

Jeffrey Frank, Outlook  
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Dear Jeffrey,

If Myra MacPherson's today article on the FBI's hounding of Izzy Stone reflects the kind of information she wants for her book, perhaps I have a little. She makes no mention of his addiction to government records, particularly of hearings. I presume she knows of this and will use it. To a degree I can date when at the latest Izzy had that addiction. When I was the editor of the Senate Civil Liberties Committee beginning in the last half of 1936 I was asked to send Izzy galley proofs of our hearings. He was then on the NY Post. The person who asked me was the editor of Bert Wheeler's railroad investigating committee. Earlier she had been editor of the Nye munitions investigation. So while I do not know when Izzy started those collections, I do know that it was not later than 1936.

And my the impression ~~that~~ <sup>these</sup> fat US Senate envelopes should have made on mail coverers.

"Still in that climate," apparently referring to "an official needed only to be spoken of favorably by one of the conspirators (no "alleged" in her direct quotation of Walter Goodman) for him to become part of the conspiracy," MacPherson then says, "Still in that climate 11 State Department employees were dismissed from their jobs." \*

Perhaps there were 11 but when it was leaked to the old Times-Herald, there were 10. I was one. While I do not doubt that Hoover and the FBI were part of it, that does not show in anything I know <sup>of</sup> or have seen.

It was under the McCarran Rider. It ~~got~~ <sup>authorized</sup> State and <sup>a few</sup> other agencies to fire at will, for no reason given or heeded. <sup>Four</sup> ~~Two~~ of us were Latin American <sup>ists</sup>. Two were anthropologists, Margaret Head protoges. The third taught as I recall Latin American history. All were PhDs. (Mine is honorary) They all thought they could return to teaching. When I convinced them that would not be likely they authorized me to seek a defense for us.

I had known Thurman Arnold when he was assistant attorney general, anti-trust and handled Nazi cartel cases. I took all I dug up for a series of magazine articles on those cartels to him. I know Paul Porter when he was in private practise, in the Earle Building. The firm of Arnold, Fortas and Porter <sup>of the N.Y. Herald-Tribune</sup> represented us so successfully that we were rehired with a public apology and then all quits (I got gypped out of my back pay.)

One of the firm got Mrs. Odgen Reid to put Bert Andrews on the story. He got Hoover to admit that there was nothing on any of us but if we had worked for him some of us were keeping questionable company. The Post carried that Trib story but my copy disappeared long ago.

It was in fact a pogrom. The four of us were Jews and I understodd that all or all but one of the others also was. One was a case of mistaken identity.

It was not as simple as <sup>H</sup>Hoover alone. With us<sup>d</sup> the House Appropriations Committee, NY GOP Neandertahl Taber chairman, ax-man <sup>H</sup>Harold Barger, blackmailed George <sup>M</sup>Marshall to agree to fire us or have his appropriation cut. And State <sup>se</sup>-called "security" was deep in it.

I was fired first on a claimed but non-existing reduction in force. Being a veteran, I went to the Civil Service Commission. They told State it could not RIF me. McCarran soon followed. I was given no charges, no hearing, just told to empty my desk and go. (I'd been an old Guild member and I'd belonged to <sup>it and to</sup> ~~the~~ government-employees unions only.)

I got an FBI record of John Peurifoy's call to <sup>H</sup>Hoover when Hoover was not in. E.A. Tamm, later an appeals court judge who ruled against me in FOIA cases, took the message, approximately that Peurifoy had finally gotten me fired. He was happy about it.

(None of this was disclosed to me by State in response to my FOIPA request for all records on or about me. Not a page!)

That was after Dies began and before McCarthy got started.

If the FBI was covering Izzy that closely, they did not disclose to me that they picked me up when I visited him at his Nebraska Ave. home <sup>and</sup> on his Press Building PM office. Perhaps also when he was with The <sup>H</sup>ation.

But then it withheld much else from me, ~~so~~ maybe it also did her. I can tell her, unless they were very careful in their copying, what some of the duplicate filings mean and what those files are. She should get excited if she sees any file numbers that begin with 94 in HQ records and with 80 in the field offices. They are for hiding just the kinds of things she writes about. Oh, ~~yes~~ yes, one that begins with 66 is usually about surveillances, especially electronic. The list of file classifications does not indicate ~~the~~ these realities.

