

HOOVER ASSAILS WARREN FINDINGS

NY Times
Nov 19 1964

Says F.B.I. Was Criticized
Unfairly on Oswald Check
—Calls Dr. King a 'Liar'

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 18—

J. Edgar Hoover, the usually taciturn director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation spoke out publicly today about the Warren Commission's report on the assassination of President Kennedy and about the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the Negro civil rights leader.

In a meeting with selected Washington newswomen that was as remarkable for its three-hour length as for its mere occurrence, Mr. Hoover loosed a broadside of uncharacteristic public charges.

He denounced the Warren Commission's criticism of his bureau for not warning the Secret Service that Lee Harvey Oswald was a potential threat to the President. He called the criticism "unfair and unjust" and "a classic example of Monday morning quarterbacking."

He attacked Dr. King, head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, as "the most notorious liar in the country."

Mr. Hoover said Dr. King had asserted that F. B. I. agents in Georgia were failing to act on Negroes' complaints because the agents were Southerners. He based his assessment of Dr.

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King on this reported statement.

Dr. King, who was awarded the 1964 Nobel Peace Prize last Oct. 14 as "the person who has done most for the furtherance of brotherhood among men," was not available for comment tonight. Aides said he was vacationing in the Bahamas and would have no reply until tomorrow, at the earliest.

Many civil rights workers in the South have long been dissatisfied with the bureau's role in communities where there has been anti-Negro violence.

Mr. Hoover is known to have been deeply angered by the criticisms of the bureau in the Warren Commission report. His scorn was plain today.

"It is not a fair report as far as the F.B.I. is concerned," he declared. He specifically attacked the commission's suggestion that "an alert agency such as the F.B.I." should have had the foresight to list Oswald, the assassin, "as a potential threat to the safety of the President" on his fatal Dallas visit last Nov. 22.

Finds Psychiatric Role

The commission called this omission by the bureau an example of "an unduly restrictive view of its responsibilities." The bureau itself subsequently disciplined and reassigned the two agents implicated by the commission.

The commission's recommendation for better communications between the bureau and the Secret Service has resulted in the bureau's sending thousands of names to the White House security detail each time the President journeys out of town, Mr. Hoover said.

The Secret Service is "hopelessly undermanned and ill-

equipped to do the job it is supposed to do," he said. He asserted that the bureau's new function had "also charged the F. B. I. with the obligations of a psychiatrist."

It was not Mr. Hoover's first criticism of the commission, but it was his strongest. In closed testimony before the commission, Mr. Hoover warned that the recommendations would tighten safety precautions around the President to the point where the country would approach "totalitarian security."

This brush with the commission did not become known until last Oct. 2, when the bureau made Mr. Hoover's critical testimony available to the Washington Evening Star. The testimony has yet to be released by the commission.

Retirement Is Due

Mr. Hoover, who will be 70 years old Jan. 1, would ordinarily have to retire on his birthday. However, President Johnson has been considering waiving the compulsory retirement age to permit Mr. Hoover to remain as director past the age of 70.

Some observers here raised the question whether Mr. Hoover's remarks today might not have a bearing on the President's decision.

Mr. Hoover's attack on Dr. King was based on the clergyman's reported advice to other civil rights workers not to report acts of violence or other violations to F.B.I. agents in Albany, Ga., because the agents there were all Southerners and would do nothing. Albany has been the scene of prolonged racial violence.

"The truth is," Mr. Hoover declared, "that 70 per cent of the agents in the South were born in the North and four out of five agents in Albany, Ga., are Northerners."

A bureau spokesman said later that the four Northern agents in Albany were from Kingston, N. Y.; Auburn, Ind.; Arlington, Mass., and St. Peter,

Minn., "and Dr. King knew it."

Mr. Hoover's wrath fell with unusual, if not equal, frankness on both sides in the civil rights struggle.

He charged that "red-necked sheriffs" in Mississippi and members of the Ku Klux Klan had participated in racial violence. But his harshest remarks were addressed to Dr. King.

He repeatedly stressed the recurring theme that the bureau did not protect anyone. He said that included the President and "those who go down to reform the South."

Mr. Hoover charged that agents investigating civil rights cases in the Mississippi swamps had been hampered because that area was "filled with water moccasins, rattlesnakes and red-necked sheriffs, and they are all in the same category as far as I am concerned."

He exempted, however, the Mississippi Highway Patrol, which he said had cooperated with the bureau in investigating the murders of three civil rights workers last summer near Philadelphia, Miss. He said great progress had been made in that investigation.

"Around Philadelphia, Miss.," he said, "law enforcement is practically nil, and many times sheriffs and their deputies participate in crime."

He also asserted that there was police participation in crime in several Middle Western cities.

On several counts, he had harsh things to say about the courts, including the Supreme Court.

Commenting on the trial of nine white men in McComb,

Miss., who were given suspended sentences after pleading guilty to bombing Negro homes and churches, Mr. Hoover remarked:

"They ranged in age from 30 to 44 and the judge gave them suspended sentences because of their youth. I don't know when youth ends—that was a scandalous thing to do."

The ages of the defendants actually ranged down to 20.

Later, referring to "bleeding hearts who want to move the age of juvenile delinquency up to 21 "to soften the legal consequences of crime on more mature youths, Mr. Hoover said, "I think it should be moved back to 16". Most jurisdictions regard youths under 18 as juveniles.

"Some of our bleeding heart judges ought to have more guts when it comes to handing down sentences," Mr. Hoover said. "You can't safely walk the

streets of Washington, D. C., even in the daylight."

In New York City's Central Park, he said, "no one dares walk in the daytime and there are holdups on Fifth Avenue at 9:30 or 10 at night."

Critical of Fading

He also fastened the "bleeding heart" label on the Justices of the Supreme Court who had ruled that prisoners in Washington, D. C., must be arraigned promptly after their arrests and could not be held for questioning without a specific charge. The decision has been under sharp attack by the Washington police.

The news conference was unusual for Mr. Hoover, who rarely even grants interviews. One bureau spokesman said he could not recall the director's holding "a regular news conference."

It was his third uncharacteristically controversial move in recent weeks. The testimony

criticizing the Warren Commission was leaked Oct. 2.

Then, on Oct. 15, Mr. Hoover sent flowers and a sympathy card to the hospital room of Walter W. Jenkins, the former special assistant to President Johnson who resigned Oct. 14 after disclosure of two morals arrests.

That gesture brought upon Mr. Hoover some of the harshest criticism of his 40-year career from spokesmen of conservative viewpoints who had been among his staunchest admirers. The bureau was subsequently ordered to investigate the security aspects of the Jenkins case, and Mr. Hoover's critics charged that his "blunder" had "compromised" the bureau.