40th Street
New York, NY 10018

Dear Mr. Sussman:

Thank you very much for your quick response to my request for information on freedom of the press around the world. The material you sent was most useful, and I'm keeping it on hand for future reference.

Reimbursement for the material is to be provided by another office in the Agency. Please let me know if you have not received it.

Thank you again for your help.

Sincerely,

[Redacted Signature]

Deputy Assistant for Public Affairs
to the Director of Central Intelligence

STAT

STAT/DCI/PA/D [Redacted] /JW

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at the Willkie Memorial Building 20 West 40th Street, New York, N.Y. 10018 (212) 730-7744

Programs to strengthen the institutions of freedom
Research, publications, advisories on domestic and foreign affairs
Comparative Survey of Freedom in every nation
Freedom at Issue, a bimonthly • Book program in Asia, Africa, Latin America

January 17, 1978

STAT

[Redacted]

Deputy Assistant for Public Affairs
to the Director of Central Intelligence
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C. 20505

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Dear [Redacted]

In response to your call today I am pleased to enclose the following information on our estimates of the level of press freedom around the world. As I indicated, our judgments under civil rights/liberties in the several tables are determined in large measure on the actual independence of journalists from the regime (whether or not independence is proclaimed in constitutions, etc.; and whether or not communications media are operated or regulated by the government, as in the case of the BBC).

I also enclose Mass News Media and the Third World Challenge and other articles on this related subject.

Please let me know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

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Executive Director

jm
enclosures

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~~SECRET~~
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Leo Cherne:

Taking a look at a CIA-watcher

By Jim Kostman and Bob Katz

Last year, the Rockefeller Commission investigated allegations of illegal domestic spying by the CIA. Composed largely of men with previous ties to the US intelligence community, the Commission concluded that some abuses had occurred and made limited recommendations to prevent future ones. President Ford's recently announced plans for dealing with this problem include the formation of a three-man Intelligence Advisory Board. It too is composed of men long associated with covert politics.

Most interesting of these is Leo Cherne, described in press accounts as a professional economist and head of the Research Institute of America. For some 25 years, Cherne has been chairman of the International Rescue

Committee (IRC), a strongly anti-communist organization with the ostensible purpose of setting up relief operations in foreign countries and assisting refugees from areas which have come under communist control.

With this brief background in mind, it is noteworthy that in January, 1962, a young American former Marine named Lee Harvey Oswald, who had defected to the Soviet Union in 1959, wrote to the IRC asking for financial aid for his intended return to the United States. In December, 1961, Oswald had informed the American embassy in Moscow that he wished to return to the USA. The State Department then contacted the IRC and a Texas chapter of the Red Cross about helping Oswald. At the suggestion of the embassy, Oswald wrote twice to the IRC, initially requesting \$800, then upping it to \$1000. "After all this time our visas have finally been granted, thank

God," Oswald wrote the IRC on Jan. 25, 1962, "but our troubles are not financial, only if your organization steps in."

The IRC never stepped in. They informed the State Department that "as a strongly anti-communist organization, we would hardly be the appropriate agency for an American who went to Russia to live there." The IRC never even replied to Oswald, but the State Department eventually came through with \$435, apparently the sum Oswald required to sail to New York.

The Warren Commission Report states only that Oswald attempted between Feb. 6 and May 1 to procure aid from the IRC. But this account is in conflict with the evidence contained in the 26 volumes of hearings and exhibits published by the Commission. These documents show that Oswald contacted the IRC long before Feb. 6, and Oswald's letters from the spring of 1962, prior to May 1, reveal that he had already been assured of the State Dept. money. If Oswald continued to correspond with the IRC until May 1, there is no record of it.