In that sick beginning of the lingering national illness being for ~~the~~ peace <sup>was</sup> ~~as~~ also a crime, as the Izzy file reflects. I must try to remember when someone is here to do the searching for me to get the CIA's copy of the Ramparts ad of the first writers and editors protest of the Viet <sup>N</sup>am war. There were a few more than 100 of us. The CIA marked only six or seven us. Beside me, I remember only that <sup>D</sup>r. Spaack was marked.

<sup>H</sup>ow sick it all was. Peurifoy made ambassador to Guatemala, where he worked on the overthrow of its first legally elected government with the CIA and David <sup>F</sup>Phillips. (Peurifoy ~~as~~ was quite wild. <sup>H</sup>e killed himself down there <sup>in</sup> a one-car accident.) But he, whether or not Otto Otepka, was in with <sup>H</sup>oover on the firing of those 10 who may have grown to 11.

Best,

*Harold*  
Harold Weisberg

# The Secret War Against I.F. Stone

From J. Edgar Hoover's Files, the Story of a Political Vendetta

8/21/94  
By Myra MacPherson

**F**OR 40 years, from the Great Depression through the Vietnam War, the FBI closely monitored I.F. Stone, America's most independent leftist journalist. During the height of the McCarthy era from 1950 to 1954, Stone was investigated for espionage, it was revealed in some 2,000 recently released pages of Stone's FBI file.

J. Edgar Hoover—the “glorified Dick Tracy,” “the sacred cow,” “the immortalized secret police chief,” as Stone ridiculed the FBI director during the height of Hoover's power—sought in vain to link Stone with a sensational Cold War case involving an alleged New Deal spy ring and former Communist Party member Elizabeth Bentley, dubbed the “Spy Queen” by the tabloids.

In their campaign, FBI agents and informants tracked the journalist from coast to coast and in Europe. They traced his mail, monitored his phone calls, took down the names of those who entered his house, recorded his speeches and clipped his articles. They also kept dossiers on meetings with other journalists, sources, friends, relatives and neighbors, as well as alleged and known communists.

In 1954, the espionage case was closed “after extensive investigation has failed to establish any espionage activity.” However, Stone continued to be watched as a “security matter” and his file did not end until after he closed his newspaper, I.F. Stone's Weekly, in 1971. Moreover, the charge of an informant has been enshrined in the file as absolute fact: “Investigation in-

*Myra MacPherson is writing a book on I.F. Stone and dissent in American journalism for Lisa Drew Books/Scribner.*

stituted on Stone [in] 1950 when it was learned [emphasis mine] that he was a Communist Party member as of 1945.”

The claim was based on one—and only one—assertion: “confidential informant [blank] of known reliability, advised on [blank] that Irving F. Stone was a member of the Communist Party whose membership was concealed. [Although the informant couldn't get Isidore Stone's first name right, he did identify the publications for which he had worked—the New York Post, the Nation, PM.] . . . The informant continued that as late as



BY RANDALL MAYS—FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

1945 Communist Party official [blank] referred to Irving F. Stone as an active Communist and that his advice was sought by the state leaders of the Communist Party on a number of points.”

Had the FBI been able to pin anything on Stone, it seems almost certain that he would have been dragged

See STONE, C4, Col. 1

STONE, From C1

into yet another witch hunt of the Cold War era. In 1948, Elizabeth Bentley became as famous as Whittaker Chambers and Alger Hiss with her sensational allegations of espionage. Not one of about 30 government employees named by Bentley was ever indicted for espionage, but a number of prominent New Dealers were smeared. Among them were close friends and acquaintances of Stone's, including Harry Dexter White, assistant secretary of the treasury under Henry Morgenthau.

Bentley admitted she had never met White, who had helped design the Bretton Woods monetary plan, the Morgenthau plan for Germany and the World Bank. In his book, "The Committee," Walter Goodman wrote that Bentley's testimony "depended largely on hearsay . . . an official needed only to be spoken of favorably by one of the conspirators for him to become part of the conspiracy." Still, in that climate, 11 State Department employees were dismissed from their jobs. Harry Dexter White died of a heart attack during hearings by the House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC).

Stone's dealings with White, among others, found their way into Stone's FBI file: "On November 2, 1946 the Harry Dexter Whites invited [other names blanked out] and I.F. Stone to their home."

It was later learned that the FBI had routinely opened White's mail.

Stone, who always saw himself as a political independent, would not have recognized his characterization by the FBI. The real Stone always referred to the communists in speeches and articles as "they" and characterized the U.S. party as an ineffectual collection incapable of overthrowing anything. Whenever Hoover went before Congress seeking to boost budget appropriations to eradicate the "Red Menace," Stone ridiculed him; the FBI must be doing a lousy job if they hadn't eradicated them by now.

