

Who in Hoover Irked by Name?

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A proposal to remove J. Edgar Hoover's name from the new FBI building elicited a stream of "no comments" this week from most employees there. Only three workers criticized such an action, while others said the whole idea was "silly."

And nobody wanted to give their names or even be quoted on the subject.

"Do you really want the truth?" asked one FBI secretary, queried during her lunch hour at the Pennsylvania Avenue entrance to the monumental structure. "I don't care what they call it. They can tear it down if they want to."

The proposal to change the building's name came last week from Rep. Gilbert Gude (R-Md.) following disclosure that the late FBI director had approved what the congressman said was "a smear campaign" against Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., the slain civil rights leader.

Gude, discussing a bill he said he would introduce, said the building "should not become a permanent reminder of actions taken in bad faith."

About 25 employees were questioned about the proposal, and opinions were solicited from special agents as well as clerical workers and mid-level administrators.

"I don't think they'll rip Hoover's name off the wall," said one high agency official, who said the late FBI director

should be judged with his total accomplishments in perspective. "Do you change the name of the city because George Washington apparently fathered an illegitimate child?"

Hoover's actions were made public during a Senate Intelligence Committee hearing that revealed the FBI waged a campaign to discredit Dr. King during the 1960s, including sending him a letter that was interpreted as a suicide suggestion.

Attorney General Edward Levi said in an interview with newsmen Wednesday, "I think we ought to be very careful about making instant judgments on great public characters. I don't think history can be written so easily and quickly."

Levi said he was less concerned with the name of the structure than with its architecture. "My own view," he said, "is that the building is a terrible building, one of the ugliest I have ever seen."

The Hoover building occupies a square block between 9th and 10th Streets NW facing Pennsylvania Avenue, a huge monument to the man who directed the FBI from 1924 to 1972.

Built of yellow concrete and bronze tinted glass, it rises to a height of 11 stories around a central courtyard. It is the most expensive government building to date, costing \$126 million. About 7,000 FBI employees work there.