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During the World War, U.S. machinery for ferreting out spies and saboteurs was either non-existent or rusty. Building and oiling it in a hurry meant bad functioning. After the war, the hunt for spies became a hunt for "alien radicals". Then it became a drive against all "aliens" and all "radicals". Had it not been stopped in time, it might have widened into an O.G.P.A.- Gestapo setup to snare all who disagreed with the Administration.

Today, with the European war underway and the United States vowing to have nothing to do with it, the spy-hunting apparatus is still in existence, in much better working order, and with all the deadly potentialities of the 1917-1920 days.

Between the red-hunt of the last war and the red-hunt that is gaining momentum today there runs a strong thread of continuity in the person of one man: J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Special Assistant John E. Hoover (it became J. Edgar in 1926), barely old enough to vote, was an ambitious clerk in the Department of Justice during the World War. He had a couple of degrees in law and a yen for excitement. When A. Mitchell Palmer and his presidential itch became Attorney General, John E. got his chance. The hysteria of the war years lingered, so Palmer decided that the quickest and easiest way to become President would be to save the country from the reds. He began by scaring Congress with the details of a re plot to subvert the government, complete to the actual day of the uprising. Result was a record appropriation of \$2,600,000 for the "detection and prosecution of crimes against the United States."

With the money in hand, Palmer needed two things before he could get started: (1) plotters (2) a semblance of legality for the whole procedure. The first need was filled by William J. Flynn, a notorious private detective whom Palmer immortalized as "the greatest anarchist expert in the U. S." The second item was referred to John E. Hoover who became "Special Assistant to the Attorney General."

Loophole Plugging What followed was the greatest campaign in abrogation of civil liberties ever carried on by the Federal government. With Flynn finding anarchists everywhere and Hoover plugging every legal loophole, thousands upon thousands of American citizens who wouldn't have known an anarchist if they'd seen one in broad daylight were hounded for a full year. Department of Justice agents joined radical societies and led the innocents on. Meetings were called by government men so that other government men could raid them and arrest the participants. Radical activity boomed on the initiative of those who were fighting it.

On Nov. 7, 1919 radical headquarters in eleven cities were raided simultaneously. Men and women were beaten, furniture was destroyed, records were confiscated and never returned. Among the thousands arrested, 235 were held incommunicado, rushed through farcical hearings and on Dec. 21, 1919 dumped on the S. S. Buford (known thereafter as the Soviet Ark) and shipped away to Russia. On Dec. 27 another series of raids were carried out in which 10,000 were arrested. Department of Justice officials boasted that from the 10,000 they had netted 5,000 "perfect cases."

Someone in Congress introduced a bill providing the death penalty for all communists. Billy Sunday told enraptured audiences "I would stand every one of the ornery, wild-eyed IWWs, anarchists, crazy socialists, and other types of reds before a firing squad." Tough old Leonard Wood said of the alleged reds: "I would load them on a ship of stone with sails of lead, and with the wrath of God for a gale to send them to hell as their destination."

