

Scholarly Ethics at Risk

Dale F. Eickelman

1 November 1985

Nadav Safran [“Harvard Unaware CIA Funded Book, Seminar” Oct. 12] claims that his failure to disclose a \$107,430 CIA research contract did not harm the “credibility” of his recent Harvard University Press book on Saudi Arabia because the CIA made no prepublication changes. He also failed to disclose CIA sponsorship of a recent Harvard Middle East Center conference on Islamic fundamentalism until compelled to do so.

Mr. Safran evades a major issue in scholarly ethics. The Middle East Studies Association, of which he is a fellow, adheres like many other professional academic associations to a policy of calling upon its members “to disclose fully in any written results” and to persons involved in such activities as conferences “all sources of support—other than personal.” Our resolution states “that the continued credibility and trust of the public in academic research on the Middle East rests upon an open and free disclosure of funding for such research.”

Failure to reveal sponsorship, especially intelligence funding, has a direct potential for destroying the delicate-and poorly understood ties of trust, understanding and mutual support upon which scholars of all nations rely to conduct, basic international research and discussion. Mr. Safran’s conduct, which resulted in the abrupt cancellation by several conference participants, will make it more difficult to secure the future participation of scholars from the Middle East in conferences with similar themes.

By providing such funds for research and conferences, the CIA, even if it places no restrictions upon the disclosure of its support, damages the national interest by compromising the potential for independent academic research- on sensitive political and social issues. The Harvard dean who stated that it is not a matter for Harvard that Mr. Safran chose not to disclose all aspects of funding in a Harvard University Press book similarly manifests a deplorable insensitivity to one of the basic tenets of academic research.

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and Black (Cont'd.)

Benjamin Mays or the many other black scholars past and present. It is they who made Mr. Murdock what he is today.

My hope is that before Mr. Murdock forgets his black roots, he will

A critique of his ideas & actions.



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The Washington Post. A24. Letters to the Editor.

www.thetedkarchive.com