

## INCOME TAX RETURNS CHECKED REGULARLY

# Anti-Dissent Techniques Varied Widely

BY CHARLES NICODEMUS

Chicago Sun-Times

CHICAGO—The FBI used a variety of techniques in waging its 15-year secret war against dissent in America.

Files of the Chicago field office show that the arsenal of tactical weapons included:

**Illegal use of tax files**—Director J. Edgar Hoover and the Chicago FBI Office regularly abused federal income tax laws—illegally obtaining copies of Black Muslim official Herbert Muhammad's returns, to see whether he was reporting all income from managing Muhammad Ali (he was); trying to dig up tax returns of the leaders of Students for a Democratic Society to check whether they were proper (they could not be found locally), and covertly scrutinizing the returns of wealthy Chicago suburbanite Lucy Montgomery, who contributed generously to the SDS and oth-

er antiwar and civil rights causes.

While the Internal Revenue Service audited her return, in hope of finding her donations improperly deducted (they were not), Hoover directed FBI agents here to "detect any weakness which can be utilized" to pressure Montgomery into stopping her contributions.

But the illegal FBI review of her returns, completed six months later, could find no secret profits from any war-related businesses—as the FBI had hoped—or any other potentially damaging information. Nonetheless, Hoover recommended that Chicago consider putting her on the "security index." That would have guaranteed her placement in a political detention camp in case of a "national emergency."

**Provoking disputes**—In the climate of suspicion and confusion fostered by the counterintelligence program, the FBI found that an often-effective

tactic was creating or aggravating factional disputes within or between target organizations. The tactic was used repeatedly and successfully on Communist-related groups, the files show. In other cases:

—Perhaps the most startling directive found in the Chicago office files was Hoover's order that when Black Muslim leader Elijah Muhammad died, the FBI should move quickly either to "change" or "destroy" the organization. The memo from Washington directed the Chicago field office to win a change in the sect's tenets—although it didn't specify how that might be done. Or, Hoover said, the FBI should "destroy" the group by promoting likely factional cleavages. Methods for accomplishing that were spelled out in detail.

The directive represents the only time in U.S. history that a federal agency has been detected ordering, in

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# FBI'S ANTI-DISSENT TECHNIQUES

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writing, the destruction of a religious group boasting tens of thousands of members. (Elijah Muhammad died in 1975, three years after Hoover, and the organization enjoyed a peaceful leadership transition.) The group's name is now the World Community of Al-Islam in the West and its members are known as Bilalians—charges with which the FBI says it had no connection.

—In an attempt to break up the alliance between the SDS and the Black Panthers, the Detroit office sent letters to Panther leaders, signed "An Angry Black Brother," racially attacking the "lily-white" SDS for "trying to control" the Panthers. Chicago agents counseled Detroit to make sure the letter had "more of the vulgarity and obscenity common to Panther speech and writing."

**Poison pen letters**—The FBI's single most frequently used weapon was a massive poison pen and pamphlet operation. And one of its most favored tricks was to accuse targets of some sort of sexual impropriety:

—A letter to Elijah Muhammad's

wife accused the Nation of Islam leader of carrying on with his secretaries. The bureau also wrote to a Black Panther youth-group leader, accusing Black Panther officers Fred Hampton and Bobby Rush of using Panther headquarters for "sex orgies."

—In St. Louis, when an FBI informant passed the word that a black husband might be suspicious about the fidelity of his white wife—who worked in a mostly black civil rights group and also did antidraft counseling—the bureau promptly scrawled this letter to the husband on crumpled note paper:

Dear—:

Look, man, I guess your old lady doesn't get enough at home, or she wouldn't be shucking and jiving with our Black Men in ACTION, you dig? Like . . . us Black Sisters ain't gonna take no second best from our men. So lay it on her, man, or get her the hell off our street.

A Soul Sister

Five months later, in mid-1970, the couple broke up and a report suggested that the anonymous letter "cer-

tainly contributed very strongly" to the split, which impaired both the woman's antiwar and civil rights efforts.

