

Interlopers and invited guests

On anthropology's witting and unwitting links to intelligence agencies

DAVID PRICE

David Price is Associate Professor of Anthropology at St. Martin's College, Lacey, Washington, USA. His email is dprice@stmartin.edu.

The CIA seal in red, white and blue, the colours of the American flag. The compass or star has sixteen points, symbolizing the search for intelligence data all over the world. This data is to be brought back home to the centre, CIA headquarters in Virginia, USA, after which it is disseminated to policy-makers in US government. The compass rests upon a shield, symbolizing defence of the United States of America. The bald eagle is the American national emblem.



Marvin Harris (1927-2001).

Marvin Harris once told me that his 1956-57 fieldwork experiences in Mozambique were instrumental in developing his interest in the theoretical distinctions between what were later referred to as emic and etic components of cultural life. Specifically, his pre-fieldwork reading of Mozambique cultural history, and discussions he held with officials once he and his wife were living there, left obvious discrepancies between statements of racial equality and the brutal practices of Mozambican apartheid. Identifying the inconsistencies between professed beliefs and behaviours offered some assistance in understanding the apparently contradictory cultural information Harris encountered.

Documenting the contradictions and brutalities of racial discrimination in Mozambique soon became the focus of Harris' fieldwork. But the further he pursued this line of research, the more worried attention he drew from Mozambican authorities and American embassy functionaries. Over time his movements were tracked by intimidating thugs, his home was ransacked and his research notes were rifled through. Finally, he was told in no uncertain terms that his research was unwelcome. Harris had established lifelong friendships with Eduardo Mondlane and Antonio de Figueiredo, and with leaders of Frelimo, Mozambique's liberation movement – contacts that American intelligence agencies and the Mozambican régime were probably interested in tracking. When Marvin and his wife Madeline hurriedly left the country, the Ford Foundation offered to use its clout with the embassy to ship his research materials back to New York, as a research courtesy.

When Harris' notes and research data finally arrived in the US they had been repackaged, and bore obvious signs of tampering: pages were dog-eared, food crumbs and cigarette ash were spread throughout the pages. Harris was outraged. His complaints to Ford were brushed off and he was assured that no-one had read his fieldnotes, but he never believed this explanation. When I have encountered similar shipping privileges while conducting research in the Near East, I have shared this story and Harris' concerns with fellow anthropologists, but have been surprised by the response these concerns produce, as if convenience and economy overrode concerns about the security of one's research notes.

But noting such suspicions is a long way from establishing verifiable links between the intelligence community and anthropologists. Outside of examinations of Project Camelot, the Thailand Affair, or the unauthorized use of anthropological research by military and intelligence agencies in the Vietnam war, there has been little focused analysis of witting and unwitting connections between anthropologists and spies. But there are some published accounts which give an indication of the ways in which anthropologists and intelligence agencies such as the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) interacted during the Cold War. For example, Payson Sheets recently recalled how in 1976 he had almost taken a position with an archaeological survey along the Panama/Costa Rican border when he discovered that the USAID funding for the project was nothing more than a front for the CIA. After making enquiries, Sheets learned that this project

was archaeology masquerading as ethnography back in the days when [the USA was] trying hard to hold onto ownership of the



Panama Canal. If the pressure by Panamanians got too great, the US government would 'leak' my front study as clear evidence that the US was serious in developing a competitor to the Panama Canal up the San Juan River and across the Rivas peninsula to the Pacific, so the Panamanians had better just behave themselves. (Sheets 2001:3)

Sheets also recounted an incident in Guatemala where alleged CIA agents posing as archaeologists were killed by guerillas. Reported episodes of spies posing as anthropologists are far from rare (see e.g. Eveland 1980). Adventurer and purported archaeologist Frank Hibben recounted being chased and shot at by Chinese troops in the 1950s when he used archaeology as a cover to plant secret devices to monitor Chinese nuclear tests from Outer Mongolia (Preston 1995). Archival records and FBI documents establish the existence of troubling covert relationships between the CIA and the American Anthropological Association's Executive Board in the 1950s (Price 2000, 2002b). The CIA even had an accidental peripheral involvement in the 1947 discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, when Miles Copeland, husband of archaeologist Lorraine Copeland and the CIA's man in Damascus, was approached by a 'sly Egyptian merchant' with 'a scroll, the edges of which were already disintegrating – fragments were flaking off into the street'; thus CIA officer Copeland helped bring the find to the attention of archaeologists (Baigent & Leigh 1991).

Public reflections on links between intelligence agencies and anthropologists are sparse, though the reasons for this sparseness are unclear. Some express fears that drawing attention to true and false accusations of anthropology's links to espionage creates dangers for all anthropologists in the field. Here in the United States, one detects an additional fear of problems which might be unleashed by public discussion of the decision by the American Anthropological Association (AAA) to lift explicit prohibitions on anthropologists engaging in espionage (Fluehr-Lobban 2002). But these issues only fester when ignored, and anthropology's ignoble historical ties must be thoughtfully examined, in the interest of the self-determination and safety of minority groups around the world that stand to be harmed by such practices.

