

# Confessions of an FBI agent

Part 2

By Robert Wall



*The author (today, in his Buffalo home) shortly expects to move with his wife and three children to Nova Scotia in hopes of a new, simple life style, a chance to reconsider American society.*

To the Bureau, the nation's security was threatened by civil rights movements, SDS, Panthers, Stokely Carmichael, the Institute for Policy Studies, the Black Studies Program at Federal City College. An agent's job was to prove the threat. If he investigated, discovered otherwise, and reported what he found, as the author did, he was called naive or duped, and other agents were assigned to produce conclusions that would agree with the Bureau's vision.

**M**y assignment to Squad 5-7 (Internal Security) in May, 1967, coincided with stepped up activity of the peace movement. The antiwar movement was rapidly becoming a movement of national significance and the FBI was gearing up to investigate what was becoming in its eyes a threat to national security. The initial justification for these investigations was the "Communist Conspiracy." Some of the organizers and leaders of the various peace groups, we were told, were people whom the FBI had investigated in the '40s and '50s for alleged membership or affiliation with the Communist Party. We were instructed to watch for these people at demonstrations and to target our informants on these individuals.

Soon, however, we were opening investigations by the hundreds. Anyone who acted in a leadership capacity in any of the antiwar groups was likely to become the subject of an FBI investigation. When the demonstrators began using civil disobedience as a tactic, J. Edgar Hoover labeled them "violence-prone activists who are giving aid and comfort to America's enemies." Now the "violence of the militant antiwar groups" became the justification for the continued and expanded investigation.

Fortunately, there are lighter moments even in security investigations. In October, 1967, the Washington Field Office was preparing to cover the "March on the Pentagon." Everything was in order. The assignments of agents was made, two-way radios allocated, photographic surveillance teams briefed, and stenographers stood by to report in triplicate every step of the march. Then a report was forwarded from a New York informant. He told of a group of an undetermined number which had left from New York City to join the march. The rest was not too clear, but the gist seemed to be that this group practiced some oriental religion and that their purpose in going to Washington was to circle the Pentagon with a living chain of bodies and by chanting the sacred word "OM" levitate the building thereby freeing it from the evil spirits of war and hatred dwelling within. They had also predicted rather cryptically that the Potomac River would run red.

I remember sitting in the office reading the teletype containing this "hot info," laughing quietly and wondering how much the informant had been paid for his report. Almost immediately, a Bureau supervisor who had also received a copy of the teletype phoned to be briefed on what special steps Washington Field Office was taking to handle this new threat. I was dumbfounded to learn that anyone, much less a person of supervisory stature in the Bureau, had taken the report seriously. But orders are orders etc., and so, the agent teams at the Pentagon were instructed to be alert for any attempt to form a human chain around the building and report promptly if it began developing. (Then I supposed we could make plans to alert the National Guard and the U.S. Marshals to check carefully before exiting any of the Pentagon's doors.) To counter the red river threat, some agents who owned power-boats volunteered their craft to patrol the Potomac for

the duration of the march.

We received no reports that the human chain was being formed but in mid-afternoon after most of the marchers had already crossed to the Pentagon, we received a report that an individual on the Key Bridge was throwing something into the river. A boat was quickly dispatched to the scene where three packages of red Air Force marker dye were fished from the river. The Potomac had been saved by the FBI in action.

**T**here are hardly any limits on the Bureau's activities in compiling political information, particularly about the New Left. A case in point is the Institute for Policy Studies, an organization set up by dissenting officials in Kennedy's administration to carry out independent studies in international and domestic questions. The Institute caught my attention shortly after I began investigating the new left. Reports from FBI informants showed that many of the leaders and spokesmen of antiwar and civil rights organizations called at the Institute when they visited Washington.

I reasoned that if there were a conspiracy that linked all these groups the Institute was the logical place to look for it. I drafted a memo to that effect and requested that a case on the Institute be opened and assigned to me. My supervisor quickly agreed: he was then trying to increase the case load of the squad to justify a request for an increase in manpower.

**M**ost of the information about the Institute's work is easily available and I was soon able to accumulate a vast dossier on it including biographical sketches of its founders, sources of its financial support, a general idea of its day to day operation, and a pile of scholarly studies published by it. After analyzing this data I concluded that the Institute was not the secret mastermind of any conspiracy to overthrow the government but simply what I described in my report as a "think-tank of the Left," where a wide variety of current and former government officials, lawyers, journalists, radicals, and others were holding seminars, doing research, writing reports, etc. I closed the investigation. To do otherwise, incidentally, would have meant a mound of paperwork that would have occupied me full time for months.

