

Rt. 12, Frederick, Md. 21701

4/12/76

Mr. Corliss Lamont  
315 W 106 St., 15C  
New York, N.Y. 10025

Dear Mr. Lamont,

Thanks for your note and the "ation reprint.

My immediate purpose in writing is that your article does not say you also filed a request with the CIA in particular. (Other spookeries may be relevant.)

It is not my intention to be forward, but I do believe that if you have not you should include CIA and if you have not as rapidly as possible because it is the truth that it and the FBI are swamped with requests. If you desire to do this I think I can be of help.

I also believe that although there is an enormous difference between my lawyer, who is just starting his practice, and an authentic eminence like Leonard Boudin, my lawyer may be able to help. If he can I know he will be willing. To the best of my knowledge he has had more experience in political FOIA cases than any other lawyer. We have what will probably be precedent under the investigatory-files exemption before the D.C. court of appeals right now. To date our main adversary has been the FBI. My own opinion is that despite our lack of facilities and support we have them looking for new walls to climb.

If you do make a request of the CIA, I suggest you also use the Privacy Act. Under it you have some rights you do not have under FOIA and you avoid some of the potential liabilities. If you ever said a word about Viet Nam there is little doubt they have files. However, they stonewall and lie as a matter of self-conceived "patriotism." They and the FBI should both have separate files on you because of Oswald's use of your pamphlet, The Crime Against Cuba.

Kelley's language, "a file," ought not deceive you. There is no doubt at all that you can be in other files.

From our experience Tyler, the Deputy, is a wretched person, a willing FBI foil.

Until the government can rewrite the laws through procured court decisions I believe that one of the best ways of exposing this fascism is through these kinds of suits. I expect to be exposing unknown CIA fronts when I can file, unknown domestic operations and if I can find a way of taking depositions, true sensations. We can, if you like, discuss this. I believe that with what I have and with the abuses of my most basic rights by the federal spooks, of which I have proofs they have not supplied, with some organizational support much may still be accomplished in court. I had forgotten that you are chairman of the NECIC. I knew Clark Foreman. His wife was a good friend after I knew Helen. The last time I saw them was at a party they held for Glenn Taylor.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg

222-6931

April 8, 1976  
315 West 106th Street  
New York, N.Y. 10025

Dear Weisberg -

Sunday, April 18, at  
the Harvard Club, 27  
West 44 St., is our  
meeting place.

Best regards,  
Caleb Lambert

# What the FBI Had On Me

Corliss Lamont

On his appointment as Ambassador to India by President Kennedy in 1961, John Kenneth Galbraith was investigated by the FBI, which asked him to explain why he had lived in the building where I also had an apartment—450 Riverside Drive, New York. Professor Galbraith reacted with affronted dignity to this question concerning what he called “dangerous cohabitation.” It happens that Senator and Mrs. Javits also resided in the same apartment house. For their sake I hope that their “cohabitation” with me has not been discovered by the FBI.

The Galbraith incident is but one of scores of idiotic doings revealed in documents that I have obtained under the Freedom of Information Act from the bureau’s file on me. A year ago, on March 7, my attorney, Leonard B. Boudin, wrote the FBI requesting “All records referring to Dr. Lamont in any way, which are possessed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation including but not limited to letters, memoranda, tape recordings, electronic surveillance logs and investigative reports. . . .”

For almost three months a correspondence ensued between Mr. Boudin and Clarence M. Kelley, director of the FBI. On May 29 Mr. Kelley wrote: “A check of our records based on newly available information reveals there is one file, containing approximately 1,800 pages, which is probably identical with Dr. Lamont.” He added that “a charge of 10¢ a page is made for reproducing copies.” I was rather startled by the number of pages compiled about me, but some of my friends expressed their congratulations.

The FBI did not send copies of the entire 1,800 pages. After further correspondence, however, it did finally supply me with copies of 274 pages, withholding the remaining 1,526 pages because, Mr. Kelley states, they must among other reasons be “kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy.” I am appealing this fractional and selective compliance with the Freedom of Information Act to the Deputy Attorney General of the United States, but have been informed by the FBI that there is a substantial backlog of appeals and that my case, No. 1,176, will be heard in its proper order.

I have at last plowed through the 274 pages showing my “subversive” activities. At least half of the material deals with my defense of civil liberties, a suspicious

activity in the eyes of the FBI. There is much about my work toward American-Soviet cooperation and world peace. Nine-tenths of the material consists of speeches and writings of mine that were already in the public domain. For instance, the file contains monitored radio talks, copies of entire articles, summaries of some of my “Basic Pamphlets,” a transcript of the entry on me in *Who’s Who in America*, a list of my books in the New York Public Library, a transcript, from my passport expiring in 1965, of countries I visited. The names of all those reporting to the bureau about me are blacked out.

FBI sleuths telephoned our maid to discover my whereabouts; called airlines to determine when I was flying to Europe; asked pointless questions about me of officials at Columbia University where I taught philosophy, hinting that I was a dangerous person; discovered that I subscribed to *The Militant*, a Trotskyite weekly; and visited two different publishers to indicate disapproval of their issuing books I had written about the Soviet Union.

The most serious part of the documents deals with the bureau’s weird attempts to prove that I was a member of the Communist Party, an organization I never dreamed of joining. In this unceasing attempt, the FBI relied primarily on various ex-Communist perjurers.

The remaining 1,526 pages of my file probably record even worse invasions of my privacy, one of which I know for certain from other sources: every month for many years FBI agents visited my bank to scrutinize my canceled checks, copies of which the bank later sent to the bureau.

The FBI’s treatment of me is characteristic of its harassment over the years of tens of thousands of Americans who held liberal or leftist views. The bureau’s anti-democratic practices not only violate our civil liberties but also drain away tens of millions of dollars, a senseless waste of the taxpayers’ money—for what? The accumulation of vast files of useless information.

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*Corliss Lamont is chairman of the National Emergency Civil Liberties Committee. Among his books are The Philosophy of Humanism (Frederick Ungar) and, most recently, Voice in the Wilderness (Prometheus Books).*

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