

The Army Is Snooping On You

1,000 plain clothes investigators are digging into political opinions of law-abiding civilians and keeping file on us.

One of the most frightening stories in many years appeared January 25 in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. The United States Army has a staff of 1,000 investigators probing into the political opinions of law-abiding civilians. Not only that, but the unverified, unedited file of their diggings is available to any agency of the government for whatever purpose it chooses.

The information is contained in an article by Capt. Christopher H. Pyle, who recently completed two years service as a captain in Army Intelligence, and comes from briefings he received at the headquarters of the United States Army Intelligence Command and from observations of friends and acquaintances who served in intelligence units throughout the U. S. and Europe. None of it carried a security classification of any kind.

No one can deny the Army's need for intelligence of any plans for conspiracy, for attack on an Army installation, airport, railway, water system. No one can deny the Army's need for information bearing validly on the competence or loyalty of persons about to be appointed to positions of trust.

But the Army' sending 1,000 plain clothes investigators snooping into the political opinions of law-abiding citizens is repugnant to the very principle on which the United States of America is built -- freedom of thought.

The Army obviously does not trust the FBI or the state and local police forces in this country. Political opinions are none of their business either, but when they come upon information that indicates that a person could be involved in a plot to commit a crime, they have both the authority and the capacity to act.

The United States Army was never intended, as Capt. Pyle points out, to be a domestic law enforcement agency. It may occasionally be called in to help state or federalized National Guard troops, but it has no authority to round up persons the moment some civilians take up arms or to arrest civilians unless martial law has been declared.

The political opinions of any person in the United States, usually gathered from unreliable hearsay, are none of the Army's business. Moreover, the political opinions of soldiers are none of the Army's business either.

Capt. Pyle's chilling story should fill every American with cold fury, and move him with calculated, deliberate action to tell the President and Congress to get the Army back to its own business and keep its nose out of the private opinions of American citizens.

Army snooping into personal opinion is only

one short step away from intimidation, and intimidation is only one short step away from dictatorship.

If we do not stop this, none of the issues like pollution, inflation, poverty, crime, Vietnam, germ warfare, or education will mean anything.

We could save an American that wouldn't be worth saving.

To the plain clothes agent of CONUS Intelligence Branch, Operations IV responsible for the Newport-Lake Sunapee area: I hereby proudly proclaim that I wrote the above editorial, that it accurately reflects my views. To make it easy to complete your dossier, I am attaching my fingerprints. There is a set that has been kicking around down there for nearly 30 years, but they're in Washington, and I thought it would be easier if you could have these right there at Fort Holabird in Baltimore.

Edward DeCourcy

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