These are delicate and complex matters that impact us all. As Nancy Howell noted, suspicion of being a spy is a significant hazard of anthropological research, given that the 'suspicion of spying is much more frequently reported by social-cultural anthropologists (about 25%) than among archaeologists and physical anthropologists (about 10%)' (1990: 98). Anthropologists have at times been falsely accused of engaging in espionage because of their prox-

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1. To cite but one of many possible examples, a paper on the AAA's covert links to the CIA during the 1950s only entered the public's awareness (after several years and three split-rounds of peer reviews for the *American Anthropologist*) upon the intervention of Laura Nader and AAA President Louise Lamphere (Peterson 2001, Price 2002a).



Letterheads of the National Security Agency and the Central Intelligence Agency, as commonly found in declassified documents.

2. Witting-Indirect is the most unlikely of the four categories and is included in the interest of maintaining exhaustive typological symmetry. Some of Clyde Kluckhohn's work at Harvard's Russian Research Center fits these criteria as he worked on projects of interest to the CIA and other intelligence agencies (Diamond 1992, Price 1998).

3. Starr's and Andrews' careers are documented in their obituaries, respectively in the *New York Times* (17 March 1994) and *Anthropology Newsletter* (October 1988); Gower's contacts are cited in Lepowsky (2000), and Worman's in the *AAA News Bulletin*, 2(2): 30.

4. Conference participants included Chester Barnard, Bernard Berelson, Bernard Brodie, Charles Dollard, William Fox, Herbert Goldhamer, Lawrence Henderson Jr., C.J. Hitch, Harold Lasswell, Frank Lorimer, Frederick Mosteller, Franz Neumann, Hans Speier, Samuel Stouffer, Jacob Viner, Warren Weaver and Donald Young.

5. There are many other Cold War research projects using anthropologists for ends which are not clearly understood. One example finds Jacobs receiving an urgent telegram from Margaret Mead and the Institute for Intercultural Studies (which had CIA MKULTRA employee Harold Wolff on its Board) asking Jacobs to use students to conduct surveys on American perceptions of the Soviet Union's recent Sputnik launch. Mead instructed Jacobs to withhold information on this project from both the research subjects and his student assistants.

imity to sensitive areas: for example, Howell recounts how in the early 1970s, while conducting research in Lebanon, Bruce Schroeder was arrested by the Syrian Border Patrol on suspicion of being a spy. False accusations against anthropologists, archaeologists or other social scientists have had tragic consequences – and for good reason, fear of such consequences has led many anthropologists to avoid examining anthropology's known links with espionage. One tragic example of such false accusations involved Raymond Kennedy, who spent World War II in Indonesia in the OSS, then joined the US State Department (Winks 1987). Kennedy quit his post after it became clear that his opposition to the Dutch colonial administration of Indonesia was out of step with State Department policies. Four years later he was tragically executed in Java by freedom fighters who (mistakenly) believed he was a CIA agent.

False accusations of links to intelligence agencies also have less lethal, but nevertheless harmful consequences. Former CIA officer John Stockwell once recounted that when lecturing at Michigan State University he met a doctoral student who had lived for several years in Zambia. This student told him about an American scholar she'd known in Zambia who was 'well known to be CIA'; because of these accusations she'd steered clear of him throughout her stay. As the 'former supervisor of CIA activities in Zambia during the time she was there' Stockwell knew that this suspect individual was not a CIA asset (Stockwell 1991:103). Stockwell mused that 'Americans in Zambia mistrusted and avoided one another because the CIA had poisoned the environment. Frankly, my guess is that if Congress were investigating this aspect of CIA operations, they would find that most CIA managers actually preferred that other Americans in the country not trust one another' (1991:104). Thus, groundless speculations create an atmosphere of distrust where unfounded paranoia destroys cooperative relationships, creating unending futile searches for verification.

Voicing the past

While some anthropologists speculate privately on the intrusion of intelligence agencies into their field, most are loth to discuss this topic in public. There is a perception that raking through anthropology's past links with the intelligence community, whether witting or unwitting, could reduce opportunities for contemporary anthropologists to conduct fieldwork in foreign nations. But until anthropology examines past connections with the CIA and other such agencies, and takes measures to safeguard against the repetition of these events, there is a clear and present danger that these sort of arrangements could recur. National and international anthropological associations need to confront this past critically, establish boundaries for contacts with the intelligence community, and provide guidance for limiting unwitting contact with such agencies. Otherwise we all risk reduced field opportunities as these largely unexamined historical interactions become documented.

This is an extremely difficult topic to publish on in Western anthropological journals. In the US, articles documenting links between anthropologists and the CIA have a difficult time getting through often emotional peer review processes, and editors become skittish at the prospect of

discussing such uncomfortable relationships.¹ In the UK, libel laws make it nearly impossible to discuss the specifics of even unwitting interactions between living anthropologists and spy agencies, and this article therefore avoids such discussions.

The sensitivity of even discussing past links between anthropologists and the intelligence community can be seen in the brouhaha that erupted after archaeologist Anna Roosevelt noted in passing that the American archaeologists and cultural anthropologists working in South America in the post-war era 'first fanned out in Latin America, often with close ties to the US government and its foreign policies, through the OSS (later to become the CIA) and the State Department' (Roosevelt 1991:106; cf. Roosevelt 1996). For this simple observation Roosevelt became the target of a vitriolic protest letter denouncing her statements as 'not only highly irresponsible, but also dangerous', published in the official organ of the Society for American Archaeology (SAA), and bearing the signatures of 188 prominent archaeologists (Baffi et al. 1996). The ferocity of this response was odd given both the neutrality of Roosevelt's original statements and the obvious fact that one of her family members (Kermit Roosevelt, a CIA agent whose Agency exploits are well documented and legendary) was a key operative in America's mid-century intelligence community.