—Sometimes the letters sought to pressure third parties into action against a target—as when the bureau wrote to Marion Isbel, president of Ramada Inns, unsuccessfully attempting to persuade him to bar a klan group planning to use the chain's Tuscaloosa, Ala., motel for a national meeting. The anonymous letter, signed "An Interested American," warned that it would "Definitely injure the reputation of Ramada Inns on a nationwide basis if it becomes known" that the chain was permitting such a use of its facilities.

—Character assassination of all kinds was another frequent ploy. An FBI-produced cartoon book ridiculed the New Left and branded anti-war activist Tom Hayden as a Central Intelligence Agency "plant" in "The Movement," while a letter to Black Panther headquarters in Oakland, Calif., accused Bobby Rush of "skimming" profits from the sale of the party's newspaper.

—What seemed like the bureau's brightest opportunity turned into one of its most significant failures. When investigation by the Chicago office established the accuracy of an Anti-Defamation League tip that Chicago Nazi leader Frank Collin was half-Jewish, Chicago's special agent in charge predicted disclosure of the information would "demolish" Collin. Washington then ordered that an anonymous letter be sent to Nazi headquarters in Arlington, Va., breaking the news.

A month later, in January, 1969, Arlington abolished Collin's Midwest post and ordered him east. But Collin refused to go. Instead, he bought a new headquarters on the South Side and expanded his motley group. When Arlington appeared to be taking no further action, word about Collin's parentage was leaked to the news media and the story broke April 22, 1970, in the Chicago Sun-Times.

In June, 1970, a Nazi squad from Arlington tried to muscle Collin out of his headquarters, but Collin sued and won it back. Then he set up his own group, the National Socialist Party of America. And eight years later, after threatening to march in heavily Jewish Skokie, Ill., Collin was the best-known neo-Nazi in the United States.

**Using other agencies**—When local Nazis set up a "white power" recorded phone message in a Nazi leader's apartment, the FBI twice intervened to have it discontinued—once by arranging to have Chicago police pressure the Nazi leader into moving, and the second time by having the U.S. attorney's office pressure the phone company into cutting off the message.

Abuse of the draft was an oft-used gambit. When the FBI found out that SDS leader Michael Klonsky was an Army reservist, the bureau urged the Pentagon to activate him. The Army answered that he had too little time left to serve and that it didn't want antiwar activists anyway.

In 1969, the University of Chicago suspended more than 100 students involved in a building takeover. The FBI wanted to get the male students drafted, but the university would not release their names. So Chicago FBI chief Marlin Johnson, who now heads the Chicago Police Board, wrote to the U.S. attorney's office, saying it would have to subpoena the names if they were to be obtained.

—At one point, Hoover even tried to get the Mafia to do the FBI's dirty work. It suggested to the Chicago office that it pass the word to Cosa Nostra about activist-comedian Dick

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Gregory's public attacks on organized syndicate activities—openly hopes that the underworld would retaliate.

—When the SDS planned a convention for Ann Arbor, Mich., June, 1969, the FBI schemed to disrupt it. It attempted to get several five local SDS leaders picked up by Chicago police on minor harassment charges, or to get them served with investigative grand jury subpoenas, anything to keep them in town.

And in 1970, when two SDS members convicted in the Weatherman riots stopped at a Chicago-area bar for a swim en route back to county jail from their "work-release" program, two FBI "shadows" tipped off Red Squad police who took a jump. He ordered their work-release canceled and the pair jailed for the rest of their 90-day sentences.

—Informant tips from American Nazi Party infiltrators, passed along to various police, got the local Nazis arrested so regularly for demonstrating and for other activities that to

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## DISSENT TECHNIQUES

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Nazis' Arlington (Va.) headquarters joined them in until more bail bond money was available. The arrests came at sites ranging from the Loop to Louisville.

—Results of the FBI's tip to the state's attorney's office about guns in the Black Panthers' apartment is history. Panther leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were shot to death in the controversial December, 1969, raid. But there also were many other, lesser-known tips.

In one case, the FBI discovered an old, local mob action charge still pending against Fred Hampton. An informant's alert that Hampton was bound for a television studio brought his arrest just before airtime. He later was acquitted of the charge.

—Informant tips passed along to police also were the undoing of a major Illinois klan leader, Turner Harden Cheney. After he bombed a Milwaukee leftist's store, an FBI informant blew the whistle. And when Cheney tried to hire another klan-

man to kill the first one, the second one turned out to be an informant, too.

