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PROGRAM THE AMERICAN WOMAN

STATION WCBS

(orig under)

DATE FEBRUARY 15, 1975

12:21 P.M. CITY

NEW YORK

CIA & League of Women Voters

LEE THORNTON: THE AMERICAN WOMAN. New charges that the CIA used the League of Women Voters overseas to conduct surveillance on women's groups. I'm Lee Thornton reporting on the CBS Radio Network. More in a moment.

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THORNTON: A Seattle woman is charging that the Central Intelligence Agency used a branch of the League of Women Voters to collect information about women's groups overseas. Ann Roberts who worked as a secretary for the Overseas Education Fund of the League says she can substantiate the charge.

ANN ROBERTS: I knew it because I gathered this much from reading the correspondence in the office that was freely circulated and was not secret or anything. It was everyday information in the office, and it didn't take too long to figure it out.

THORNTON: And what did it benefit the CIA to spy on overseas women's groups?

ROBERTS: In doing this, they can learn how to manipulate women's groups as they did in Chile, and I think it has been proven that the CIA provided funds to various movements in Chile in order to disrupt and sabotage the Allende government, and they can do the same thing -- they did it with the women's groups in Chile, they bussed them from one area of Santiago to another, and it was called The Empty -- the March of The Empty Pots, and it made it look like the poor people were against Allende's government when in fact it was the upper-class women who were demonstrating that created quite a bit of disruption in Allende's government. And, I don't want this to happen again, women being manipulated like this.

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THORNTON: Why women's groups? Ann Roberts says women are so eager to participate, to take a roll in government, that they may be easily manipulated and easily misled. Roberts was asked if she had faith in the Rockefeller investigation of the CIA.

ROBERTS: No, I don't. I have some degree of faith in the Senate investigation though, and I hope they will take up this matter. The Rockefeller brothers' foundation was one of the places funding the Overseas Education Fund, and I'm sure that they didn't want this to come out, and I don't know how much they're going to look into it, but I hope that the Senate will.

THORNTON: The Overseas Education Fund has denied giving information to the Central Intelligence Agency, and the CIA has declined to comment on the Roberts' allegations.

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THORNTON: THE AMERICAN WOMAN. Lee Thornton, CBS News, New York.