

## Ex-Agent's Story

# How FBI Checks on Left

By Morton Kondracke

WASHINGTON — (CST) — Shortly before the massive Nov. 15, 1969, antiwar march on Washington, march organizers received a letter, ostensibly from a local black militant group, demanding a \$20,000 "security bond" as the price of the group's support.

According to Sidney Lens of Chicago, a leader of the New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, the demand was taken seriously, negotiations were held and only in the end did the MOBE finally reject the black group's proposal.

Last week, a former FBI agent declared that the letter did not come from a black group at all, but from "Cointelpro — New Left," a unit in the Washington field office of the FBI created to sow dissension and confusion in the ranks of the Left.

The former agent, Robert F. Wall, 33, of Buffalo, also charged that the FBI regularly planted stories in the press that violence was expected at certain demonstrations, in order to discourage attendance, or that rally leaders were known Communists in contact with Hanoi.

In an article in the New York Review of Books, Wall also revealed that the Internal Revenue Service has a seven-man unit lodged in the basement of IRS headquarters here that spends all its time collecting information on "extremist" groups of the Left and Right.

An IRS spokesman, Leon Levine, confirmed that the group exists, but denied that its function is political.

"We have from time to time, formed various special groups to look at different

kinds of organizations to see that federal tax laws are being complied with," he said.

He cited the examples of IRS teams watching organized crime and the narcotics traffic.

Levine declined to say who or how many persons and organizations have come under IRS surveillance.

He said only that "some of these people get a lot of publicity. They travel a lot and they seem to have a lot of funds.

"Some of them act in a manner not in accordance with other federal laws, and so we suspect that they may not obey the tax laws either."

One group that apparently has come under scrutiny of both the FBI and IRS is the Institute for Policy Studies, well known in Washington as a "New Left think tank" that sponsors research projects and seminars on foreign policy, civil rights and civil liberties.

Arthur I. Waskow, research fellow at the institute, said that for each of the last two years the IRS has called institute officials in to justify the group's tax exemption.

Each time, after producing all its records, the institute exemption was upheld, Waskow said.

"Clearly, this is political harassment," Waskow said. "It's obviously intended to have a chilling effect, to make everybody nervous about whether he is or isn't doing the kinds of research that is going to get the institute into trouble.

"Also it imposes heavy burdens on the administrative staff that has to spend a lot of time and effort getting papers together and present-

ing them to the government when it could be doing more productive things for the institute."

Wall, who has been confirmed by FBI spokesmen to be an ex-agent, said the institute was being "investigated with gusto" when he left the FBI in April, 1970.

"A huge collection of papers and reports on it had accumulated."

According to Wall, the FBI monitored the institute's checking account at a Washington bank "to determine where its money was going, obtained telephone company records and compiled a list of the long-distance calls placed from the institute, and attempted to infiltrate the institute with student interns.

Wall wrote that investigations were opened on each of the fellows of the institute.

One institute fellow, Ralph Stavins, said Wall had also informed the institute that everyone entering and leaving the institute for a time was photographed by agents using cameras concealed in brief cases.

Stavins said the institute also has had its phones checked for taps and has found electronic evidence that calls are being listened to.

According to one of the institute's directors, Richard Barnet, there is also evidence of phone taps at the homes of Stavins and research fellow Leonard Rodberg, and at the home of the other co-director, Marcus Raskin.

Barnet said the institute is considering filing suit against its bank and the phone company for giving the FBI confidential information without authorization of the institute.

High-level officials of the bank involved, said Barnet, claimed they did not know that the information was being given out, but Barnet said he had learned from Wall that the practice is common among banks here.

Wall said he spent nearly three years doing "security" work for the FBI, monitoring anti-war, racial and student protest groups.

Bureau agents were directed "to investigate all the leaders in all the local peace groups and to determine among other things the source of any money used to finance the movement."

He wrote that, "The FBI followed its usual practice of planting informants," usually young persons who volunteered to do office work and worked their way up.

"With a little additional effort," wrote Hall, the informant "had access to mailing lists, names of contributors, copies of leaflets and handbills and was able to report in detail on any organizational meetings that might take place."

Ostensible purpose of the infiltration, Wall said, was to learn of any possibilities for violence.

But, "during my three years working with radical groups, I never found any evidence that would lead to a conviction for criminal violence."

Wall concluded that "the FBI claims to be a nonpolitical organization and asserts that it is not a national police force.

"But in its intelligence and counterintelligence work on the New Left, it was engaging in activity that clearly was political.

"Moreover, in trying to suppress and discourage a broad-based national political movement, it acted as a national political police."