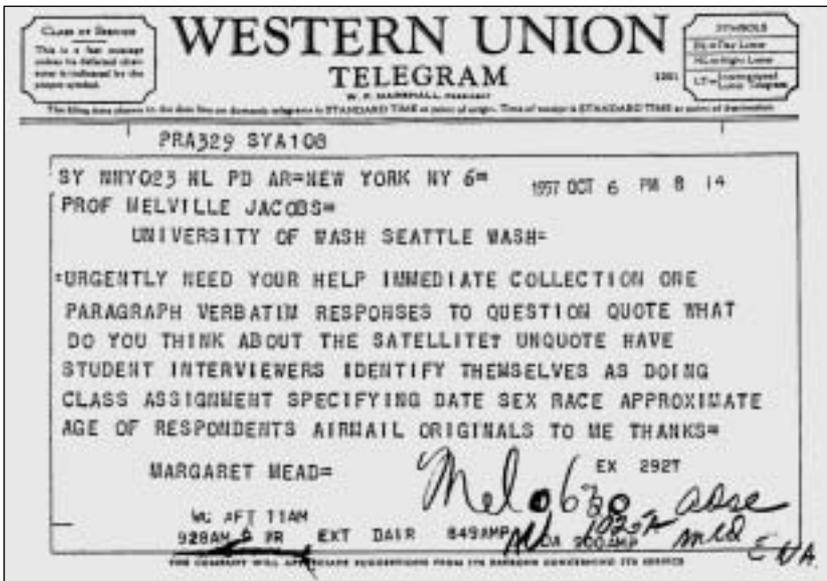
The letter protesting against Roosevelt's comments highlighted the dangerous repercussions that can follow accusations of espionage, noting that simply mentioning past episodes of espionage can be seen as endangering contemporary fieldworkers. The letter also asserted that if researchers uncover evidence that archaeologists used their research as cover for intelligence work, they have 'a moral obligation to present it to the proper authority'. This despite the fact that in the United States there is no such 'proper authority' to whom such morally obliged reports can be issued because professional scientific societies like the AAA, SAA and Society for Applied Anthropology (SFAA) have increasingly abandoned such concerns.

The dynamics of the intelligence community's interactions with anthropologists in the Cold War and post-Cold War period are complex, and distinctions between witting, unwitting, direct and indirect interactions must be made to help differentiate between different kinds of interaction. Witting contacts are those in which individuals or organizations know they are assisting intelligence agencies, while unwitting contacts are those where individuals or groups are unaware of such relationships. The distinction of direct and indirect differentiates between anthropological research being directly or indirectly funded or solicited for use by intelligence agencies: direct research is directly sought or funded by intelligence agencies, while indirect research is undertaken independently of intelligence agencies but later used by such agencies. These are four exclusive categories, and thus the following four scenarios are possible: Witting-Direct, Witting-Indirect,² Unwitting-Direct, Unwitting-Indirect. These four possible anthropological interfaces with intelligence agencies are discussed below.

Witting-direct relationships

During the Cold War uncounted anthropologists quietly passed through the revolving door between the academy and intelligence agencies with little notice or concern on the part of their colleagues. Anthropologists like Richard Francis Strong Starr, James Madison Andrews, Charlotte Gower, Eugene Worman³ and numerous other American anthropologists made careers within the CIA.

During the early Cold War the CIA openly funded anthropological research institutions such as the Human Relations Area File (HRAF), itself a relic of World War II.



In the 1950s the CIA, Army, Navy and Air Force each paid \$20,000 a year to the HRAF (Ford 1970). But although this was an era when the AAA's newsletter proudly chronicled career advancements of anthropologists working at the CIA (see *AAA News Bulletin* 4(48): 30), and university centres like the Center for International Studies (CENIS) at MIT openly received CIA funding, many seem to have known little about the nature of the CIA.

There are many other examples of these post-war funding trends, but Ruth Benedict's work was among the best funded by military-intelligence dollars during this period. Benedict saw her funding victories primarily as milestones in the struggle of women scientists, and apparently gave little thought to the ethical implications of using anthropology to further military or intelligence objectives. In 1946

Benedict had told a group including Margaret Mead at a party that she had discovered where they could get a hundred thousand dollars. 'She was unaccountably gay and mischievously refused to tell us anything more,' wrote Mead. The Office of Naval Research had set up funds for human behavior studies and had contacted Benedict as one of those to design the first projects. The money available to Benedict was indeed close to \$100,000 a year. Never had so much money been available to the Columbia-based anthropologists at one time. (Caffrey 1989:329-330)

In addition to Navy funding and briefings, she was 'negotiating with the RAND Corporation for a second Russian project and signed a book contract with Carnegie' that apparently 'would have been on anthropology and International Relations', though this was not completed due to her sudden death in 1948 (Caffrey 1989:337).