There are many curious aspects of Oswald's attempt to get help from the IRC. In the early stages of his attempt to get aid, Oswald wrote to his mother and got her, with the help of the Red Cross, to contact the IRC. When the IRC wrote back to the Red Cross, they said that the State Dept. had already been in touch with them about the Oswald case. The whole affair, including the fact that the State Dept. wound up financing the return of this one-time defector, is one reason why many people suspect that Oswald went to Russia as an agent of the U.S. government. In fact, when Mrs. Marguerite Oswald alleged that her son was a government agent, she cited the IRC/State Dept. episode.

A few days after the pointment, the connections to the subject of a *New York Times* article by John Crewdson's story at least some of the million dollars raised by the IRC comes at least partly from the CIA, quoted Frank W. Norman Foundation was approached by a "mysterious" person asked to pass about the IRC for a project in the name of Andrew Norman.

The Norman Foundation called the incident but said the money was earmarked for an unspecified Latin American effort.

The *Times* noted that the Norman Foundation was one of many institutions identified in 1967 disclosures as a conduit for CIA funds. The *Times* reported that the J.M. Kaplan Fund, also identified as a CIA conduit, has given money to both the IRC and Freedom House, an organization which publishes information on the alleged suppression of freedom in socialist countries, and of which Cherne is chairman of the executive committee.

Crewdson's report, if true, would have established the first definite link between the CIA and the IRC. But the next day, Crewdson reported that Weil had retracted the original story, saying that he had "misremembered" the crucial episode. Freedom House, apparently made nervous by the publicity, wrote the CIA and asked if they had ever been a direct or indirect recipient of CIA funds. CIA director George Bush assured Freedom House they were clean. When Cherne was asked by the *Times* why he never checked the Norman Foundation grants to the IRC for possible CIA influence, he replied, "That's the silliest question I've ever heard."

gence organization that preceded the CIA.

But we don't want to make too much of this. Cherne himself has said that the IRC is just a hobby. Men entrusted with keeping tabs on the spy agencies should be evaluated for impartiality on the basis of all their past endeavors -- like the Citizen's Committee for a Free Cuba. Founded in the spring of 1963, its membership included Cherne, Clare Booth Luce, General S.L.A. Marshall, Christopher Emmet, also of the IRC and head of the American Friends of the Captive Nations, as well as Jay Lovestone and Irving Brown, of the American Institute for Free Labor Development, which has served as a CIA front for manipulating foreign labor unions. In a report published by Cherne's Freedom House, the new committee called for a new national policy to liberate Cuba "by all means necessary." This meant encouragement of hit-and-run raids on Cuba rather than direct US military intervention. The report suggested that these raids would not endanger world peace if carried out from bases outside US territory. The report also called for assistance to the antiCastro Cuban underground in Cuba "through every possible channel."

CIA 205.1 FOIA

CIA 1.01 Bush, George

**Bush Says Freedom House
Did Not Get C.I.A. Funds**

In response to a request made three weeks ago, Freedom House, an organization that monitors the degree of freedom enjoyed by the citizens of various countries, has received from the Central Intelligence Agency an assurance that the C.I.A. has never passed funds to the organization.

The assurance came in a letter dated March 2 from George Bush, the Director of Central Intelligence.

Freedom House has requested the assurance after its name appeared in published reports saying that C.I.A. funds had been channeled in the 1960's to the International Rescue Committee, a humanitarian organization headed by Leo Cherne, one of President Ford's appointees to a new intelligence oversight board. Mr. Cherne is also chairman of Freedom House's executive committee.

Cherne Unit Not Tied to C.I.A. Fund

By JOHN M. CREWDSON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 20—Frank Weil, president of the Manhattan-based Norman Foundation, said today that he erred in his assertion yesterday that the Central Intelligence Agency had passed about \$15,000 through his organization to the International Rescue Committee in the mid-1960's. Mr. Weil said in a telephone interview that on checking the foundation's records, he had discovered that none of the \$27,000 it gave to the I.R.C. from 1961 to 1965 had been provided by the intelligence agency.

