

OUR READERS' MINDS

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CIA a different league

To the Editor:

As James and Marion Anderson point out (Letter, 10/25/67), a student preparing to interview CIA should consider the dangers inherent in CIA employment. They are there; and the CIA will not hide the fact.

The prospective covert CIA employee certainly must undergo a searching psychological test and a careful examination of his background, his friends and his personal habits. The CIA is looking for mature, stable, exceptionally "clean" people; the game that they are playing with other "CIAs" of other nations is not one that can be played by any damn fool that wanders in from the street.

How can anyone possibly expect CIA employees to attend conferences and present papers? Their area is one in which professional recognition comes only in newspaper headlines about blown operations and egg-on-the-face. You will never hear about the successful CIA jobs. And that is precisely why they are successful.

If it took the economist some three years and outside help to

find another job, then he must have been trying to jump from economic warfare in the CIA to the Economics Chair at Harvard. They are rather different leagues--like minor and major. In this economy, anyone with a modicum of talent and determination can quickly land some position in his chosen field; not necessarily at the top, but somewhere because jobs are not that hard to come by.

As for the CIA's reluctance to release their employees--why shouldn't they be loathe to let their people go. The CIA not only has considerable time and money invested in their covert personnel, but, of more importance, they have made them partners in plans and operations that are of significant importance to the U.S.A. The further away these people are, then the less control the CIA has over their tongues. And tongue control is--and must be--a pretty important aspect of the philosophy of all intelligence groups. Therefore, CIA employees do not discuss their work with their wives, their friends, their doctors and their ministers; therefore, CIA employees are subject to certain arbitrary Company procedures. Compartmentalization and the shut-mouth policy are practiced by all intelligence outfits--CIA included--and those who hire on know it.

If there are doctors and ministers who are serving CIA employees and discussing the problems of these people in public--or in private--then I would say that these doctors and ministers are professionally irresponsible. Furthermore, if those being served are self-acknowledged CIA employees, then they are overt CIA people and their problems are no worse and not much different than the problems of ordinary Washington bureaucrats, i.e., red-tape, bossism, traffic, housing, money, cocktail parties, politics, etc. And it seems that there is an extraordinarily high rate these days of alcoholism, secret drug-taking, and family breakdown among university professors and administrators, doctors, lawyers, merchants and chiefs, not to mention bank dicks and railroad brakemen.

Incidentally, I did not get my information on the CIA from economists, or unimpeachable sources, or trusted acquaintances, or doctors, or ministers; I went down the CIA road for some years and came back again. I am neither happy nor sad over the experience. But it certainly was an experience.

For the sake of the Constitution and for the sake of democracy the CIA is involved in a dirty and dangerous kind of work that usually doesn't measure up to the American ideals of fair play and all that. Nevertheless, the work must be done.

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