The conflicts inherent in linking anthropology with intelligence agencies did not go unnoticed by Benedict's colleague Gene Weltfish. Weltfish became alarmed that Benedict would inevitably become beholden to her funding sources and would not have the freedom to either direct her own research or have a say about what was done with her findings (Ann Margetson, personal communication, 1998). These concerns did not overly trouble Benedict, though in the last years of her life she was increasingly aware of the uses to which such military-intelligence research was put.

Ruth Benedict was the only anthropologist, and the only woman, present at the RAND Corporation's First Conference of Social Scientists, held in New York City in 1947. The 35 participants came from a variety of disciplines and academic backgrounds. Most had spent the war with military-intelligence organizations, and many of them later established careers at the CIA, Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), RAND and agencies linked to the

intelligence community.⁴

This conference was the brainchild of RAND Corporation game theoretician and strategic mathematician John Williams, and of Warren Weaver, social science chairman of the Rockefeller Foundation. RAND's objective for the Conference was 'to get RAND started on a social science program that would be useful to national security. Before this Conference got under way, RAND had been tentatively circling around a rather vast ocean and getting its toes wet, feeling what the temperature of the water was. This Conference has very effectively precipitated it into the midst of the waves...' (RAND 1948: viii). An extensive transcript (334 pages of single-spaced small print) of the meeting's discussions was produced as a classified RESTRICTED document. Much of the conversation was candid and concentrated on frank discussions of a variety of Cold War research programmes that RAND was considering funding. Benedict offered insights into the methods that could be used to study Communist Party members in the US, differences in cultural perceptions of nuclear weapons, the extent of pro-Russian feeling in the United States, and many other Cold War research topics.

Some of Benedict's comments reveal her interest in using anthropology and the conference as a means of establishing and maintaining peace, but the agenda's scheduled and resultant discussions betray a structural lack of interest in pursuing these goals (RAND 1948: 16). Instead, the projects under consideration had titles like 'Psychology of attack behavior', 'Public apprehension of threats to physical security', 'Morale policy in wartime', 'Emotional impact of atomic bombing', 'Psychological effects of reconnaissance satellite' (RAND 1948: 19-23). There were proposals outlining the construction of a 'Belligerency Index' ('for clues to the imminence of aggressive military action by potential enemies'), numerous counterintelligence programmes, new methods of tracking Russians, etc. This was a conference where peace was given lip service, but finding new ways to wage war was the real agenda.

As conference participants mulled over various research ideas there were free-flowing discussions of how American social scientists could shape the new post-war world into a form to their liking by using many of the methods from the past world war. The ethnocentric insouciance of this undertaking is striking. Harold Lasswell pontificated on the cultural mitigation of aggression, the prospect of a social science for the 'management of peoples' responses' and the prospect of manipulating and changing 'people from identification with the USSR or



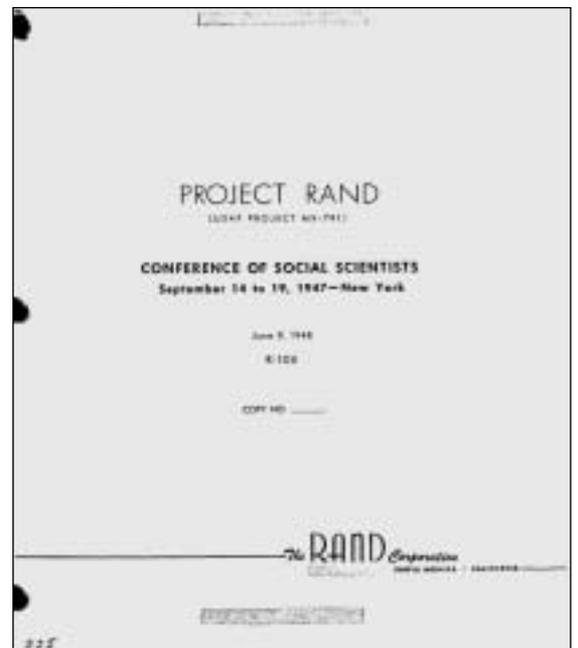
Ruth Benedict (1887-1948).

6. Vera Rubin was indeed the radical individual appearing in the FBI's files – though the FBI did not figure this out until 1972 (WFO 10-470269).

7. The Church Committee identified 170 foundations as CIA pass-through funding fronts, including organizations such as the Kaplan Foundation, Littauer Foundation, and the Rabb Charitable Foundation (Saunders 1999).

8. The 'big three' foundations (Ford, Rockefeller and Carnegie) are excluded from this calculation, not because they are free of CIA influence (Ransom 1975), but because they were not the focus of the Church Committee's inquiry.

9. The CIA's efforts at so-called 'mind control' techniques were pathetic, and involved the illegal dosing of unsuspecting individuals with psychoactive drugs such as LSD. The closest the CIA ever came to perfecting mind control was its innumerable successes in planting bogus news stories in the 'free' press.



Agee, Philip 1976. *Inside the Company*. New York: Bantam.

Baffi, E.I. et al. 1996. Letter to SAA Bulletin. *SAA Bulletin* 14(1):4-5.

Baigent, Michael & Richard Leigh 1993. *The Dead Sea Scrolls deception*. New York: Summit.

