

Hoover Ties to German Police Detailed in FBI Documents

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J. Edgar Hoover maintained contact with top Nazi police officials until the week before Pearl Harbor, according to FBI documents made available yesterday.

The then FBI director exchanged requests for information and on one occasion provided a German police admirer with an autographed photograph of himself.

The documents detail the early years of FBI cooperation with the International Police Commission, now known as Interpol, which the United States joined in 1939 despite warnings it was German-dominated.

Not until Dec. 4, 1941—three days before the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor—did Hoover put out a memo saying, "In the future, no communications will be addressed to the International Police Commission, whose present location is Berlin, Germany."

The 1,785 pages of documents were obtained from the FBI by the National Commission on Law Enforcement and Social Justice, an arm of the Church of Scientology, through a Freedom of Information request. The church is trying to document the workings of Interpol.

Among the memos is a June 26, 1939, letter to Hoover from W. Fleischer, described as counselor of the Criminal Bureau of the Reich, thanking Hoover for sending him the FBI's latest annual report, informing Hoover that the Reich's fingerprint division had 772,371 fingerprint records and concluding:

"May I ask a personal favor? I

should be deeply grateful to you if you could send me a photograph of yourself with a little dedication."

On July 18, 1939, 1½ months before Germany invaded Poland, Hoover complied with the request.

A July 20, 1939, internal FBI memo on joining the commission noted that "we would not receive much practical benefit from membership" but warned "there is also the possibility that if we fail to join, the Secret Service or some other federal agency may seek to become member, and the FBI might thereby suffer in international prestige."

The memo, which included the warning about German domination, also said if the FBI failed to join after expressing its willingness to become a member, "it might be construed as an act of unfriendliness," and recommended the bureau join.

Irregular correspondence between the FBI and the commission continued until an internal FBI memo on Nov. 22, 1941, noted the police organization's headquarters had moved from Vienna to Berlin.

It questioned whether the FBI should continue the contact "in view of the fact that by so doing the bureau might be said to tacitly recognize the fact that Germany has taken over" the commission.

A meeting of the FBI Executive Conference was convened on Dec. 1, 1941, and recommended no further communication be addressed to the organization after which the Dec. 4 Hoover memo went out.