

Police Given 'Spy' Classes at Institute

By Joel Kokkin and Bill Wallace
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SACRAMENTO, Calif.—Electronic surveillance and undercover intelligence-gathering methods—once primarily the preserve of the CIA and FBI—are being taught to local police from virtually every section of the country at a unique state-run training institute here.

This unusual school, known as the Western Regional Organized Crime Training Institute (WROCTI), has since its founding in 1971 taught such things as electronic eavesdropping and infiltration to more than 4,000 local police officers from 30 states and several foreign countries.

WROCTI run by the California Department of Justice, Organized Crime and Criminal Intelligence Bureau (OCCIB), teaches police how to use modern intelligence methods in handling such diverse crimes as political terrorism, labor racketeering and white-collar crime. Its critics, however, claim its distribution of crime courses to local police is a "proliferation" of such as an undercover program.

In the course on urban terrorism, for instance, officers at WROCTI find out how to investigate terrorist groups, "operating under the cover of legitimate fronts" such as parades, assemblies, book stores and even law offices. It also instructs local police on how to develop "a proclivity for proactive reaction" which, according to WROCTI's director, Roy

Langels" in class but says all he really wants to teach is "how to bring the operation to an end without jeopardizing the course field. Among the current instructors in informant courses for instance, is Kenneth Gumbertol whose resume boasts that he is the only known infiltrator of the Weather Underground."

In the past instructors brought in to teach the local police have included James Hilsen, former U.S. Army expert in psychological operations and counter insurgency; Steven Dumas, a special government intelligence consultant to the U.S. Marines in Indochina; and Walter Harper, a systems analyst who has done government research on riots and political disturbances in California colleges and communities. WROCTI's administrators believe the school has done well because of

"Surprisingly enough, the federal agencies have never had this sort of national intelligence system and training capability," Goldin said.

While Goldin and WROCTI officials insist the schooling given at WROCTI will help prevent intelligence agency abuses in the future, some civil liberties groups fear the school has become the training ground for a dangerous new national police spy network. "We believe they're training people to spy on citizens who are engaged in constitutionally protected activities," said Brent Darbandi, Sacramento legislative advocate for the American Civil Liberties Union. ACLU is seeking a state court order to find out more about the operations of WROCTI.

The suit seeks to remove exemptions in the California Public Records Act which so far has allowed OCCIB and WROCTI to withhold information about their training classes and which the ACLU claims

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with police investigations and intelligence in this way some of the details of WROCTI's training, the names of its trainees and its instructors have been shielded from public scrutiny. But officials at WROCTI an

sible abuses from WROCTI-trained intelligence officers, some civil liberties believe, comes from the institute's broad definition of organized crime to include such politically sensitive areas as millinery and terrorism. WROCTI-trained OCCIB agents and some WROCTI-instructed local police intelligence units have, according to a 1973 OCCIB document, gathered information on such politically active persons at Berkeley City Councilwoman Flora Hancock, former student leader Tom Hayden, singer Joan Baez, United Farm Workers President Cesar Chavez and the late radical organizer Sam Alinsky, whom OCCIB identified as "a known communist."

As the political uproar over raiding has died down, some of the concern over the activities of WROCTI entities has shifted to groups opposing nuclear power. In 1974, for instance, the Tarr Department of Public Safety, which has sent some of its top intelligence officers to the WROCTI, admitted it kept files on Robert Pomery, a communist active in the anti-nuclear movement in the Citizens Association for a Sound Energy, a Tarr-influenced anti-nuclear group.

Just last year the Santa Barbara sheriff's office, which maintains even closer ties to WROCTI, admitted sending Deputy C. D. Smith to infiltrate the anti-nuclear Abalone Alliance as members were preparing a Hiroshima day demonstration in August. Lt. Don Dicus, commanding officer of the county sheriff's special investigation

several foreign countries.

WROOTTI, run by the California Department of Justice's Organized Crime and Criminal Intelligence Branch (OCCIB), teaches police how to use modern intelligence methods in battling such diverse crimes as political terrorism, labor racketeering and white-collar crime. Its critics, however, claim its definitions of crime are so broad that WROOTTI-trained forces are being used against noncriminals such as anti-nuclear protest groups.