About a year later another agent newly assigned to the squad came to see me with the closed file of the Institute and asked whether I thought the case ought to be reopened. This agent, like so many others, had strong right-wing views and could not believe that the Institute was merely sponsoring seminars and doing the other work I had described. It seemed necessary to him to think that a grand New Left conspiracy existed. In spite of my opposition, he had the case reopened and began a full-scale investigation of the Institute. He began monitoring the checking account of the Institute to determine where its money was going. He asked for telephone company records and compiled a list of the Institute's long distance

telephone calls. He attempted to place informants in the Institute as student interns and gathered every available paper published by it. Individual investigations were then opened on the people who worked for or received money from the Institute.

When I left the Bureau in April, 1970, the case on the Institute was still being investigated with gusto, and a huge collection of papers and reports on it had accumulated. So far as I have been able to determine, the FBI has found no evidence whatever of any illegal activity by the IPS, but the Institute continues to be investigated.

**T**he FBI has always been divided about college campuses. It wants to know what is happening on the campus, yet it is afraid of being charged with interfering with academic freedom. When the antiwar students began challenging the legitimacy of the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC), the propriety of secret military research projects in colleges and universities, and the legality and morality of the draft, they turned their campuses into centers of political activity.

The Bureau's first response to this student activism had a cautious note. We were instructed to investigate to determine who was responsible for the demonstrations and uprisings on the campuses, on the theory that they were organized by outside agitators traveling around the country, but not to conduct investigations on campus. We were told to plant informants in violence-prone student groups but not to use students themselves as informants. Then as campus activity increased we got the green light to recruit students again but were warned to choose only those who were "mature" and reliable. Those students selected were to be admonished strongly that the Bureau was not interested in "legitimate campus activity" (a term as definable as "New Left").

**I** was understandably somewhat anxious when in November, 1967, I was assigned the case titled "Students for a Democratic Society (SDS)." Here was the organization that the Bureau had singled out among all the other young activist groups for special attention. I was told that I had to prepare a comprehensive report on all SDS activities in the Washington area in less than a month. Every campus SDS chapter was to be identified, as were the names and backgrounds of all officers of the various groups, the number of members in each chapter, the activities of each group, including especially any activity where violence or destruction of property took place.

The agent previously assigned to the case assured me that a brief letter to the Bureau would suffice since there was no significant SDS activity in Washington, D.C., a fact that he had dutifully reported three times in the preceding year. (This particular agent was at the time moving up the ladder of Bureau success to a supervisory position and I felt certain that his astute handling of the SDS case was largely responsible.)

With very little effort I was able to learn that there were already four campus SDS chapters in the city and an SDS regional office had just been set up. Realizing that it would be impossible in the time remaining to compile all the information demanded by the Bureau, I chose to imitate my predecessor and reported that there was no significant SDS activity in the Washington, D.C., area. Shortly thereafter, when the squad was beefed up, I arranged to have the SDS case reassigned to one of the newcomers.

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The Bureau's ambivalence regarding campus unrest was apparent when the Washington Field Office received a request from then Assistant Director William Sullivan to analyze the activity on campuses, point out the causes, and recommend the appropriate FBI policy for dealing with student movements. Since our squad was closest to the problem, the job of preparing the position paper was turned over to us. Our squad supervisor elected to assign the task to an older agent who had recently been assigned to the squad. This agent had little experience with college matters but had as yet been assigned few cases and had more time available. He also had a reputation for being able to "write well," that is to say, what the Bureau wanted to hear in the language to which it was accustomed.

When I learned of the choice I was disturbed. The agent chosen, if described by a friend, would have been called an extreme conservative. In the banter of the office I had hung the label "facist pig" on him. He in turn called me the "Father Croppi" of the office, or "Crop" for short. I knew that he saw a conspiracy in every campus demonstration and felt that swifter police action was the first and best answer to any problem of disruption by college students. So I knew what tack he would take.

