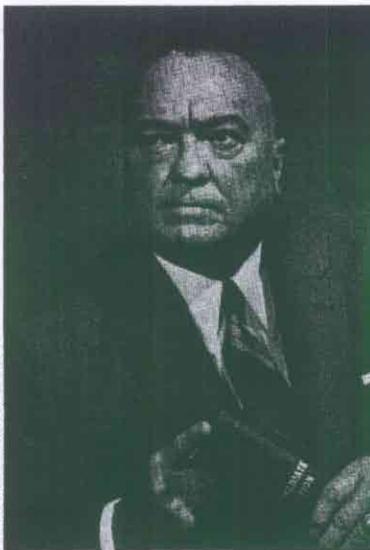


J. Edgar Hoover Speaks Out With Vigor

For 46 years, under eight Presidents, J. Edgar Hoover has presided over the Federal Bureau of Investigation. He will be 76 on New Year's Day, but the prickly views on everything from his former bosses to the "jackals of the press," the frank prejudices, the devotion to the bureau pour forth with undiminished vigor. On the wall of his office is a mounted sailfish whose staring eyes are as steely as the chief's own. There Hoover discussed a variety of topics with TIME Correspondent Dean Fischer. Excerpts from the interview:

ON REDUCING CRIME: First, there must be improvements in the training and salaries of law-enforcement officers. Second, there must be court improvements. Many judges don't sit as long hours as they should; they come in at ten o'clock, take a two-hour lunch break, and go home early in the evening. Third, there must be improvements in the penitentiaries. Some people come out worse than they went in. I have been accused of opposing parole and probation. I'm heartily in favor of them. But I am vigorously opposed to the abuse of parole and probation. The bleeding hearts on parole boards ought to be a little tougher. [In the matter of preventive detention] people who commit serious felonies—rape, murder, hijacking and kidnaping—should be incarcerated until they're tried, but it's absolutely wrong that they should have to wait seven or eight months before their trials.

ON EXTREMIST GROUPS: Bombings are the most serious threat to society because of the activities of the Black Panthers, the S.D.S. and the Weathermen. You take last year, when 23 police officers were killed and 188 injured by [black] racial extremists. The Black Panthers are directly associated with guerrillas in Jordan and Algiers. They pose the worst threat from the standpoint of violence.



FBI DIRECTOR HOOVER

ON PROTECTING THE PRESIDENT: We cooperate with the Secret Service on presidential trips abroad. You never have to bother about a President being shot by Puerto Ricans or Mexicans. They don't shoot very straight. But if they come at you with a knife, beware.

ON THE FBI'S IMAGE: We have recruited 50% of our [1,000] new agents from the officer corps in Viet Nam. You get a man who has been in command of men and he has to use good judgment. They all have to be above average in personal appearance. You won't find long hair or sideburns à la Namath here. There are no hippies. The public has an image of what an FBI agent should look like.

ON ROBERT KENNEDY: My differences with Bobby were very unfortunate. His father

was one of my closest friends. He wanted me to lower our qualifications and to hire more Negro agents . . . I said, "Bobby, that's not going to be done as long as I'm director of this bureau." He said, "I don't think you're being cooperative." And I said, "Why don't you get a new director?" I went over to see President Johnson and he told me to "stick to your guns." But there was no disagreement about organized crime.

ON HIS 1964 MEETING WITH KING: I got a wire from the Reverend Doctor King in New York. He was getting ready to get the Nobel Prize—he was the last one in the world who should ever have received it. He wired asking to see me.* I held him in complete contempt because of the things he said and because of his conduct. First I felt I shouldn't see him, but then I thought he might become a martyr if I didn't. King was very suave and smooth. He sat right there where you're sitting and said he never criticized the FBI. I said, "Mr. King"—I never called him reverend—"stop right there. You're lying." He then pulled out a press release that he said he intended to give to the press. I said, "Don't show it to me or read it to me." I couldn't understand how he could have prepared a press release even before we met. Then he asked if I'd go out to have a photograph taken with him. I said I certainly would mind. And I said, "If you ever say anything that's a lie again, I'll brand you a liar again." Strange to say, he never attacked the Bureau again for as long as he lived.

* The celebrated meeting between the two men occurred Dec. 1, 1964, after Hoover called King "the most notorious liar in the country" for advising civil rights workers to avoid making complaints to FBI men because they were Southerners, and King then suggested that Hoover had "faltered" under the burdens of office.

ON THE FBI'S CAMPUS ACTIVITIES: A lot has been said in the press about the FBI swarming onto the campuses. The FBI is not on any campus. A Princeton professor blamed me for having agents on the campus, and he even called me a bastard. I wrote him that the FBI never goes on a campus except to investigate bombings of federally funded buildings, and while I do not indulge in vulgarity, I called him a liar. It's an absolute lie. Of course, most students think we shouldn't go on unless they invite us. They can have as many demonstrations, sit-ins, lay-ins as they want, and we will never look into it. I think students have a perfect right to dissent and to express their views through proper channels. But they ought not to resolve their differences by throwing bricks and bottles on the streets.

ON HIS HEALTH AND HABITS: I told the President I'd remain as long as my physical condition permitted. We have employees in the bureau who are in their 80s. I've always been against retiring a man by age; the longer a man is with us, the more valuable he becomes. To keep fit, I walk several blocks almost daily to the office. [His other recreation consists of TV watching and playing the horses at nearby tracks.] I live on the edge of Rock Creek Park, and I used to walk there. I can't do it now because of [crime] conditions in this city. I've been very observant of my weight. I had to cut off 20 pounds, and I had to give up everything I like, like chocolate cream pie. My two dogs are among the smartest and most affectionate dogs I've ever seen. Anybody would think twice before they'd commit murder because of the way those dogs bark. They're great company to me. The less I think of some people, the more I think of my dogs. I can leave in the morning and be in a bad mood, and when I come home at night they'll jump all over me.