

SOCIETY OF FORMER AGENTS

MR. HOOVER'S LOYAL LEGION

WILLIAM W. TURNER

Mr. Turner, a former FBI agent, is now a journalist and lecturer. He is the author of Hoover's FBI (Sherbourne Press) and Power on the Right (Ramparts Press).

The annual convention of the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI might again have passed unnoticed last fall had not Spiro Agnew been the featured speaker. The press showed up at Atlanta's posh Regency Hyatt House, and although rapped by the Vice President and the program chairman and pointedly left unfed at lunch, dutifully reported the speech. "Our traditional concept of success," Agnew told his well-tailored-and-barbered audience, "makes the ultraliberal nose twitch with distaste, as though it has sensed a vaguely unpleasant odor." The former G-men greeted his familiar philippics with a standing ovation.

Despite this coverage, few newspaper readers had the remotest idea of the success J. Edgar Hoover's alumni have had in penetrating the highest echelons of the nation's security-industrial complex, or in populating the Congress, the Executive, the Judiciary and state and local governments.

As an index, there are eleven Society members in the House of Representatives, foremost among them being H. Allen Smith, ranking Republican on the powerful Rules Committee. Four hold key staff positions on the House Internal Security Committee. The chiefs of the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Secret Service, IRS Intelligence Division and Post Office Inspectors belong to the Society. So do the security directors of major defense contractors, large corporations and the National Football League. Many public law-enforcement and private investigative agencies are dominated by Society members. The Governor of New Jersey carries a card, as does the attorney general of California, who aspires to be that state's governor in 1974.

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The Society, with headquarters in the Statler Hilton in New York, claims approximately 5,200 members. It was founded in 1937 with slightly more than 100 members and the motto: "Loyalty—Goodwill—Friendship." The motivation seems to have been an American Legion-like camaraderie among men who fancied themselves front-line veterans of the war against crime. To this day, the pages of the Society's monthly *Grapevine* drip with nostalgia for the Dillinger days. A recent article, for example, lamented the passing of a member who had helped "set the trap for John Dillinger in front of the Biograph Theatre in Chicago on July 22, 1934," and ran a news photo of the agent, in two-tone shoes and straw boater, standing behind the hearse that carried away the remains of Public Enemy No. One. Another issue published an article by a charter member, entitled "G-Men Cut Gangsters Down to Size in Blazing 1920s." It told how "the FBI stepped in with brilliant detective work and undaunted courage under the matchless leadership of J. Edgar Hoover." Nothing in *Grapevine* tampers with the legend. No mention is made, for instance, that the infamous Lady in Red who set up Dillinger for the kill was actually a paid informer of the private Hargrave Secret Service, and an announcement that a member newly elected to a California judgeship took part "under J. Edgar Hoover's leadership in the capture of Roger 'The Terrible' Touhy" fails to recall that the FBI had erroneously seized Touhy for the 1933 Hamm kidnapping, a caper actually pulled off by Alvin "Kreepy" Karpis.

The bond of experiences shared lures the Exes, as they call themselves, to Society luncheons, dinners, dances, parties, ceremonial functions and days at ballparks and race tracks. A meeting of the Los Angeles chapter was addressed not long ago by Jeremiah O'Leary, a Washington *Star* reporter through whom the FBI plants its stories.



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In 1970 the Philadelphia chapter passed a resolution over after-dinner coffee, commending that city's "law-and-order" police commissioner, now Mayor Frank Rizzo. Later that year the Utah chapter played host to Judge George W. Latimer, defense counsel in the My Lai trials. And last October 22, Hoover himself appeared at a Washington chapter dinner to report delays in the construction of the new FBI headquarters (which will cost an estimated \$105 million and be by far the most expensive government office building).

Such events are covered by *Grapevine* in something of a fraternity-house style. One recent item reported that a member who manages a restaurant-hotel complex in Southern California had bought a female elephant for a wild animal farm that is part of the promotion. The member, the magazine advised, "is adamant in his refusal to ride the elephant as a publicity stunt, even though it conforms to his political party preference."

The Society's most important single activity is the Executive Services Committee, a kind of placement bureau that depends on the local chairmen to keep it informed of local employment opportunities. The Exes have found the FBI legend highly exploitable—indeed, some entered the bureau simply to gain the prestige. Lawyers have found that an autographed portrait of Hoover on the office wall generates clients; others have discovered that the doors of industry and commerce are frequently wide open. The committee puts out feelers on behalf of agents who are

quitting or retiring. Its success is indicated by a recent report that it had "placed thirty-nine Society members with an average salary of \$19,750."