Bourgeois, Philippe 1990. Confronting anthropological ethics. *Journal of Peace Research* 27(1):1-10.

Caffrey, Margaret 1989. *Ruth Benedict*. Austin: University Of Texas Press.

Church Committee 1976. See: *Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities (Church Report)*, Senate Report, 94 Cong. 2 SESS., no. 94-755. Washington, DC: Government Printing Office.

Condominas, George 1973. 'Ethics and Comfort': Distinguished lecture. *AAA Annual Report, 1972*. Washington, DC: AAA.

Diamond, Sigmund 1988. Informed consent and survey research. In H. O'Gorman (ed.) *Surveying social life*, pp. 72-99. Middleton: Wesleyan University Press.

with a national religious group' (RAND 1948: 110). Ruth Benedict enthusiastically responded to these suggestions with observations about the necessity of understanding the subtleties of the culture one is dealing with before venturing to bring about such changes, but she did believe that such work should be carried out (RAND 1948: 111).

The conference considered a proposed programme entitled 'Pro-Russian feeling in the US', a project designed to 'determine, by use of subtle and indirect questions in public opinion surveys, the extent of the "highly" pro-Russian segment of the population, and of its proselytizing activities' (RAND 1948: 26). The proposed study would be secretly 'carried out in cooperation with the FBI; public opinion surveys at regular intervals [would be used] to study variations in the magnitude of the group in relation to current events' (ibid.). Though some members of the conference found potential methodological problems with this research, no one voiced concerns about the ethical or legal propriety of the assisting the FBI in spying on American citizens. The closest thing to a complaint was Ernst Kris' comment: 'I find here cooperation with the FBI, which is fine, but then also, public opinion surveys, which I can't by any stretch of the imagination combine with information coming from the FBI' (RAND 1948:123). While Kris may have been confused about how the FBI might be directly involved in such research, Herbert Goldhamer was not. Goldhamer realized the FBI need not passively digest survey data collected by others; it could use the pretext of a legitimate survey to collect data on individual citizens. According to Goldhamer, 'The FBI, or whatever agency keeps track of these things, might specify individuals who fall in the group we are discussing. It might then be feasible to send out public opinion interviewers with an arranged list of questions who would interview these people, supposedly at random...' (RAND 1948:123).

While the fate of this proposed research is unknown, there were a number of such projects in which social sci-

entists secretly worked in tandem with the FBI while disingenuously pretending to interview individuals as if selected through random sampling procedures (see Diamond 1988, 1993). Clyde Kluckhohn was involved with a Survey Research Center study that interviewed Russian immigrants to the United States and then secretly shared these findings with the FBI and CIA.⁵

Though Benedict's comments record hopes that the post-war military-intelligence apparatus she encountered at RAND could be used for the betterment of humanity, she expressed misgivings concerning RAND's heavy reliance on secrecy. When discussing proposals to study different nations' goals and values, Benedict stated that she

did not originally submit a project on basic values in other countries, because it is impossible to do such a study under restricted auspices, and I thought it wasn't possible under RAND. They tell me now there are ways of arranging it. You cannot send anyone under the armed services of any one country even to France to do work on such a problem... If there can be some arrangement by which some additional help can be given in such studies, it would be very desirable, but it depends on the studies being unclassified. (RAND 1948:135)

Benedict recognized that issues of secrecy limited and shaped symbiotic anthropological collaborations with intelligence entities (RAND 1948:124), but there was little examination of the ethical implications of secret research during this period.

The FBI and Vera Rubin: Window shopping for spies

In-house gossip among anthropologists has long rumoured that individual anthropologists have periodically been approached by intelligence agencies and asked to collect information while conducting fieldwork in foreign countries. Because of the secrecy involved in such matters it is difficult to find concrete evidence of anthropologists being approached to conduct espionage in other countries, but recent research using the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) has led to the release of documentary paper trails establishing preparations by intelligence agencies for such contacts. Anthropologist Vera Rubin's FBI file records FBI efforts to determine whether she should be approached to provide information of value to an undisclosed 'American intelligence agency' that appears to be the CIA.

The FBI opened an investigation of Rubin in 1964 after learning that she had received a grant from the Marian Davis Scholarship Fund to travel to Mongolia. Initially, the FBI believed Rubin an ideal candidate to approach for such a covert operation, and a New York City FBI agent requested permission from FBI headquarters to interview Rubin so that she could 'furnish detailed information concerning her visit to Mongolia which would be of interest to other government agencies' (FBI file WFO 105-133625). The FBI's New York bureau established that Rubin was a self-employed scholar, and by using 'a pretext telephone call to subject's residence seeking a physician [they] determined that she is an anthropologist' (WFO 105-133625). But FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover turned down the request to interview Rubin because FBI headquarters could not determine if she was the same Vera Rubin

who has contributed considerable amounts of money to various communist front and other subversive organizations in the past. She was formerly Executive Secretary for the American Labor Party in Westchester County, New York in the early 1940s.