Yet Stone fiercely defended the party's right to exist in a free society. He was, after all, someone who had once refused to answer questions about his political affiliations "as a matter of principle" when applying for a passport.

Alas, for the agents trailing Stone, there were no trysts with steamy Svetlanas. "At 6:45 p.m. on July 24, 1951 subject left his office carrying two suitcases and a third small carton and proceeded by taxi to Union Station" is about as gamey as it gets.

Indeed, Stone's file reflects the futility of hounding a man so publicly opinionated. When asked why he was never called before HUAC or any other investigative committees, Stone once remarked, "What was McCarthy going to do to me? Expose me? It would be like exposing Gypsy Rose Lee. I was exposing myself every week anyway."

Still, the files are a chilling reminder of the expense and effort to which Hoover and his

FBI resorted in the pursuit of invading one man's privacy.

"Stone is known to the bureau because of his hostile editorial comments made against the FBI as early as 1936 . . . he has repeatedly attacked and vilified the Director and the FBI," notes one memo.

Fair enough. Stone's FBI file bulges with speeches and articles demonstrating his constant crusade against "unconstitutional inquisitions," blacklists and wiretaps, deportation acts and loyalty oaths. By 1953, Stone took to calling the FBI America's equivalent of the NKVD, the Soviet secret police. "Today in America," he often wrote and said, "it is a crime even to think."

Stone's enmity was returned in kind by Hoover. Stone was called everything from Irving to Finkelstein in a filing system where



THE WASHINGTON POST

J. Edgar Hoover came away empty-handed.

accuracy seemed of scant consideration. (The newspaper PM was written "PEN" by one hapless agent given the task of listening to a speech by Stone.)

A strain of antisemitism is present in Hoover's constant references to Stone as "Isador Feinstein." "He is of Jewish descent and [blank] advises that he is very arrogant, very loud spoken, wears thick, heavy glasses and is most obnoxious personally," states a July 29, 1941 memo. The FBI reiterated, incorrectly, that Stone was "not his correct name," or that "his true name" was Feinstein. Several years after the fact, the FBI file acknowledged that Stone had legally changed his name in 1938.

As Stone continually damned Hoover and the FBI in print, Hoover fumed. When fact-checker Stone called to check whether some new data that Sen. Joseph McCarthy had de-

livered was "in fact anything new," Hoover wrote across the bottom of an internal memo, "We won't even tell Stone the time of day."

In 1943, when Hoover read one of Stone's 1943 exposes on the FBI "gestapo" in the Nation magazine, he tersely demanded: "What do we have on him?"

**F**or those whose memories of Hoover go back little further than recent biographies depicting him as a cross-dresser who answered to the name of Mary on festive occasions, it is hard to imagine the courage it took to battle the FBI director or his absolute power.

Secret dossiers on the sexual proclivities of presidents and kingmakers, the kind of files that Hoover never kept on himself, helped assure Hoover's ascendancy. In a June 13, 1949 column in the Compass, the last leftist publication for which Stone worked before striking out on his own, he attacked the "incredible vomit of slander, gossip and suspicion pouring out of the FBI files" in the Judith Coplon spy case and the "mountainous mass of garbage at FBI headquarters."

Ten days later Stone attacked the government for introducing evidence of sexual relations with an alleged lover of Coplon's: "This is a dirty business . . . . If FBI men can gather sex stories and salt them away in those files of theirs, 'fornication' can be said to obtain conviction in many kinds of cases."

The FBI, in turn, kept up with Stone, as revealed in this random selection of Stone sightings:

- Checking Stone's correspondence, the FBI managed to ascertain that Box 200, Elmford, N.Y., was the Sonotone Corp., manufacturers of Stone's hearing aids. ("It will be noted that Stone uses a hearing aid," reported the FBI.) Among those informants requesting protection in the files was the chief of the Superintendent of Carriers, Main Post Office.

- A 1950 memo; "By means of a pretext call to the Washington office of the 'New York Daily Compass' an individual identifying herself as [blank] advised that Stone was in Paris, France as the European correspondent of the 'New York Daily Compass.'" (A cursory reading of the newspaper could have told them the same.)

- "Confidential information disclosed during the early '40s that Stone appeared to be dependent on the income received from PM and Nation and highest salary was approximately \$150 a week."