He said that the \$50,000 in C.I.A. funds passed through the foundation in that period had gone instead to four other organizations—the American Society of African Culture, the African-American Institute, the Pan American Foundation and the International Development Foundation.

Leo Cherne, one of President Ford's three appointees to a new intelligence oversight board set up to check for possible abuses of authority by the C.I.A. and other intelligence agencies, is board chairman of the I.R.C.

Mr. Cherne, a professional economist, said the I.R.C.'s work involves assistance to political refugees round the world. The I.R.C. project funded by the Norman Foundation was

a medical-service unit set up in the Belgian Congo to aid Angolan refugees and others.

Mr. Weil said today that he "misrecalled" himself yesterday in recollecting that "a mysterious gentleman" from the C.I.A. had approached him in 1963 or 1964 with a specific request to pass agency money to the Congo medical project. He said he had also erred in recalling that the foundation had agreed to serve as a pass-through for the funds only after deciding that the I.R.C. project would have been worthy of a contribution from its own endowment.

"I Was Wrong"

"Let me make it very clear," he said in the interview, "I made a mistake. I was wrong."

Although he spoke to Mr. Cherne last night and again this morning, he said, Mr. Cherne "did not ask me to do anything" with respect to setting the record straight. He is amending his earlier statements because "harm has been done," he emphasized.

Mr. Cherne was appointed in 1973 to sit on the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, which The New York Times reported erroneously today was abolished by Mr. Ford this week. It was the United States Intelligence Board that was abolished by executive order on Wednesday.

The President's Intelligence

Board, created by President Eisenhower in 1956, is a group of private citizens responsible for reviewing the functions of the Federal intelligence community and reporting to the President on the conduct of those agencies.

The United States Intelligence Board was a high-level coordinating group within the intelligence community, presided over by the director of Central Intelligence. In the past it met as often as each week to coordinate intelligence data available from all members of the community.

In a related development Freedom House, an organization with which Mr. Cherne has also been closely associated for many years, asked George Bush, director of Central Intelligence, whether the C.I.A. had ever given it funds "directly or through any other entity."

The request was in a letter sent to Mr. Bush that mentioned a report, also in today's Times, that Freedom House received \$3,500 from the J. M. Kaplan Fund between 1962 and 1964.

The Times article quoted executives of the Kaplan Fund as having said that while they had passed C.I.A. money to the now-defunct Institute for International Labor Research, all the funds paid by them to Freedom House or to the I.R.C. had been their own.

Group Led by C.I.A. Board Nominee Reportedly Got \$15,000 From Agency

By JOHN M. CREWDSON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 19 — A private humanitarian organization headed by Leo Cherne, one of President Ford's appointees to a new committee that will investigate possible abuses of authority by the Central Intelligence Agency, reportedly received some \$15,000 of C.I.A. funds in the mid-1960's that were channeled through a New York City philanthropic organization.

Frank Weil, President of the Manhattan-based Norman Foundation, said in a telephone interview today that he was approached by "a mysterious gentleman" from the C.I.A. in 1963 or 1964 and asked to pass about \$15,000 in Government funds to the International Rescue Committee, of which Mr. Cherne was then chairman of the board.

Mr. Weil recalled that the funds had been earmarked for a medical services project in what was then the Belgian Congo that was being supported by the rescue committee. But he said he was uncertain whether Mr. Cherne or anyone else there had been told that the money was from the C.I.A. and not from the foundation's endowment.

Mr. Cherne, reached at his New York City office, said that neither he "nor any official of the I.R.C. had the slightest knowledge that any of those funds were C.I.A. funds."

He said that the committee, which he has headed since 1951, had "never sought C.I.A. funds" and would not have "welcomed" them if they had been offered overtly.

On Previous Board

President Ford announced on Tuesday that he was naming Mr. Cherne to the newly established intelligence oversight board, set up as part of Mr. Ford's reforms of intelligence community operations to monitor the C.I.A.'s activities for possible illegalities or improprieties.

