

Bulging U.S. Files on Dissenters

WASHINGTON—(AP)—Behind the closed door of Room 2439, a handful of government clerks search through radical newspapers methodically snipping out names.

They are hunting Americans favorably mentioned by the publications of dissent.

Found, snipped, checked, reviewed, the names are conveyed down a wide clean cor-

ridor to be fed into a "subversive activities" data bank already bulging with names of 1.5 million citizens.

The name-hunters in Room 2439 are low-level servants of the Civil Service Commission, the agency set up to oversee federal employment.

The commission's security dossiers — not to be confused with its separate files on the 10 million persons who have

sought federal jobs since 1939 — are indicative of the watch the government keeps on Americans in this age of dissent and social turmoil.

Army 'Blacklist'

An Associated Press study showed:

- Military intelligence agents have spied on civilian political activities and kept secret computerized files on thousands of individuals and

organizations although Pentagon counsel cannot cite any law authorizing this surveillance.

- The Army has kept a so-called blacklist which included the names, descriptions and pictures of civilians "who might be involved in civil disturbance situations."

- A second list has been

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circulated by the Pentagon's Counter Intelligence Analysis Division as a two-volume, yellow covered, looseleaf publication entitled "Organizations and Cities of Interest and Individuals of Interest" — according to a court suit.

- The FBI, with the most extensive security files and 194 million sets of fingerprints, has infiltrated the leadership of virtually every radical organization in the United States.

- Agents of the FBI, Naval intelligence and local police have seized citizens' garbage in hunts for incriminating evidence. In one case Navy agents examined garbage from an entire apartment house to find information about one tenant.

- The Secret Service has set up a computer with 100,000 names and 50,000 investigative dossiers on persons who it says could be dangerous to top government officials.

- A Senate subcommittee found that federal investigators have access to 264 million police records, 323 million medical histories and 279 million psychiatric dossiers. In each category, that's more numbers than there are people in the United States.

Federal income tax returns also are considered confidential by the IRS. But they may be seen by the heads of federal agencies, some congressional committees, the governors of every state and by a special counsel to President Nixon.

'Dead as a Dodo'

A proposal three years ago to gather files of all agencies into a National Data Bank and use them for statistical purposes kicked up such a furor in Congress that, according to one official, "now that issue is dead as a dodo."

But the AP study showed that investigative and intelligence agencies can — and do — share the information they gather.

For example, investigative agencies of the executive branch have access to the "subversive activities" data bank in the Civil Service Commission's downtown Washington headquarters.

According to an official commission publication, the data bank "at present ... contains approximately 2.5 million index cards containing information relating to Communist and other subversive activities."

S.F. Lawyer Named

A quick thumbing through the file discloses names like:

- Charles Garry, a white San Francisco attorney who represents the Black Panthers.

- Robert Shelton, a leader of the Ku Klux Klan.

- Staughton Lynd, professor and radical writer.

- Robert DePugh, head of the Minutemen.

The files are kept as index cards in mechanized rotary cabinets. There are thick bundles of cards for some individuals, only one card for others. The cards do not state anything about a person; they are more like a bibliography, citing publications which mention him.

Until evaluated, the clippings are considered "raw data" and are kept in other filing cabinets.

One name in the raw data is that of William Kunstler, civil rights attorney who represented the defendants in the "Chicago 7" conspiracy trial and who faces a jail term for contempt of court.

Kimball Johnson, director of the commission's Bureau of Personnel Investigations, says the security file is kept up to date by 17 clerks, "experts in the field," who read Communist publications, the Black Panther paper, underground papers and other publications such as The Guardian, Workers World, The Militant and Liberation News Service.

Section Chief Harold G. Pierce, who supervises the name-hunters in Room 2439, waves a hand toward a stack of publications on a table in his office and says: "That's what we check. It's full of subversive material. Note the Commie art. Picasso and others all tied into Communism."