At this point I was still naive enough to believe that the Bureau was amenable to change and I saw this paper as an opportunity to "affect the Bureau from within." So I went to my supervisor and asked for his permission to take over the assignment of preparing the paper for Sullivan. He refused because, in his words, "You're too young to place the SDS in proper historical perspective with the old guard Communist organizations." Undismayed, I "borrowed" the rough draft of my colleague's paper and proceeded to draft a reply, counterproposal. In essence, I contended that university administrators needed to re-evaluate the role of the

university in our society and take the initiative away from radical agitators by instituting needed changes before the demand for these changes became the rallying point for student discontent.

I concluded that if university administrators could recognize the issues behind the student uprisings, meet with student representatives, and be willing to compromise, they would generally be able to avert destructive confrontation. I recommended that the Bureau keep its hands off the universities, even those that had already suffered disruption, because the FBI had no legal justification to intrude; any intrusion would, moreover, be taken by students as an indication of attempted repression by federal authorities.

When I dropped my paper on the supervisor's desk, he handled the situation with the skill of a diplomat. Rather than choose between the papers, he gave both to a third agent to prepare a compromise paper to be presented to Sullivan, setting out the principal points on both sides of the issue. He promised also that I would have the opportunity to make an oral presentation to Sullivan at a later date.

About two weeks later, I returned to the office unexpectedly in midmorning to discover that a meeting with Sullivan had been arranged at 1 p.m. that day. Angry at what appeared to be an attempt to keep me out, I went to the Coordinating Security Supervisor (my supervisor's supervisor) who had originally received the request from Sullivan that set the whole paper-writing flurry in motion. In his smooth Dixie manner he assured me that no slight had been intended. I had not been invited to the meeting merely because of an administrative oversight. Certainly I'd be allowed to have my say.

It seemed obvious to me then that they did not want me to attend the meeting but they didn't want to be too obvious about it. So I spent some time preparing an oral argument while I awaited the 1 o'clock

meeting. At 12:45, just as I was bringing my shoes to a new luster, my phone rang. The Coordinating Supervisor on the other end advised me that, unfortunately, Mr. Sullivan's office had only four chairs for visitors and since I had been the last to request a part in the presentation and would be the fifth person, there was no choice but to exclude me. He tried to calm me with lavish praise for my initiative and willingness to tackle difficult problems, but he managed only a hollow laugh when I suggested that I'd accept standing room.

I was certain that my exclusion was just another example of how people on the lower levels of a bureaucracy act as a buffer for those higher up the ladder. They decided what the man at the top wanted to hear and they gave him just that. They had heard and read Mr. Hoover's statements that the SDS was a subversive group that traveled about the country seeking to destroy the institutions of higher learning and they could not make a presentation that deviated from that line.

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**"If an individual or group is black and does something to gain attention, it is likely to be investigated."**

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The final result was an order directing intensified investigation of student agitators and expanded "informant penetration" of campus SDS groups. Predictably, the informants reported the names of hundreds of students who had done no more than say they were interested in SDS or had dropped in at a meeting. Our Washington squad alone opened dozens of cases on freshmen college students who attended orientation sessions sponsored by SDS on Washington, D.C., campuses. Soon we had so many new cases that we had to request additional

agents to handle this new "threat to national security."

While we were investigating antiwar groups and student activists, the squad also handled what were called "Racial Matters." This category was an absurdly and frighteningly broad one. Investigations on almost anything done by or for black people could be opened simply by labeling it a Racial Matter. Here, for example, are some of the "cases" we investigated:

A group of teen-agers from the ghetto areas of Washington who marched to the City Council chambers and demanded restoration of funds for summer jobs for ghetto youth.

—Two busloads of steelworkers who picketed the Department of Labor to protest discriminatory practices at the Bethlehem Steel Sparrow's Point (near Baltimore) plant.

—A group of high school students who staged a protest in their school cafeteria complaining that the food was not fit for human consumption.

—Two members of the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) who opened a bookstore on 14th Street in Northwest Washington. The FBI quickly responded with an investigation titled "Drum and Spear Bookstore, Racial Matter."

When the poor people's march was organized to dramatize the plight of the poor in our nation and a camp was set up near the Washington Monument, this was a Racial Matter. More logically perhaps, investigations of the Ku Klux Klan, the American Nazi Party, and similar groups were also Racial Matters.

Clearly the Bureau had no rational criterion for opening these investigations. The only consistent pattern that I found was that if an individual or group is black and does something to gain attention it is likely to be investigated.

