



The Most Feared

Longer version, WXP,
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WE HAVE BEEN digging into the secrets of the late J. Edgar Hoover, whose abuses of power made him the most formidable and feared bureaucrat in the history of the republic.

Only a complete exposure of his abuses can prevent them from happening again.

He built his enormous power by manipulating the press and maligning his critics. Thanks to carefully publicized human strengths and carefully hidden human failings, he appeared as a man of action fighting the forces of evil.

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WRITERS who dared to criticize Hoover wound up on his hate list, which was far more deadly than the FBI's most-wanted list.

Attorney Max Lowenthal, for example, questioned the FBI's fabled reputation in a book entitled simply "The FBI." It dealt more with the corrupt agency Hoover had inherited than the effective crime-fighting organization he built. But there were some passages that were less than flattering about Hoover.

After he read it, he let out a roar of rage and summoned a trusted assistant whose function it was to prevent such embarrassments. Hoover angrily threatened to fire the man for failing to block the publication of the book.

Hoover then ordered his minions to prepare half-a-dozen black, fiber-bound volumes of critical analysis tearing apart the Lowenthal book. These were used to compose harsh book reviews, which were secretly circulated to compliant newspapers and magazines."

But this wasn't enough to placate the irascible FBI chief. He also ordered every index in the FBI checked for derogatory information about Lowenthal. He seized upon a vague tie with Communist-front group, which was spread through FBI field offices to the media.

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THE Fund for the Republic, meanwhile, conducted a scholarly study of domestic communism, which concluded the FBI was overblowing its importance. This inflamed Hoover, who ordered an all-out investigation of both the Fund and its head, Dr. Robert Maynard Hutchins.

The FBI chief directed his subordinates to prepare a monograph ripping Hutchins to pieces.

Another famous scholar, Henry Steele Commager, also offended the great G-man. Hoover fired off orders directing them to smear Commager.

Because of his mastery of publicity, the old curmudgeon lasted on top of the bureaucracy longer than any other American and became too formidable a public figure even for Presidents to challenge.