

HOW THE FBI WORKED THE 'BUDDY SYSTEM' AT DUKE UNIVERSITY

Students discredited as 'secret'
dossiers are filed against them;
classroom discussion to Washington
Reports filed on Selma march, too

BY MARIANNE HINCKLE

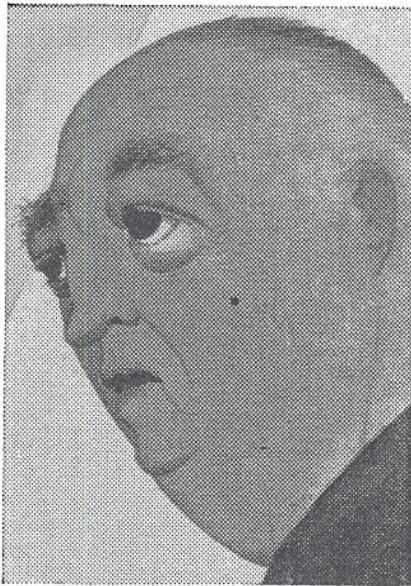
A Duke University student housemaster recently spilled the story of his affiliations with the FBI to fellow students—a hesitant followup of the national catharsis which had arisen as a result of Ramparts Magazine's disclosure of the CIA/NSA bond.

But what bothered one of the students more than information supplied to the Agency, such as the sources of funds to bring certain speakers to the campus and reports made on students who went on the Selma march in the spring of 1965, was the misinformation related and that remained unchecked—but filed by the FBI.

A sloppy job by the FBI has caused unjustified damage of at least one university student maybe more.

Tommy Taft, a junior at the university disclosed that he had been working for the FBI since his freshman year—supplying information on students, literature and organizations he thought were involved with liberal and possibly subversive activities. He said that he has not operated as an agent since he became a housemaster last semester (a confidential position in which he would act as a counselor for freshmen in his dormitory.)

Taft related his activities in part to the student newspaper, the Duke Chronicle, as such: "During my Freshman year (1964-65) I had noted a good deal of anti-war literature on campus that described such things as American advisors torturing Vietnamese women, etc. According to the manner in which I was brought up, these flyers and handouts seemed less than patriotic and so I gathered several and mailed them to FBI headquarters in Washinton.



"Shortly thereafter—in early Spring, 1965, a special agent who lived in Durham, Rufus Powell, contacted and questioned me why I sent the material, where it had been posted, etc. I furnished him more complete information and answered certain questions con-

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cerning what I knew of the University Liberal Action Committee and gave him some general information concerning several individuals. The agent was always careful to note what my source of information was."

In the spring of 1966 just before the Vietnam protest march in Washington another FBI agent contacted Taft. Ex-agent Powell had gone on to become the Secretary of Duke University. Taft said he told the agent that he knew nothing about the march although he was contacted several times. "I feel very strongly that I acted properly in sending the non-campus originated literature to the

FBI, but I think I erred in giving any information concerning individuals—no matter how little it was," Taft declared.

Doug Adams, a senior and friend of Taft's who witnessed the initial confession said that he "advised him (Taft) to tell the whole truth so that others would believe his promise not to pass information to the FBI in the future. I still am waiting for Tommy to tell the whole truth. But I believe we must sympathize with Tommy who is in a very difficult position and under great pressure." Advised also by the FBI, Taft has been silent about further exposure of his fellow campus spies.

Adams learned that second and third-hand sources and classroom discussion had gone to Washington. "Taft couldn't even remember the persons names he had accused of subversive affiliations. And for the most part he passed along lies and the FBI took his word for it without ever checking with the University.

"Taft simply had such a conservative outlook when he came to the university that any so-called liberal activities would naturally seem to him subversive and then he would assume that persons were members of such groups without checking the facts," Adams added. "The Tieger affair of last spring shows that the FBI is not always thorough and does not always go to deans to check on students and confirm reports on students."

Buddy Tieger was a high rank-in scholarship winner, since graduated from Duke, who was actively involved as a special organizer for the civil rights movement in North Carolina as an undergraduate. He was involved in sit-ins and had even gone to jail. The Tieger FBI resume, prepared when he applied for Conscientious Objector draft status read in part as follows:

"Another representative of the university advised that the registrant was individualistic, immature, and anti-regulation, and had an anti-personality, and was a nuisance. . . . Another representative of this University advised that the library of the University had addressed a postcard to the registrant indicating that a book concerning the writings of Trotsky was overdue."

William Griffith, Assistant to the Provost in the area of student affairs, assured that the FBI did not check with him or the University deans to seek confirmation or denial of such comments. Dr. Howard Strobel and Griffith wrote the draft appeal board to try to rectify

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the errors in the FBI inquiry; but the damage had been done. Since then letters have been written on Tieger's behalf—that the report was a total misconception. But he lost his presidential appeal and is now classified 1-A.

"No telling how many have been damaged. It is not only draft status that erroneous reports have affected," Adams said. "Applications for state department jobs may be turned down also. Often the applicant doesn't know why."

The extent of the floundering FBI's reliance on misapplied and inaccurate assumptions about students and their programs is not known on Duke's campus. The Duke Chronicle denounced FBI informers as "incredible and destructive to the University's atmosphere of free inquiry, investigation and expression. Students hope that expose of student spies will not turn into another *Crucible*." But there is a frenetic concern about national implications of a federal agency whose carelessness has made the future awkward for all students.
