

1 March 1976

## Letters to the editor

### **'I never fingered Richard Welch ...'**

The comment accompanying your front-page photograph of me on Jan. 16 was in error. I never "fingered" Richard Welch to *Counter-spy*, the *Athens News* or to any other publication or person. However, I continue to help other journalists, and would have helped the *Athens News* in identifying the CIA people if asked.

Welch was identified in print as a CIA officer as early as 1968, and several times thereafter. The view that I am behind the rash of identifications is inaccurate. Increasingly, journalists and others opposed to the CIA's promotion of repression are determined that CIA people accept personal responsibility for their acts and those of the institution to which they belong.

Exposing CIA people will force untimely and continual personnel change-overs, with no danger of violence if exposed people return to Langley, Va. Thus, the policy underlying the CIA's work — which shows no possibility for change until fundamental internal changes occur — can be blunted, to some degree at least, by weakening the instrument through which the policy is applied.

Philip Agee  
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(NOTE — Mr. Agee, a former CIA employe, is the author of "C.I.A. Diary.")

### **Commentary**

Hugh Sidey (WTOP TV and Radio): "... The problems of Vietnam, Watergate, CIA, FBI grew out of secrecy, out of the arrogance and ignorance of men who felt safe in their bureaucratic closets, behind the facades of national security. The trouble we have today in all this did not begin by people giving away classified material, it began by people making their mistakes and conspiracies classified."

George Bush, new CIA chief, on "Sixty Minutes": "We're living in a tough world. We're not living in one where everybody's operating in an opened society like we are."