Our guide to Racial Matters at the field office was the early edition of *The Washington Post*. A typical news item

would read: "Police arrested six persons early this morning when a crowd gathered as detectives of the Metropolitan Police Department were attempting to arrest a suspected narcotics peddler at the corner of 14th and U Streets NW. Some rocks and bottles were allegedly thrown at police," etc. Inevitably, when such a story appeared, we would receive a call from the supervisor of the Racial Desk in Bureau headquarters asking what we knew about the incident. It was his firm conviction that incidents of this type were a manifestation of the conspiracy by blacks to take over their community by driving out the police.

So that we would not be embarrassed when the supervisor called, it became standard practice for one of the early arrivers in the office to scan the paper for articles like the one above. He would clip the item, call the precinct to verify the names of the persons arrested, and then paraphrase the news item in a teletype message to Bureau headquarters, advising them that we were following the incident and would report any further developments. A month or two later, the agent to whom the case was assigned would close it with a letter stating that the incident was apparently spontaneous and not part of a conspiracy, and giving an estimate of the damages, the names of those arrested, and the backgrounds of those who already had records in FBI files.

Often the supervisor on the Racial Desk at the Bureau would request specific information about a case under investigation by the field office. The agent to whom the Drum and Spear Bookstore case was assigned received such a request. For months he had been investigating the bookstore, watching its operations, checking out its owners, looking into its bank records, trying to ascertain the source of its funds. He had found nothing connected with crime, conspiracy, or evil doings. Now he was instructed to go to the bookstore and purchase a copy of the *Little Red Book* containing the quotations of Chairman

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Mao Tse-tung. It was pointless to ask what purpose the purchase of this particular book would serve. It was obvious to us that the supervisor felt that the bookstore, by selling this book, was somehow implicated in the Oriental branch of the Communist conspiracy.

The agent dutifully made his way to the Drum and Spear where he learned that they had sold their last copy of the book. Rather than order a copy to be mailed to the supervisor, a cheeky solution which he admitted considering, he returned downtown, bought a copy at Brentano's, and duly passed it on to the Bureau supervisor, just as if it had come from the Drum and Spear. Thereafter, the written description of the Drum and Spear contained the note that radical literature including the *Little Red Book* of Mao Tse-tung was obtainable there.

**A**s I worked on Racial Matters in Washington, the appalling racism of the FBI on every level became glaringly apparent to me. It seemed that every politically dissident black man was a candidate for investigation. Perhaps this racism was no worse than in other branches of government, but it was extremely discouraging to find it so firmly entrenched in an organization of supposedly educated, professional men charged with responsibility for investigating violations of the civil rights laws.

The documents stolen from the Media, Pa., office of the FBI demonstrate the endemic racism of the Bureau. In one memo that J. Edgar Hoover directed to all offices of the FBI, he ordered investigations of "all black student unions and similar organizations organized to project the demands of black students, which are not presently under investigation. The stated purpose for these investigations was that these groups are the "target for influence and control by violence prone Black Panther Party (BPP) and other extremists."

Hoover had publicly announced that the small and largely ineffectual

Black Panther Party was the greatest single threat to the security of the country. Having itself created the threat, the Bureau set out to neutralize it. Even if Hoover could have seriously documented his charges against the Panthers, which he never did, it was absurd to investigate hundreds of people whose only connection with the Black Panther Party was that the party was trying to influence them. Hoover

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### The FBI sent paid informants to report on a Black History Week program at the Smithsonian Institution's Anacostia annex.

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might similarly have justified an FBI investigation of every member of a "working class" union because the Communist Party directed its propaganda and organizing effort at workers, or an investigation of every college student organization because the SDS sought to influence and control students.

Nor was this assault on the black student unions an isolated incident. I could cite many incidents, for example the FBI's interest in the Smithsonian Institution when it opened an annex in largely black Anacostia. One of the annex's first events was a program for Black History Week centered on the life and contributions of Frederick Douglass. The FBI actually paid informants to attend the program and report the contents of the speeches given during it.