In the course of urban terrorism, for instance, officers at WROOTTI find out how to investigate terrorist groups, "operating under the cover of legitimate fronts" such as parades, assemblies, book stores and even law offices. In the numerous local police on how to generate "a proclivity for proactive reaction" which, according to WROOTTI's director, Roy Lester, includes "furthering intelligence on groups before they commit crimes."

In conjunction with urban terrorism courses, WROOTTI offers a specialized surveillance equipment course that covers such gadgetry as ion-charge and infrared cameras, and recording ranging from those the size of a pack of cigarettes to those designed to be hidden in an undercover agent's briefcase.

One WROOTTI instructor formant development and maintenance course, "includes sessions on 'informants,' 'police undercover operators,' and 'recruited penetration agents,' as well as the niceties of using such 'human resource management tools' as 'doctors, contact reports, biographical data and resource banks."

The informant course syllabus stresses the proper method for "targeting and planning for covert operations." In addition, the officers are taught the methods of "when, why and how to terminate" undercover agents—a terminology which in past Central Intelligence Agency instances could mean ending the life of an informant. One WROOTTI instructor said, "termination always brings a few

Notes & a political disturbances in California, colleges and counterinsurgency operations in Southeast Asia. WROOTTI's administrators believe the school has flourished because of

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the problems faced by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and CIA following disclosures of intelligence-gathering abuses over the past decade. "The fact that the Feds have been means it on their intelligence work means it spilled over to the local," said one ranking WROOTTI official. "When the CIA types got in trouble, they couldn't help us anymore so we took to training ourselves."

Officials at the U.S. Law Enforcement Assistance Administration (LEAA), which has sunk over \$2 million in the California school, believe local police are no longer willing to sit back and let federal units control important domestic intelligence operations. "Every police department has reasons of pride to have an intelligence unit," said LEAA's Jim Goldin. "If you don't have an intelligence unit, you're not with it."

With police from around the country attending classes together, WROOTTI chief administrator Lester says, "we are facilitating communication when you get to know people from other parts of the country. It makes it a lot easier to get information from the other guy. It's a lot better than cold teletype."

Goldin of LEAA goes further. "A major fringe benefit of WROOTTI, he believes, is the creation of a de facto national police intelligence force" unlike one even seen in the nation.

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But officials at WROOTTI and the OCCIB which administers the institute and provides its staff, Geny Barnhart's charges. Charles Casey, OCCIB's director, insists WROOTTI is only interested in training officers in gathering intelligence about criminals. "If it's not related to a crime, it's not criminal," Casey said. "If people want to stand on a street corner and do their thing, go ahead. We don't care."

WROOTTI is one of three centers run by local and state law enforcement agencies conceived in the past decade to train police in intelligence-gathering techniques. Besides the Sacramento center, there are the Dade County Institute of Organized Crime, in Miami, founded at about the same time as WROOTTI, and another center being developed in Columbus, Ohio.

Of the centers, only WROOTTI so far has received much public attention. The Dade County Center, apparently as large as WROOTTI, concentrates on traditional organized crime and unlike the Sacramento institute, shields away from the politically sensitive area of terrorism. The Columbus center, is still too small and too new to have engendered much note.

Perhaps the greatest source of pos-

several, Saw Hubbsy, whom OCCIB identified as "a known communist."

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Just last year the Santa Barbara Sheriff's office, which maintains even closer ties to WROOTTI, admitted lengthily Deputy C. D. Smith to infiltrate the anti-nuclear Abalone Alliance as managers were preparing a Hiroshima day demonstration in August. Lt. Don Dixon, commanding officer of the county sheriff's special investigation division, said, "Just about all our intelligence officers are WROOTTI-trained. We've learned how to infiltrate and conduct surveillance on unions, organized crime and the anti-nuclear movement."

The Santa Barbara and Texas incidents have helped make the institute a major focus of concern for anti-urban clear groups.

Such concern about WROOTTI is misplaced, believes LEAA's Goldin. "The whole intelligence community is based on trust," he said. "I think you're faced with a tremendous flow of people in and out of intelligence but the fear of them being there long enough to do any real damage is just crazy."

But, unofficially, some WROOTTI administrators and lecturers are deeply concerned about how local intelligence agents are using their training after they leave the institute. "I guess there really isn't any way to control this—how can you control anything," asked one WROOTTI administrator. "Look what happened to the CIA and the FBI. Guys get power and just abuse it. I guess that's just the way things go."