Asked to cite a statute or regulation authorizing the security file, Johnson replied there is no specific law. But, he added:

"The file is an essential tool to the commission's legal function of investigating the fitness of people for federal employment for security positions. And there is Public

Law 298 which shifted responsibility for making personnel investigations from the FBI to the Civil Service Commission."

FBI Infiltration

The commission says that when any subversive information from the security file is identified with a person under investigation, the case is referred to the FBI for a full field loyalty probe.

The FBI has overall responsibility and broad powers, based on presidential directives dating back to 1939, for investigating matters relating to espionage, sabotage and violations of neutrality laws.

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover told Congress last year his agency had placed informants and sources "at all levels including the top echelon" of such groups as the Student Nonviolent Coor-

minating Committee, the Ku Klux Klan, the Black Panther Party, the Republic of New Africa, the Nation of Islam, the Revolutionary Action Movement, the Minutemen and the Third National Conference on Black Power.

Hoover also gave a hint of the scope of FBI security files when he outlined how agents keep tabs on sympathizers who contribute money to radical causes.

"Included among these," he testified, "are a Cleveland industrialist who has long been a Soviet apologist, the wife of an attorney in Chicago who is a millionaire, an heiress in the New England area who is married to an individual prominent in the academic community who has been active in New Left activities, and a wealthy New York lecturer and writer who for years had been linked to more than a score of Communist-front organizations and has contributed liberally to many of them."

Hoover also said agents have identified most of the writers of anti-war newspapers — which he termed "the work of the dedicated revolutionaries who are against ROTC and against our war

Big Brother?

effort in Vietnam" — and had referred that information to the Justice Department for possible prosecution.

Don Edwards, Democrat from San Jose and member of a subcommittee which oversees FBI budget requests, complains that Congress does not exert proper authority over the FBI.

He believes one reason for this is fear stemming from long-standing rumors that the FBI, among its many dossiers, has files on each member of Congress.

There was, however, much alarm expressed in Congress with the recent disclosure that, for the past several years, military intelligence agents have conducted surveillance of civilian political activists and have fed information on individuals and organizations into data books.

In response to 50 congressional inquiries, the Army admitted that it:

- Kept a so-called blacklist which included the names and descriptions and pictures of civilians "who might be involved in civil disturbance situations."
- Operated a computer data bank for storage and retrieval of civil disturbance information.

- Used its intelligence agents in some instances for direct observation and infiltration of civilian organizations and political meetings.

But the Army said that during the past year it has sharply curtailed such activities after realizing they weren't needed to prepare for any civil disturbances.

The Army said the blacklist — a term to which it objects — had been ordered withdrawn and destroyed. It said the computer data bank had been discontinued and that its agents have conducted no covert operations in the civilian area during the past year.

To determine the range of domestic military surveillance, The Associated Press submitted a list of 20 questions to each branch of the service.

A 'Crazies' Hijack Which Wasn't

WASHINGTON — (UPI) — A contingent of "Crazies" planned a year ago to board the Staten Island ferry, commandeer the vessel and order its captain to take them to Cuba, according to a document purporting to be an Army counterintelligence report.

The document, dated Feb. 27, 1969, did not indicate whether the Army took the threat seriously. The event, allegedly scheduled for March 1, 1969, did not occur.

Army spokesmen declined to answer the questions specifically, preferring to speak generally about the program. The Air Force said it does not have any domestic program. The Navy never responded.

But Navy intelligence operations slipped into public view last August when the

American Civil Liberties Union complained that agents were sifting through garbage from the apartment house of Seaman Roger Lee Priest,

accused by the Navy of soliciting members of military forces to desert in an underground newspaper he published.

A spokesman for the District of Columbia government acknowledged garbage from all apartments in the building where Priest lived was searched because it couldn't be separated from the seaman's prior to collection.

"We ended up with an ONI agent posing as a sanitation worker and picking up trash

and bagging the garbage," he said.

Private mail is often watched by government law enforcement agents.

The most commonly used means is the "mail cover," recording from a letter the name and address of the sender, the place and date of postmarking and the class of mail.