The numerous references pertaining to Vera Rubin who may or may not be identical with subject, are available to New York. In the absence of some specific indication that subject is not identical with the individual noted above, she should not be interviewed by your office (105-136424-1).⁶

Hoover ordered that Rubin not be contacted, as there were other less risky scholars travelling to Mongolia who could

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI

DATE: 12/7/64

FROM : SAC, NEW YORK

SUBJECT: DR. VERA D. RUBIN
IS - MONGOLIA
(NY file 105-new) (P)

44-824
ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 10/1/97 BY SP-10/BJW/STP

VISITORS TO MONGOLIA
IS-MONGOLIA
(NY file 105-69960) (P)

ReBulet, 8/27/64, and NY letter, 10/23/64, under caption "VISITORS TO MONGOLIA, IS-MONGOLIA".

Bureau authority is requested to interview Dr. RUBIN, in view of her employment in the education field.

On 11/5/64, [redacted] NY Telephone Co., 104 [redacted] St., NYC, advised that the subject resides at 1040 5th Ave., NYC, and that she is self employed as a PhD at 162 E. 75th St., NYC.

On 11/9/64, [redacted] caused the records of the Manhattan Board of Education to be checked and determined that in 1961 the subject, married, born in the US, date unlisted, was employed at the Research Institute for the Study of Man, 162 E. 75th St., NYC.

Indices of the NYO contain no record identifiable with the subject or her employer.

Credit and criminal checks made with negative results.

A pretext telephone call to subject's residence seeking a physician determined that she is an anthropologist.

In view of subject's education it is believed she could furnish detailed information concerning her visit to Mongolia which would be of interest to other government agencies.

1 - Bureau (RMF)
1 - New York (105-69960)
1 - New York

105-136424-1

RESEARCH SECTION

105-133625



A photograph of the original sign from the CIA's first building on E Street in Washington, DC, as exhibited in the CIA Museum, housed in the Agency's Headquarters Building in McLean, Virginia.

– 1993. Compromising American Studies programs and survey research. *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society* 6(3):409-415.

Eveland, Wilbur 1980. *Ropes of sand*. New York: Norton.

Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn (ed.) 2002. *Ethics and the profession of anthropology* (second edition). Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Ford, Clellan 1970. Human Relations Area Files: 1945-1969. *Behavior Science Notes* 5:1-27.

Harris, Marvin 1958. *Portugal's African 'wards'*. New York: American Committee on Africa.

– 1990. Emics and etics revisited. In Headland, T.N. et al. (eds) *Emics and etics*, pp. 48-61. Newbury Park: Sage.

Howell, Nancy 1990. *Surviving fieldwork*. Washington, DC: Special Publication of the AAA, No. 26.

Jeffreys-Jones, Rhodi 1989. *The CIA and American democracy*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Jones, Delmos 1971. Social responsibility and the belief in basic research. *Current Anthropology* 12(3):347-350.

Lepowsky, Maria 2000. Charlotte Gower and the subterranean history of anthropology. In Richard Handler (ed.) *Excluded ancestors, inevitable traditions*, pp.123-170. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Marks, John 1979. *The search for the 'Manchurian candidate'*. New York: Times Books.

Moos, Felix 1995. Reflections on anthropology and the military. *KU Anthropologist* 7(1):1, 17-18.

Nader, Laura 1997. The phantom factor. In *The Cold War and the university*, pp. 107-146. New York: New Press.

be approached to provide intelligence – the outcome of the FBI's attempts to locate more likely prospects is unknown.

It is not clear how the FBI first learned of Rubin's travels to Mongolia, but the FBI files of other anthropologists indicate that the FBI routinely received reports from informers at the State Department, and at public and private research foundations. It is not known how common such contacts were during the Cold War, but I have also interviewed archaeologists who report being approached by intelligence agencies in the 1960s to keep notebooks recording troop movements and other such information while working abroad.

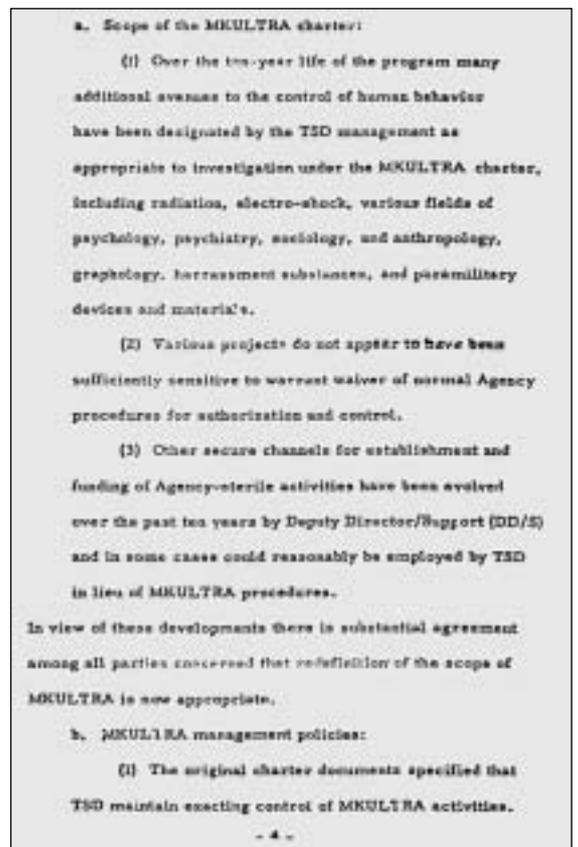
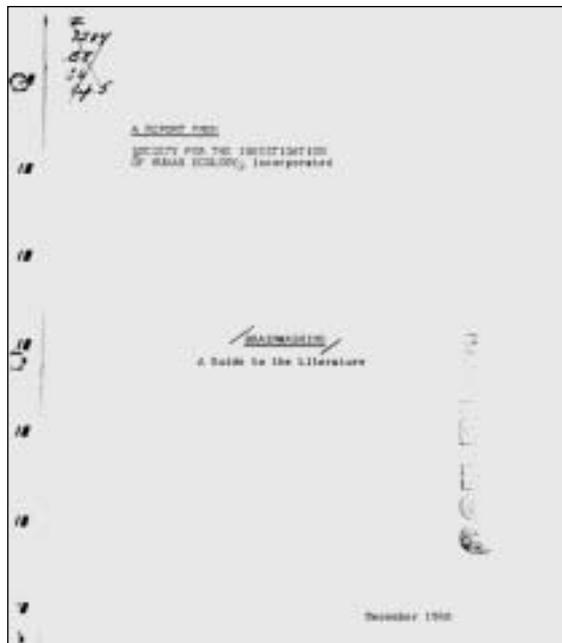
Unwitting-direct: The CIA 'buys a piece' of anthropology