**I**n the case of Stokely Carmichael the FBI was particularly determined and vicious. When he moved to Washington, in December, 1967, our squad kept him under surveillance 24 hours a day, following him about the city from lookouts and cars, and on foot. The investigation became even more intense a few days

after Martin Luther King was assassinated. When blacks in Washington, as well as in many other cities, outraged by the murder, rioted for a day and a half, in the Washington Field Office, a 50-man special squad was assembled to get Carmichael for inciting to riot. We were directed to gather evidence showing that Carmichael had plotted, planned, and directed the rioting, burning, and pillage that took place in Washington. Fifty agents spent their full time for over a month on this one case.

One man, who later admitted that he had "been mistaken and perhaps exaggerated a bit," claimed that Carmichael had a pistol which he fired into the air and then told the crowd to go home and get guns. A great many others stated firmly that Carmichael had urged the crowd not to dishonor Dr. King's memory by rioting and had politely asked shop owners to close their shops in his memory. Lacking any substantial evidence on which to base a charge, the Bureau nevertheless submitted voluminous reports on the minute by minute activities of Carmichael that were heavily weighted to imply that he had actually incited the mobs. Had Carmichael not decided to leave this country and go to Africa, the FBI, I am confident, would eventually have found something with which to bring an indictment against him.

**Q**uite by accident, I learned that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) was aiding in the hunt for something with which to pin a charge on so-called "Black Militants." In early 1969 I was checking the background of a former member of SNCC, a man I had been investigating for almost two years. On three occasions I tried to close the case because I could find no indication that the subject was doing anything that would warrant an FBI investigation. Each time permission was refused; his status as a former member of SNCC being sufficient justification for going on with the investigation. I learned that the

IRS had requested his arrest record from the Identification Division of the FBI. When I went to the IRS I found it had secretly set up a special squad of men to investigate the tax records of a list of "known militants and activists," and that the FBI was supplying the names of the persons for the IRS to include in this list. After talking to several IRS officials I was sent to a locked, sound-proofed room in the basement of the IRS headquarters in Washington where I found a file on my subject, among hundreds of others piled on a long table.

The Bureau's wide ranging investigations of civil rights leaders and groups followed an almost identical pattern. It was impressed upon us in agents' training that the FBI did not investigate "legitimate" civil rights organizations. Yet, every major civil rights group was and probably still is being actively investigated. Here again the titles of the cases all had that magic word "Cominfil" (Communist infiltration). The Bureau line went something like this: We do not investigate legitimate civil rights groups, however, we do keep track of the activities of certain groups to determine whether there is or may be any attempt by the Communist Party to infiltrate them and take over control and direction. A very fine distinction on paper was a gaping chasm in reality. We were never troubled that our intensive "preliminary" investigations failed to uncover the red menace lurking in the black movement. We could still continue our efforts to identify the leaders, catalog the membership, follow the report on their activities, recruit informants and place them in these groups, or, in short, investigate civil rights organizations.

Later, when Stokely Carmichael dared utter the phrase "Black Power" while marching through Mississippi, the fine distinction dissolved, Cominfil was dropped and the "violent tendencies of the militant black extremists" became the official justification for our investiga-

tions. Nothing changed but the title of the case.

This peculiar racism of the Bureau, by which they felt justified in opening a case on any Black individual or organization which gained prominence, was also reflected in the personnel of the Bureau. Before 1963 there were no blacks recruited for the position of Special Agent. Since that time they have recruited on a quota basis so that even today blacks number less than 1 per cent of the agent personnel. To keep track of the black agents, the Bureau assigned them a special credential number series. Each agent, when he completes his training, receives his credentials, which bear a serial number. Usually the numbers given to a class run in sequence. My class received credentials numbering from the 970s to the 990s. But black agents, no matter what the others in their class received, were assigned credentials in the 7500 series.

Often the mere presence of a black agent in an office brings out the latent racism of the agents. For example, in one case some white agents from the Washington Field Office had made an arrest of a black individual near 14th and U Streets N.W., one of Washington's "Ghetto" areas. While in the FBI car on the way to the office for photographing and fingerprinting, the individual became somewhat belligerent and told the arresting agents that he could have caused a riot if he had wanted to when they arrested him. Then when they arrived at the parking lot of the Field Office, the individual refused to get out of the car. We had been trained in many ways to get a recalcitrant subject out of a vehicle. But rather than resort to these methods, the arresting agents called upstairs for the assistance of a black agent who was then assigned to the office. Before the agent arrived on the scene, the subject agreed to leave the car and went willingly upstairs with the agents. But when it came time to fingerprint him, he again became balky and refused. Again rather than impose their will, as they are legally enti-

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led to do in the circumstances, (and would have done had there not been a black agent in the office) the agents again called for the assistance of the black agent. When he arrived, he expressed his astonishment at the fact that three agents were unable to take the fingerprints of one arrested individual. The other agents suggested that the black agent reason with the subject since "they could communicate better with each other." Instead the black agent removed his coat and watch, gave them to one of the white agents to hold and advanced toward the subject. The subject, seeing the futility of further resistance, agreed to be fingerprinted at that point.

