

Legal police state?

WATCHDOG

Many people ask, what is the Nixon Administration doing? Among other things, the White House is trying to cure a problem which has existed for quite some time now. The problem? Police and government officials "taking the law into their own hands," i.e. taking actions outside the law.

To solve the problem the Administration has introduced, at latest count, 20 anti-crime bills. President Nixon has called for speedy approval of the bills, which are now in a state between proposal and law. Thus, if some of these bills are passed, police action would no longer be outside the law, it would all be legal; Potential subversive, no-knock, blacklist, prohibited activities, and preventive detention are some of the terms being bandied about in Washington.

The House has already approved a bill to prohibit any "potential subversive" from working in a "defense facility." What is a "potential subversive"? I don't know, but the bill does define a "defense facility." A "defense facility" would include bridges, airports, laboratories, and educational institutions involved in defense research. (What educational institution is *not* involved in defense research?) Concerning the bill, Rep. Louis Stokes said, "Anyone may be investigated about anything and everything, with the scope of inquiry limited only to some official's concept of relevancy." The House of Representatives passed this bill 274 to 65.

In the Senate, the "Controlled Depressant and Stimulant Drugs Act" passed with a majority. This bill contains the famous no-knock clause, which in this case would authorize narcotics agents to enter a doctor's office or research laboratory without knocking or announcing themselves. The bill, strongly advocated by Attorney General Mitchell, would give the Justice Department the power to determine what drugs are "dangerous." (Presently the Federal Drug Administration has that power.)

Last March the Administration proposed a bill which, to say the least, is very provocative. Although the bill has not passed either the Senate or the House, it is very interesting in that many White House observers feel it is indicative of the Nixon Administration. If passed, the proposal would allow law officers, after a court order, to require anyone "reasonably suspected of criminal activity" to "submit to non-testimonial footprints, measurements,

blood specimens, urine specimens, saliva specimens, hair samples, handwriting examples, voice samples, photographs and lineups." John Mitchell describes this as "a useful tool for the investigation of criminal activity."

Another proposal, emanating from the Treasury and Post Office, would allow agents to open and inspect any letter or package mailed from abroad. All that would be required to permit such a search and seizure, would be a suspicion that the object contained "prohibited or dutiable matter." Around the time this new rule was being talked about, it was revealed that the Post Office has refused to forward certain mail for years. They have a blacklist of 9000 foreign firms and individuals which cannot receive American mail.

Both the Senate and the House have recently passed a District of Columbia Crime Bill. Among the bill's provisions are "no-knock" and "preventive detention." The White House called this bill a model program for the nation. In fact, the Administration has asked that all Federal judges be allowed to jail *suspects*, charged in "dangerous" crimes or "violent felonies," for up to 60 days before trial.

While these bills and proposals seem startling, most of the country is not really concerned about these infringements on our civil liberties. They are very content to sit back and watch it all happen, reasoning that if they keep quiet, they will be safe...

I find the whole thing frightening, disgusting, and provoking. Amerika, through its elected officials, is going to vote in a legal police state...