Intelligence agencies have historically used funding fronts, either through agency-controlled dummy foundations⁷ or by channelling research monies to 'useful' research projects through *bona fide* research foundations without the recipient's knowledge: these foundations are known as 'pass-throughs.' The US Congress' Church Committee found that during the mid-1960s such manoeuvres allowed the CIA to manipulate about half the grants made in the USA for international research – for the most part these were unwitting-direct interactions (Church Committee 1976:182).⁸ A remarkable finding, unexamined to the degree that no anthropologist has attempted a systematic analysis of how these funds were directed and what exactly the CIA gained for its efforts.

Documents from the CIA's secret MKULTRA programme of the 1950s and 60s, declassified under the FOIA, establish how the agency at times harnessed anthropology as a discipline useful to its needs. One document entitled 'Report of inspection of MKULTRA/TSD [Technical Services Division]' (CIA Report 1-185209) provides an overview of how

[o]ver the ten-year life of the program many additional avenues to the control of human behavior have been designed by the TSD management as appropriate to investigation under the MKULTRA charter, including radiation, electro-shock, various fields of psychology, psychiatry, sociology, and anthropology, graphology, harassment substances, and paramilitary devices and materials. (CIA 1-185209: 4)

Under MKULTRA the CIA funded unwitting social scientists (though some were indeed aware) through the use of funding fronts and 'cloaked grants.' It was under just such a 'sterile grant' provided by the CIA funding front known



as the Society for the Investigation of Human Ecology (SIHE) that B.F. Skinner was unknowingly provided with CIA funding while writing *Beyond freedom and dignity* (Marks 1979). The CIA funded numerous anthropologists without their knowledge by making grants available through

ostensible research foundation auspices to the specialists located in the public or quasi-public institutions. This approach conceals from the institution the interest of CIA and permits the recipient to proceed with his investigation, publish his findings (excluding military implications), and account for his expenditures in a manner normal to his institution... Key individuals must qualify for top secret clearance and are made witting of Agency sponsorship. As a rule each specialist is managed unilaterally and is not witting of Agency support of parallel MKULTRA research in his field. The system in effect 'buys a piece' of the specialist in order to enlist his aid in pursuing the intelligence implications of his research. His services typically include systematic search of the scientific literature, procurement of materials, their propagation, and the application of test doses [of LSD, THC and other psychotropics] to animals and under some circumstances to volunteer human subjects (CIA 1-185209:7-8).

Thus anthropologists and other social scientists became CIA laboratory mules and errand boys (and girls), examining questions of mutual interest while earning money and advancing their academic careers.

The SIHE (also known as the Human Ecology Fund) was but one CIA funding front that sponsored a variety of anthropological research (Marks 1979, Price 1998, Prince 1995). Most SIHE-funded research appears innocuous enough, and would not in itself appear to be ethically questionable; it advertised its grants in the usual places such as the AAA's *Fellows' Newsletter* (e.g. see *FN* May 1962, pp. 4-5). But what is known about the CIA's interest in perfecting interrogation techniques, or their failed so-called 'brainwashing' research, sheds light on the funding of select anthropological research projects examining such topics as cross-cultural experiences of pain and stress.⁹ Over the past decade I have contacted some of the anthropologists funded under the CIA MKULTRA programmes. Some anthropologists claimed no knowledge that their research was secretly selected and funded by the CIA; others said they learned of

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Witanek, Robert 1989. Students, scholars and spies. *Covert Action Information Bulletin* 31: 25-28.

Woodbury, Nathalie 1993. For God, country and our foreign policy. *Anthropology Newsletter*, October: 31-32.

this relationship some 25 years ago, while a few became angry at being asked about these past episodes.

Unwitting-indirect interfaces

Most of anthropology's interactions with intelligence agencies have probably been unwitting and indirect, with anthropological work being harvested by intelligence agencies as it enters the public realm through conferences and publications. Thus, anthropologists are well advised to consider the potential uses and abuses of their data once it enters the public realm. As Condominas (1973), Jones (1971) and others learned during the Vietnam war, this is something we have no control over, and thus we must be aware of what can potentially be done with what we make public.