Mr. Cherne had previously been a member of the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, which Mr. Ford abolished yesterday.

The Norman Foundation, formerly known as the Aaron E. Norman Fund, was among the institutions identified publicly in 1967 as those that had served as "conduits" for C.I.A. financing of a number of domestic organizations, principally the National Student Association.

Those disclosures prompted President Johnson to establish an investigating committee to look into the agency's relationships with domestic groups, and Mr. Johnson subsequently ordered all Federal agencies to halt their covert funding of such organizations.

Keeping Independence

Mr. Cherne, who described the committee as one of his hobbies, said that he had tried diligently over the years "to maintain the independent status" of the organization, saying that he believed that its freedom from government associations was crucial to its work abroad.

Asked why, in the wake of the 1967 disclosures, he had not asked the I.R.C. to recheck

its sources of financing to make certain that the committee had not unwittingly taken any C.I.A. money, Mr. Cherne replied that that was the "stupidest question I've ever heard."

It would have been next to impossible, he said, to cull the contribution records of an organization that raised in the neighborhood of \$3 million each year to examine them for donations that might have initiated with the C.I.A. but reached the committee "two or three times removed."

Mr. Cherne, who sounded distressed at the disclosure by Mr. Weil, later spoke with Gil Jones, whom he identified as the I.R.C. fund-raise through whom the Norman money was received, and reported that Mr. Jones had not "the foggiest" idea that the Norman Foundation had not been the initial source of the money.

Mr. Cherne is an economist by profession and executive director of the Research Institute of America, which publishes newsletters and advisory pamphlets for businessmen.

He was vice chairman in 1972 of Democrats for Nixon and has been associated with such organizations as the Citizens' Committee for a Free Cuba, the Council Against Communist Aggression and the Citizens' Committee for Peace with Freedom in Vietnam, according to the records of Group Research.

One of the foundations identified in 1967 as having cooperated with the C.I.A. in covert financing efforts was the J. M. Kaplan Fund, also of New York, and which over the years has contributed not only to the rescue group but also to Freedom House, an organization that monitors and reports on the degree of freedom that exists in other countries of the world.

Mr. Cherne is chairman of Freedom House's executive committee, and has been associated with the organization since 1945.

An executive of the Kaplan Fund said today, however, that his foundation's cooperation with the intelligence agency had been limited to the underwriting of a single program in the 1960's, and that none of the \$21,500 given by it to the rescue committee or the \$3,500 given to Freedom House had been supplied by the intelligence agency.

The Kaplan Fund, according to tax records compiled by Group Research, an organization here that monitors the activities of private foundations, gave the I.R.C. \$10,000 in 1968 for assistance to refugees fleeing Czechoslovakia after the Soviet invasion that August.

The committee received another \$10,000 from the fund in 1971 for assistance to Bengali refugees displaced by the Pakistani war, and \$1,000 in 1983 to aid refugees in South Vietnam.

Weil Is Disputed

Mr. Weil's recollection that the C.I.A. money given to the committee had been used to support the Belgian Congo medical program, which offered its services to Angolan refugees and others in the area, was disputed by Andrew Norman, also an officer of the Norman Foundation.

Mr. Norman said he recalled that the agency money passed through his foundation to the I.R.C. had gone to support some effort in Latin America, the details of which he said he could not remember, and that the amount involved had been a "maximum of \$15,000."



FREEDOM HOUSE

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(212) 565-3344

STAT
Executive Registry
73-253
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Freedom House

September 5, 1973

Mr. William E. Colby, Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C. 20505

Dear Mr. Colby:

We are pleased to transmit this copy of guidelines for government officials and newsmen prepared by a representative group of news media persons and present and past government officials.

We hope that you will find these guidelines useful and will share them with your colleagues.

Sincerely,

~~Leonard R. Sussman~~
Executive Director

ac
encl.

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