

Praeger Discusses CIA Book Ties

In the wake of last month's disclosures, by *Ramparts* magazine and others, of the extent to which the Central Intelligence Agency has been involved with universities, student groups, foundations and private research organizations, there was a revival of allegations, long standing in the book trade, that the firm of Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., has been heavily involved in publishing books that had a CIA taint. Mr. Praeger, whose company as part of its program publishes books in cooperation with a wide variety of governmental and private research and scholarly organizations, last week gave interviews to the New York press and to *PW* in an effort, he said, "to get on the record a sense of proportion about our operations with the CIA."

First, Mr. Praeger said, the firm published "only 15 or 16 books" that had any CIA connection—fewer than 1% of the books which the company has published since it was established in 1950. Most of the "15 or 16 books" were published in the late 1950's, he added.

Asked whether other publishers also have been involved in CIA book projects, Mr. Praeger told *PW* that while there have been rumors to that effect, he personally could shed no light on the situation.

Mr. Praeger reacted to newspaper headlines that the Praeger books in question had been "suggested by" the CIA. He said that some had been suggested by the CIA and others by himself and that in this regard the publisher's role was "no different from our relationships with other government agencies."

He declined to identify by author or title any of the Praeger books that were published with CIA support. He described them as "fundamentally books which dealt with Communist parties or movements in foreign areas which were in danger of falling under Communist sway."

CIA support, Mr. Praeger continued, took the forms of providing research data and financial aid to help defray costs of editorial preparation. He declined to comment on whether CIA also supported the books by buying copies for presentation to individuals and institutions overseas. He added

that none of the CIA-assisted books was profitable from a financial standpoint although several added prestige to the Praeger list, which is strong in the field of international affairs.

"Whatever cooperation I have given to any government agency was voluntary and enthusiastic," Mr. Praeger said. "I cooperated in projects because I thought that their aims were for the good of the country."

Mr. Praeger said that he did not know of the existence of any book or publications division within CIA itself.

"The CIA at no time had any editorial control whatsoever," Mr. Praeger insisted. "The editorial board of Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., passed on the books as books, without any knowledge of where the books had come from. The books went through the regular routine of editorial staff and editorial board, who had no information about any sources of support. The books were developed according to the standards that are applied to all of our books."

A private individual's or company's cooperation with government agencies, whether open or secret, should be viewed "in the context of philosophy and principles," Mr. Praeger said. "Any government agency, including CIA, operates within the framework of national purpose and national policy. These agencies have a job to do. They are anchored in law, and their mission and purposes are established and assigned by the government. Since we don't live in an ideal world, CIA operates to some extent behind a cloak of secrecy. I don't consider it my function to question that particular aspect of national policy, but I do consider it the duty of the citizen to cooperate, assist and advise if such is needed and if the citizen is in agreement with the general purpose of the project with which he is involved. . . . Obviously, the standards of accomplishment applied to such assistance would be the standards that I would apply to any professional job for which I was responsible."

Mr. Praeger pointed out, finally, that any government agency must occasionally go to an outside pool of talent for certain technological, scholarly or book publishing projects. "I resent the implication," he said, "that government assistance for a book af-

fects the quality of the product or the integrity of the publisher, writer or scholar involved. When government interest is involved, whatever the particular government agency, we as publishers apply the same standards that we apply to the rest of our list, and sometimes we apply considerably stiffer standards."

CIA Subsidized College Bookstore Co-op

One of the revelations that has come out of *Ramparts* magazine's exposure of the financial link between the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Student Association is that CIA funds—\$140,000 of them—were used to support a student discount textbook sales organization. An Associated Press dispatch from Washington on February 22 quoted "student sources" as saying that the CIA money was used to clear up the textbook co-op's debts.

The co-op had been started in 1961 at the University of Chicago by a group of students in protest against the University of Chicago Bookstore and its policy of not discounting books. The co-op offered college texts at 15% off list price (*PW*, February 20, 1961). From the operation on the Chicago campus grew the idea of establishing a chain of textbook discount stores, located at various Midwest colleges. However, the chain concept proved too ambitious for the Chicago students, who asked the National Student Association to take over the operation. NSA did so, for \$15,000, and then discovered that it had bought a large debt as well. According to AP's sources, the CIA provided \$140,000 to clear up the debt.

Contenders Named For NBA in Translations

Four contenders have been named for the newest of the categories in which National Book Awards are presented: translations into English of works of foreign authorship (*PW*, February 13). The four are "Death on the Installment Plan" by Louis-Ferdinand Celine, translated by Ralph Manheim (*New Directions*); "Selected Poems" by Rafael Alberti, translated by Ben