These issues are raised by Philippe Bourgois in his moving 1990 essay 'Confronting anthropological ethics', in which, realizing that his ethnographic writings on the Miskitu could be of interest to American intelligence agencies, he asked 'should I publish my material or would CIA analysts perusing academic journals seize upon my information to refine counterinsurgency operations the way monographs by unsuspecting – and not so unsuspecting – anthropologists working in Indochina were abused in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War?' (Bourgois 1990:49) We must continue to incorporate this awareness into our research designs, field interactions, and write-ups of our research, as these dynamics remain in the increasingly militaristic climate in which we work.

Mapping out the sawdust trail

Laura Nader recently called for anthropologists to examine what she called 'the phantom factor' – the undocumented relationships of codependence between anthropologists and the military-industrial complex, and the resultant 'absence of autonomy over the direction, content, and style of the field' (Nader 1997:109). Many anthropologists seem hesitant to acknowledge, much less examine, the impact of these relationships, while a growing number of American anthropologists believe that anthropologists should make decisions about working with intelligence agencies on an individual basis (e.g. Moos 1995, NPR 2002; cf. Woodbury 1993).

I am not interested in criticizing Ruth Benedict or others for their work with intelligence agencies during the early Cold War. These decisions were made in a different world, when little was known about the operations of intelligence agencies. But these are not the conditions of today. Benedict was right to worry about secrecy creating problems for anthropologists – though it is ironic that she expressed these concerns at a classified RAND conference. Secrecy is the key. Secrecy pollutes environments of scientific or humanistic enquiry. Secrecy undermines all anthropologists' relationships with the individuals and communities we study.

America's brewing war on terrorism brings a new urgency for anthropologists to uncover and reexamine past interactions with intelligence agencies. The extent that this appears to be a war on indigenous and minority peoples around the world should concern all anthropologists (see Price 2002b). But American anthropologists aligned with military and intelligence agencies are increasingly publicly advocating that anthropologists join the war on terrorism. Anthropologist Anna Simons of the US Naval Postgraduate School recently argued: 'If anthropologists want to put their heads in the sand and not assist, then who will the military, the CIA, other agencies turn to for information? They'll turn to people who will give them the kind of information that should make anthropologists want to rip their hair out because the information won't be nearly as directly connected to what's going on on the local landscape' (NPR 2002).

Many coherently argue that informed decision-making is what our political leaders are lacking, and intelligence agencies are there to collect information for improved policies. But such arguments ignore the well established history of intelligence agencies. If the CIA were simply dedicated to gathering information about the world beyond the United States' borders, the prospect of anthropologists working for CIA would not present ethical or professional problems different from those encountered when working for other government agencies. But the CIA's commitment to subverting democratic movements and its historic reliance on covert operations, assassination, torture and murder raises serious ethical issues for anthropologists in its employ; and anthropologists' role in gathering and analysing cultural knowledge to be used against cultures as enemies goes against the basic ethical dictates of serving those we study (Agee 1976, Jeffrey 1989, Witanek 1989). While the early CIA may once have striven to become America's mind, gathering information on the world at large, it soon became America's muscle, covertly bullying and battling peoples around the world who opposed the interests of corporate America, as if these were the interests of the American people.

Anthropologists need to examine past interactions and symbiotic relationships with intelligence agencies openly, including those of anthropological associations such as the AAA, the European Association of Social Anthropologists and the Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and Commonwealth. We need to take a more active interest in monitoring anthropologists' contributions to the war on terrorism. We need to examine, for example, how programmes such as the United States' National Security Education Program are calling upon anthropologists to 'pay back' federal agencies for graduate-level scholarships provided, and to look at equivalent programmes in other countries. We need to study this past and present in a scholarly manner – moving beyond anecdotal speculations by carefully examining government records and archival materials to document unwitting, witting, direct and indirect connections with intelligence agencies. Such scholarship is instructive in telling us of what we can anticipate from agencies such as the CIA, FBI and the Office of Homeland Security as the US broadens its ill-defined war on terrorism – a war virtually made to consume anthropological knowledge. While spy agencies like the CIA, MI6 and NSA bring new levels of high-tech spying through programmes like Project Echelon, the basic recruiting techniques and the witting and unwitting human-based intelligence-gathering methods remain similar to those used in the past. Anthropologists across the globe need to delve into local histories and begin the process of publicly examining past and present links between anthropologists and intelligence agencies. The world can't wait for the West to construct this history.

Finally, in assessing anthropology's complicity in assisting intelligence agencies, it is worth wondering how much the distinctions of witting, unwitting, direct, and indirect really matter. At a minimum these distinctions matter in the same way that the categories of negligent manslaughter and premeditated murder differentiate motives of actors – though arguably *outcomes* are more important than intentions in such cases. We must heed history and pay attention to the potential uses and abuses of our research. We return to Marvin Harris' interest in distinguishing between emics and etics: Harris believed that 'it is only through etic accounts of behavior stream events that unintended outcomes, or outcomes intended but dependent on differential amounts of power, can be predicted or retrodicted' (Harris 1990:60). We need to focus not just on declarations, and good intentions of anthropological research projects, but also on the uses of our training and research. ●