—With New Left finances always shaky, the FBI got the phone company to cut off the long-distant WATS service of the "New Mobe" here, hampering it just before the 1968 Democratic convention. It urged another peace group's creditors to press for delinquent payments, and privately suggested that victims of the Weatherman riots sue for damages.

—After Chicago informants learned that the SDS was planning a March, 1969, meeting of its national council at the University of Texas, the FBI persuaded school officials to bar the SDS from using its campus on the ground that the affair would be "an insult" to Lyndon B. Johnson.

—No infraction was too small to escape an FBI attempt at manipulation. When informants related that Jerry Rubin and another prominent antiwar activist were traveling on borrowed air travel cards, the bureau tried unsuccessfully to get them arrested. And no company was too big

to escape FBI pressure: The San Francisco field office recommended planting a complaint with an FBI-connected Columbia Broadcasting System stockholder, who would ask at the company's next annual meeting why CBS permitted its Columbia Records subsidiary to advertise in underground newspapers, thus "subsidizing underground propaganda."

**Manipulating the media**—When a Ku Klux Klan chapter began to thrive near Joliet, Ill., the FBI leaked details about the group, and other KKK background data, to the Joliet Herald-News. The ensuing series of stories so frazzled the klanmen that the klavern never recovered.

—With help from the Chicago office—the source of expertise on the Black Muslims—the Miami field office played a direct, secret role in the production of two television specials.

The first, aired on July 7, 1963, was on "Black Nationalists and the New Left." "A great deal of work was done by Miami agents" for the show, "and it resulted in an excellent program," an Aug. 5 report from Washington related.

In addition to providing extensive background material, "especially important was the FBI's choice of the

individuals to be interviewed, as they did not have the ability to stand up to a professional newsman," the memo said. The interviewees "seemed to have been chosen either for their inability to articulate or their simpering and stupid appearance." Washington chortled, in a memo sent to field offices praising Miami's work.

The second program, telecast Oct. 9, 1969, focused on the Black Muslims' Miami Mosque No. 29, and required particularly heroic effort, as an Oct. 15, 1969, report emphasized. "Considerable problems were experienced . . ." because " . . . The refusal by NOI (Nation of Islam) officers and members to be interviewed created a serious lack of visual material . . . and consideration was given by the station to dropping the program," the report said the producer told the FBI.

"He said, however, that through the assistance, suggestions and encouragement given by the bureau, they did go through with the program . . . and it turned out, in his opinion . . . to be excellent, evoking a near-record number of viewer responses," FBI headquarters related.

—Some media maneuvers did not always work out as planned.

The Chicago field office devoted

parts of five reports to relating how it gave a Chicago Tribune reporter details on the Muslims' expanding business operations—hoping to embarrass the group with publicity about how the organization was "more of a business than a religion."

The story appeared on Page 1 of the Tribune on Jan. 26, 1969. But to the obvious chagrin of the FBI, the Muslims were so pleased that Elijah Muhammad wrote an open letter praising the paper and the reporter. And, according to a report dated March 13, 1969, a Black Muslim functionary later "attempted to force on him (the reporter) \$1,000 as a token of NOI appreciation."

**Disrupting operations**—Just before the 1968 Democratic convention here, the Chicago FBI office counterfeited and mailed to the National Mobilization Committee 217 fake forms offering housing for visiting demonstrators. The trick helped produce "chaos" in the demonstrator housing program, the FBI later boasted. The same tactic was used during the Washington peace march in 1969.

—While the Black Panthers were purging suspected police informers, the FBI—using membership lists "borrowed" from the Panthers—sent

letters to scores of other Panthers nationwide, telling them that they, too, had been purged. The letters went out on fake Black Panther Party stationery, over the signatures of party leaders reproduced from correspondence.

—The bureau used "borrowed" Ku Klux Klan membership lists to send out a periodic newsletter from a non-existent group supposedly made up of former Klan members who had quit in disgust.

The motto of the group, the "National Committee for Domestic Tranquility," was "Vintage Hooverism: 'Quit the klan. And back our boys in Vietnam.'"