

## NEWS OF THE ASSOCIATION

To the Members of MESA:

I have resigned from the Board of Directors of MESA after a protracted exchange of views on the question of whether or not MESA, as an academic organization that defines itself as a "non-political, scholarly organization dedicated to advancement of American (US and Canada) academic excellence in the field of Middle Eastern Studies," should continue to allow overt members of the CIA to become members of the Association.

In addition to believing that this practice should be known to the MESA members and subject to their discretion, I personally believe that it represents a serious violation of the nature of MESA as an academic association, a potentially dangerous situation for those American and foreign members of MESA, and a compromising practice on the part of the MESA leadership.

In principle, the practice of admitting CIA members who so identify themselves, can be extended to members of foreign intelligence services who may also possess academic credentials. That the foreign intelligence services of some states have a keen interest in the views of their nationals abroad is too evident to require comment. That the CIA has more than a passing academic interest in the Middle East must also be evident to those who have followed recent revelations on this subject.

Concern with the practices of the CIA on university campuses was expressed in the letter of the then President of the AAUP (American Association of University Professors), Prof. Van Alstyne of Duke University Law School to Mr. George Bush, Director of the CIA. Van Alstyne wrote that "the recent report of the Senate Select Committee on Foreign and Military Intelligence has confirmed what was already published elsewhere: that the CIA has for years covertly used academic institutions and employed academic persons in ways which compromise institutional and professional integrity. Universities and scholars have been paid to lie about the sources of their support, to mislead others, to induce betrayed confidences, to misstate the true objects of their interest, and to misrepresent the actual objectives of their work."

The Church Committee Report referred to in Prof. Van Alstyne's letter clearly indicated its response to the activities of the CIA on campus. "The Committee is disturbed both by the present practice of operationally using American academics and by the awareness that the restraints on expanding this practice are primarily those of sensitivity to the risks of disclosure and not an appreciation of dangers to the integrity of individuals and institutions." In an additional statement of their views on the Report, Walter F. Mondale, Gary Hart, and the late Philip Hart, felt it important to "point out those areas in the Final Report which no longer fully reflect the work of the Committee. They included in this discussion "the role of the U.S. academics in the CIA's clandestine activities," which, they maintained had been

"so diluted that its scope and impact on the American academic institutions is no longer clear."

The Church Committee Report declared it "the responsibility of private institutions and particularly the American academic community to set the professional and ethical standards of its members. This report on the nature and extent of covert individual relations with the CIA is intended to alert these institutions that there is a problem."

The MESA Board of Directors, at its Los Angeles (Nov. 1976) meeting passed a resolution at the close of the discussion on the issue of admitting CIA members into MESA in which it stated that "MESA not stand in the way of the free flow of ideas through discriminatory membership." Far from even recognizing that there is a problem, as the Church Committee Report suggested, the resolution passed by the majority of the Board members disregards the injunctions of the Church Committee Report and by its terminology indicates a marked indifference to the nature of the CIA itself. It remains for individual MESA members therefore, to concern themselves with the establishment of appropriate professional and ethical standards as members of the academic community and of one of its professional associations.

Irene L. Gendzier  
Mar. 8, 1977



The following new members have joined MESA since October 1976. In some cases, former student members have become Regular members or Fellows. Student members are urged to contact the MESA secretariat upon receiving their Ph.D., so that their membership category can be updated. Any member may have his membership category revised by filling out a new application form available from the MESA secretariat.

#### Fellows

Abdul Rahim Abdul Rahman, History, Al Azhar University, Cairo.  
Faisal S.A. Al-Salem, Political Science, Kuwait University.  
Mahmoud Mustafa Ayoub, San Diego University.  
Khelifa Chater, History, Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de Tunis.  
Dawn Chatty, Anthropology, University of California, Los Angeles.  
Peter Duignan, Middle East Program at the Hoover Institution.  
Elisha Efrat, Geography, Tel Aviv University.  
Massud Farzan, Literature, Pahlavi University, Iran.  
Eleanor Frankle, Linguistics, El Colegio de Mexico.  
Alexander Scholch, History, University of Essen, West Germany.  
Frederic C. Shorter, Senior Representative, West Asia & N. Africa, Population Council.