- From July 11 to July 24, 1951: "Numerous spot checks were made at subject's office, Room 225 Kellogg Building, 1416 F Street." There was "nothing to indicate" that



MARY NALTCHAVAN—THE WASHINGTON POST

I.F. Stone was spotted dining with friends.

he was there. They followed him until Stone checked out of the Willard Hotel. Someone "who occupies a position of trust in the Willard Hotel made available the records relating to Stone's registration."

- "Confidential informant of known reliability advised that on July 25, 1951 Stone moved a portion of his library" from Washington to the New York office of Compass. The informant sounds as if he or she worked

with or for Stone: The shipment "did not contain any personal papers of Stone's."

However, among the books shipped to New York was "Cooperation, Tolerance and Prejudice" by Samuel Lowy. Inside the book was "the notation of E.U. Condon." (Condon, a highly respected scientist who had worked on the atomic bomb, was exonerated after being implicated by Bentley. Even so, he was forced to resign his post at the Bureau of Standards.) "Previous investigation" had "revealed that subject is well acquainted" with Condon.

In September 1951, Stone moved to Manhattan. Memos note that an immediate surveillance began at the Compass and that there was "contact of subject with CP members."

Many of the reports contained the following sort of activity, as noted on Oct. 3 and 4: Stone left his residence "at 10:50 a.m. and after making some purchases of newspapers and groceries in the neighborhood, he returned to his residence and did not come out until 2:55 p.m., when he again proceeded via subway to his office at 164 Duane Street."

When Stone arrived in Chicago on Dec. 11, 1953 to give a speech, it could have been James Bond: "... Arrived on Flight 255 American Airlines. Subject was carrying a brown leather briefcase and a manila folder. Subject proceeded from airport ... made unsuccessful efforts at the Palmer House to obtain a room, and then proceeded to the Hamilton Hotel." He made 21 local calls and one long distance to D.C. ... Subject went to a meeting of the Midwest Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born. ... He dined at a coffee shop with friends. ..."

Then, this revelation: "It is this informant's impression that Stone thought the United States was a wonderful country in which to live, and that it provided more opportunities for the foreign born than their

ancestors had ever experienced, in spite of certain laws such as the Smith and Walter McCarran Acts." (The Smith Act required the fingerprinting and registering of all aliens and made it a crime to advocate or teach the violent overthrow of the U.S. government; the McCarran Act required U.S. communists to register as foreign agents.)

Stone's FBI file says that he belonged to more than 20 organizations deemed by vari-

ous attorney generals and HUAC to be "communist fronts." Stone unabashedly supported and spoke at many of them, often opening with greetings for the FBI agents present. At the National Council of the Arts, Sciences and Professions rally against the H-bomb at Carnegie Hall, on Feb. 13, 1950, Stone announced that it might be appropriate to address the audience as "FBI agents and fellow subversives."

The irony is that, while the FBI filed it all away, it did them no good to link Stone with various American communists, such as Earl Browder, the head of the American Communist Party. Stone in fact knew and passionately defended them all in speeches and columns. He was friendly with such well known "suspects" as Orson Welles, Lillian Hellman and Charlie Chaplin. He supported Henry Wallace and his CP-filled Progressive Party in 1948. Thus when "an informant from Sing Sing said the Rosenbergs said Izzy tried to be helpful," that could not damage Stone, who wrote that he had never made up his mind about the Ethel and Julius Rosenberg case but railed against their death sentence.

In 1953, Stone responded in print to a New York Herald Tribune column in which "I was represented as saying that there was more freedom in the Soviet Union than in the United States. I consider a statement of that kind wholly untrue and politically idiotic. The very fact that I can speak and write as I do rebuts the statement attributed to me."

In the '60s and the '70s the names of the organizations changed: SANE, Fair Play for Cuba, the Ad Hoc Committee of Veterans for Peace in Vietnam. But Stone kept speaking and the FBI kept coming. He seldom failed to greet the agents present.

One of the first critics of the Vietnam War, Stone in the 1960s became a hero to the antiwar movement. Now the press as well as the FBI covered him, and subscriptions to the Weekly reached 70,000. Stone often remarked that he had become a rich capitalist. After the Weekly closed, he went on to new investigations: He taught himself ancient Greek in order to ferret out the truth about the trial of Socrates. He died in 1989, and three years later he remained under attack: an unsubstantiated charge in the arch-conservative Human Events magazine, based on alleged remarks by a retired KGB general, Oleg Kalugin, that Stone had been a paid KGB agent.

As for the FBI, it kept alive its passion for "the subject." The phone book would have sufficed, but the last page in Stone's file said that his residence was verified on Feb. 5, 1972, by an FBI agent "utilizing a suitable pretext." Hoover died three months later.