**M**y awareness of the racism in the Bureau was solidified when I was assigned to investigate a black school. A number of teachers in the Black Studies Program at Federal City College determined that a true black studies program could not exist under federal sponsorship and decided to set up their own independent school for black studies.

The supervisor on the Racial Desk of the Bureau, prompted by an unsubstantiated allegation that the school was teaching the art of making molotov cocktails and the techniques of urban guerilla warfare, ordered an investigation. As many as six informants, two under my direction and the others directed by other agents on the squad, were instructed to penetrate the school at all levels and determine the truth or falsity of the allegation. Some of the informants enrolled in the school and attended the classes. Others worked in the office of the school helping with the paper work and organizing. In addition, I and other agents on the squad staked out the school at various times, noting those who entered and left and the activities in and around the building. I arranged to have the checking account and the record of long-distance telephone calls made by the school monitored. Following our normal procedures, I made these ar-

rangements with the bank and the phone company, even though I had no warrant, court authorization, or legal authorization of any sort.

The result of all this activity was a report in which I stated that the school was in fact a school and that we should discontinue the investigation. In no instance had any of the informants reported any evidence of the making of molotov cocktails or the training for urban guerilla warfare. Nor had any of the investigation by agent personnel uncovered any information which indicated that there was some other purpose than education in the school.

Within a few days of the submission of my report, we received a teletype from the Bureau on green paper, fondly called a "greenie." A "greenie" signifies that the matter is to be handled expeditiously. It may sometimes contain a pat on the back, but more often contains some chastisement for the agent assigned to the case. In this instance the greenie was short, barely three paragraphs. In essence it said that either the agent handling the investigation was naive or that he had been duped by the informants or that the informants did not know what they were supposed to be looking for. It ordered that the case be reopened, that the investigation be intensified and that additional agent personnel be assigned to the investigation. My resignation was effective shortly thereafter.

**P**rinted boldly in Bureau propaganda literature is the statement that the defense of innocence is as important as the proof of guilt. It heads the list of cardinal virtues of the Bureau and is tacked up for all to see in FBI offices throughout the country. Yet, innocence offers no protection from a continuing FBI investigation when the subject of that investigation is black or espouses an unpopular political philosophy.

My experience has shown me that the FBI, in its pursuit of blacks, the anti-war movement, and college activists, was not an impartial, disinterested

finder of fact but rather a relentless guardian of orthodoxy, a police force which sought to cause harm to movements that boldly questioned the policies of the government. It engaged in these activities not simply because of the political prejudices of the director and his staff, but, to a large extent, to justify its own existence. Each attack on any outspoken critic of American institutions was intended to show the FBI as the indispensable protector of the public. To each slanderous name-calling or alarmist leak to the press, Hoover added a soft-spoken if tendentious appeal to Congress for more money and additional personnel. Enemies of the public were created to justify the Bureau's role as defender of the "National Security" against domestic foes who sought, according to Hoover's propaganda, to subvert the country.

This is not to say that an effective federal investigative agency is not needed to deal with crimes or that the FBI itself has not done efficient and honest criminal work (although it has for years been reluctant to act vigorously against organized crime). But my years in the FBI convinced me that most of what the Bureau does in matters of internal security consists of investigations and rumor mongerings that are foolish, pointless, and time-wasting so far as protection of the public from violation of criminal laws is concerned; while the agency is all too effective in harassing legitimate political activity. At the same time, all of the investigations I have referred to here have resulted in adding more names and dossiers to the millions in the FBI's files. The FBI is thus creating a proliferating store of secret police files on innocent people, often based on bizarre allegations and dubious information, and sometimes on nothing at all.

What I saw and did as an agent for the FBI exposed for me the wisdom of the old question: Who will watch the watchers? I have no easy answer to it. ■

(Portions of the preceding article appeared in The New York Review of Books.)