The annual Congressional Night staged by the Society shows just how highly placed some of the Exes are. The 1970 event, at the Rayburn House Office Building, heard speeches by Secret Service Chief James J. Rowley and Congressman Smith. The 1971 affair, transplanted to the more commodious Shoreham Hotel, starred Lieut. Gen. Joseph F. Carroll, head of the DIA, and Republican Congressmen Samuel L. Devine of Ohio and Lawrence J. Hogan of Maryland. Six other Congressional members of the Society were present: Garry Brown (R., Mich.); Omar T. Burleson (D., Tex.), chairman of the House Administrative Committee; Frank Denholm (D., S. Dak.); Ed Edmonson (D., Okla.) and Wiley E. Mayne (R., Iowa). Three others who couldn't make it that night were Smith, Robert Tiernan (D., R.I.) and Harold Runnels (D., N. Mex.). Conspicuous by his absence was Don Edwards (D., Calif.), a liberal who hasn't bothered to apply for the Society and has called for Hoover's ouster.

Also honored at the 1971 Congressional Night were three members who are federal judges in Washington: Edward A. Tamm, Walter J. Yeagley and W. Byron Sorrell. Yeagley, who once directed the Justice Department's Internal Security Division, was named by Richard Nixon as a recess appointment to the Court of Appeals, after his initial nomination had been turned down by the Senate District Committee. Other Society card holders on the dais were Lester P. Condon, high in HUD; Raymond F. Farrell, commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service; Robert E. Lee, an FCC commissioner; Dale W. Hardin and Robert G. Gresham, ICC commissioners. Representing Hoover were assistant to the director John P. Mohr and the bureau's press spokesman, Thomas Bishop.

Richard Nixon's partiality for ex-FBI men persists, even though he was once turned down by the bureau as "not sufficiently aggressive." Richard T. Burrell is his White House deputy counsel, Randolph W. Thrower was his IRS chief until he resigned a few months ago, and Allan Oakley Hunter is his appointee as president of the Federal National Mortgage Association.

The list of Society men in federal posts seems endless. William A. Kolar heads the IRS Intelligence Division; Hoover's nephew, Fred G. Robinette, is a middle-level IRS bureaucrat. William J. Cotter is Chief Postal Inspector, and N. Donald Dick heads up personnel security in HEW. The witch-hunting House Internal Security Committee has chief counsel Donald G. Sanders and three others on staff; its Senate namesake employs John R. Norpel, Jr. as director of research. Only Richard Helms knows how many Exes are in the CIA, since the Society directory doesn't list them as CIA but under such camouflage as the State Department, Department of Defense and Agency for International Development.

The security departments of public agencies and private corporations are thick with erstwhile G-men despite the fact they aren't necessarily qualified in the field by FBI experience. Norman H. McCabe, one of the agents who actually grabbed Alvin Karpis in New Orleans in 1936 while Hoover watched from an alley, is security officer for

RCA in Camden, N.J., and president of the American Society for Industrial Security. The National Space Agency (NASA) and Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) have many Exes in their security departments. In San Francisco, the prototype Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) put retired agent Ralph M. Lindsey in charge of security, but before the first train has rolled there are complaints of unduly restrictive rules.

When there was talk of gambling influences several years ago, the National Football League brought in Jack Danahy to capitalize on the FBI's reputation for incorruptibility. The security directors of the Sheraton and Loew's hotels and the Holiday Inns belong to the Society. The security departments of such aerospace goliaths as North American Rockwell, Lockheed and Hughes Aircraft are loaded with Exes. The security directors of Mobil, Gulf and Continental Oil companies, to cite only three, are in the Society. The Thoroughbred Racing Protective Bureau is thoroughly ex-FBI. So are the security staffs of the Bell and General Telephone Systems, a fact that present FBI wire tappers find convenient.

Private investigation is a fertile field for Hoover's drop-outs. Possibly the best known operator is George Wackenhut, whose Florida-based Wackenhut Corp. employs some 8,000 persons throughout the United States and Latin America and provides security services at Cape Kennedy and the AEC's Nevada test site. The burly, crew-cut Wackenhut broke into the news a few years ago when then Gov. Claude Kirk hired his sleuths to probe organized crime, thus stimulating cries of "private Gestapo." [See "Governor Kirk's Private Eyes" by Fred J. Cook, *The Nation*, May 15, 1967.] Wackenhut denies being a Birch Society sympathizer—"I am nothing more than a full-blooded, pro-American man"—but the firm's board of directors numbers such right-wing activists as Gen. Mark W. Clark and Los Angeles lawyer Loyd Wright. Moreover, the *Wackenhut Security Review*, distributed to corporate clients, purports to expose the "threat" of communism in every movement from civil rights to Latin American reform. The venerable Burns Detective Agency has lately taken on a number of Exes as executives. Fidelifacts, a nationwide affiliation that advertises its employment of former agents, is headed in New York by Vincent W. Gillen, who attained notoriety several years ago when detected shadowing Ralph Nader for General Motors.

Some Society stalwarts occupy executive suites in huge corporations. Past president Harold M. Percy is vice president for personnel of the C.I.T. Financial Corp.; Carl B. Sherman is president of Houston Lighting & Power; Edwin J. Foltz is president of Campbell's Soups International and John D. Stewart is a senior vice president of American Express, to name a few. But the luminary in this category is Robert A. Mahau, who masterminded Howard Hughes's Nevada operations before going out in a blaze of controversy in late 1970.

The Ford Motor Company is a major employer of FBI graduates; it has thirty on the payroll. The affinity began years ago, when the head of the Detroit FBI office, John S. Bugas, moved over to the auto maker as vice president for industrial relations. Now retired, Bugas presided at a "Ford Night," paid for by the company, at the Society's 1970

convention at Disneyland. The guest of honor was, appropriately, Efrem Zimbalist, Jr., star of *The FBI* television series sponsored by Ford.

FBI influence, predictably enough, permeates law enforcement. Nixon has named three Exes as United States Attorneys, notably Edward R. Heaher in the Eastern District of New York. Quinn Tamm, brother of Judge Edward Tamm, is executive director of the puissant International Association of Chiefs of Police. Edmund L. McNamara is Boston's police commissioner. Dour little E. Wilson Purdy commands the Dade County (Miami) Department of Public Safety. Peter J. Pitchess is sheriff of Los Angeles County, his previous two re-election campaigns having been chaired by Walt Disney and Bob Hope. Advertising executive Emmett C. McGauhey is president of the Los Angeles board of police commissioners, from which post he was instrumental in assuring the appointment of Chief Edward M. Davis, a truculent redbaiter, over a moderate candidate who had scored higher in civil service tests.

The Society harbors a number of professional right-wingers. Most widely known are Howard D. (Dan) Smoot of Dallas, who publishes and broadcasts the *Dan Smoot Report*, and W. Cleon Skousen, an ex-Birch Society functionary whose tracts include *The Naked Communist*. Keeping more in the background is the American Security Council, led by Society members John M. Fisher, president, and William K. Lambie Jr., administrative director. Begun in the mid-1950s as a kind of a blacklist service for its corporate members, ASC has branched out into propaganda and lobbying for a tough military stance and domestic law and order. Among ASC's advisory officers, who also number Gen. Curtis LeMay and Dr. Edward Teller, are three Exes: Kenneth M. Piper, personnel director of Motorola; Stephen L. Donchess, a United States Steel executive; and Russell E. White, a security consultant with General Electric. President Fisher's latest campaign is "Operation Alert," a fund appeal utilizing a massive mailing list designed to counter the "formidable 'Anti-Defense Disarmament Lobby' led by Senators like Proxmire, McGovern, Fulbright and Kennedy." [See "Hawk's Nest: The American Security Council" by Harold C. Relyea, *The Nation*, January 24.]

Although the Society claims to have enlisted a majority of former agents, it is only a bare majority, for the number of alumni is estimated to be 10,000. A conspicuous nonmember is C. Jackson Grayson, Nixon's newly appointed Price Commission chairman. Also missing from the roster is Aubrey Lewis, who in 1962 became the first black agent to go through the FBI training academy. When Robert Kennedy became Attorney General and put the word out to Hoover to hire black personnel, Lewis, an all-American football player at Notre Dame, was prosyletized and showcased to the press. He resigned several years ago and is now with a merchandising chain.

Moreover, many members are only nominal, and many, especially the younger ones, are dissatisfied with the way the Society is run by the old guard leadership. A common complaint, voiced only privately, is a reverence for Hoover that at times borders on the fanatic. "I like the guys," one member told me, "but they ought to grow up when it comes

to the Director." Another, who thinks of letting his membership lapse, is disgusted because the Society doesn't take an open stand against Hoover's abuses of power.

The Society once functioned with a degree of autonomy, and being in Hoover's good books was not a criterion for membership. All that changed in the early 1960s, when the Director and the Society's hierarchy decided they needed each other. One service the Society renders Hoover is to propose selected members who are deputized to assist in the roundup of tens of thousands of persons on the FBI's Security Index should the DetCom (Detention of Communists) program ever be implemented. The bond was symbolically sealed in 1964 when the Society commissioned a sculptor to do a bust of Hoover and peddled miniature replicas at the convention that year.

The ridiculously cultish tone was set when then president Emmett McGaughey retorted to a *Life* magazine suggestion that Hoover step down. "The amalgam that binds the agents of the FBI to the bureau is Mr. Hoover and his leadership," he oozed. "He is also the amalgam that binds the 4,600 members of our organization together in our devotion to each other, to the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and to Mr. Hoover, whose life is the fulfillment of the motto of the FBI: fidelity, bravery, integrity." The tone was perpetuated by Los Angeles banker Dixon D. Moorhead, president in 1969, who urged that members purchase in quantity through the Society the new book *J. Edgar Hoover on Communism* and hand them out as "a valuable business development and/or community relations gift for any businessman or professional man."

Admission to the Society is on the blackball principle. A list of applicants is circulated to the membership, with the instruction that they "carefully study" it and report "any information bearing adversely upon the character or reputation of any of the applicants which you believe would render them unfit for membership in the Society." Ordinarily, a man such as Quinn Tamm might not be accepted, since he had a falling out with Hoover before quitting as an assistant director. But Tamm happens to be the brother of Judge Tamm, and a power in his own right through his position with the International Association of Chiefs of Police. Perhaps most important, he has studiously avoided any public airing of his difference with the FBI chief.

The Society gives short shrift to any member who lets heretical views out into the open. When Norman Ollestad wrote his critical *Inside the FBI* in 1967, he was drummed out of the club, the book being deemed "detrimental to the good name or best interest of the Society." At present there pends the case of Bernard F. Connors, whose novel, *Embarrassment to the Bureau*, discusses Hoover's megalomania. There is talk in Society councils, Connors says, that he will be expelled.

The Jack Shaw case provided one of the Society's most shameful moments. A former seminarian and Marine, a Russian linguist and seven-year FBI veteran, Shaw was taking courses at New York's John Jay College to equip himself as a police instructor. In response to a professor's criticism of Hoover, Shaw composed a long letter that partly defended his boss but criticized him on several scores. For instance, the letter referred to the "personality cult" surrounding Hoover and remarked: "There is a

haunting phrase that echoes throughout the Bureau. 'Do not embarrass the Director.'" Shaw never sent the letter, but its pieces were retrieved from a wastebasket. Accused of "atrocious judgment," he was summarily transferred to Butte, Mont. FBI officials must have known that he could not move because his wife was in the hospital as a terminal cancer patient. The Bureau accepted Shaw's resignation "with prejudice."

Shaw wanted to stay in law enforcement, but found that the New York Police Department and other agencies were intimidated by the "with prejudice" stigma. So he sought aid from the Society. In October 1970, weeks before there was any publicity on his case, he visited the New York headquarters, where he talked with Frances Keogh, for a quarter century the Society's executive secretary. "It would be fruitless to try to join at this time," she said, but suggested that he attempt to get Harvey Foster or John Ring, both influential in Society affairs, to back him. (Harvey G. Foster was agent in charge of the New York office when he retired in 1962; he's now a vice president of American Airlines in Chicago. It was Foster, a fellow Notre Dame alumnus, who persuaded Aubrey Lewis to become an FBI agent. The late Thomas F. Ring was chief executive officer of the New York Liquor Authority, appointed by Governor Rockefeller.) "But," Shaw quotes Miss Keogh as warning, "you're going to have to grovel and eat dirt."

Shaw decided against a trip to Chicago to see Foster—he was strapped for money because of his wife's medical expenses—and didn't make connections with Ring. Instead, he wound up in the office of Scudder D. Kelvie, a vice president of New York's Franklin National Bank and vice chairman of the Society's Executive Services Committee—the job-finding arm. According to Shaw, Kelvie was effusively cooperative—until he read the letter with its sacrilegious passages. As it turned out, Shaw didn't need the Society. The ACLU succeeded in having the "with prejudice" stricken, and a private investigative group that doesn't consider Hoover's frown a bar to employment took him on.

When the controversy over Hoover erupted last year, the Society achieved a new peak of sycophancy. Chapter after chapter passed unanimous resolutions backing the Director. The April 1971 edition of *Grapevine* reported that the Congressional Night "developed into an evening of serious commentary about numerous recent scurrilous attacks against the FBI and Director J. Edgar Hoover." The same issue reprinted a column by Robert Allen and John Goldsmith, proclaiming a "strongly suspected undercover conspiracy" to smear Hoover had been hatched by everyone from "anarchist revolutionaries" to "bleeding-heart liberals." The national convention in Atlanta passed a vote of confidence in Hoover against "vicious and unwarranted attacks" that were politically motivated.

It was logical that the Society would view the conflict in ideological terms, since the politics of its members tend to reflect Hoover's archconservatism. But the current debunking of the FBI must be excruciating in another way. These men have clung to a myth that for decades had seemed inviolable. Now the ultimate irony was upon them: Hoover whose deft sense of public relations had spun the myth was now destroying it through senescent perversity. E