



Hoover Deserves It

Andrew Tully

OBVIOUSLY, the late J. Edgar Hoover of the FBI was not a very nice man. He bugged private citizens for political purposes at the behest of six presidents, and he did his best privately to smear people he didn't like by leaking dossier stuff to friendly politicians and media people.

It can be argued that Hoover should have refused to obey those surveillance orders from Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon, and I hereby so argue.

The American people have been disillusioned many times, but I believe we still desire of our heroes both rectitude and guts. In knuckling down to Presidents who ordered him to conduct immoral and probably illegal surveillances, Hoover showed a streak of cowardice. As for the morality of the thing, J. Edgar apparently never gave it a second thought.

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ALL OF WHICH brings us down to the petty controversy over whether Hoover's name should be removed from that new architectural obscenity on Pennsylvania avenue which houses FBI headquarters. The proposal to change the building's name came from Representative Gilbert Gude, (Dem.-Md.), after disclosure that Hoover directed a smear campaign against the late Dr. Martin Luther King.

Gude's proposal has political aspects, of course, but I find it mostly

tiresome, irrational and capricious. It reminds me, in reverse English, of the mad rush to name things after John Kennedy following his assassination:

Gude is judging only one side of the man named J. Edgar Hoover — the bully and bigot who took a casual view of the law when it suited his personal purposes. The other side showed a highly competent cop and a superb administrator who made the FBI perhaps the most efficient government bureau in Washington.

I much prefer the view of Atty. Gen. Edward Levi, not the type of man who would have socialized with Hoover. "I think we ought to be very careful about making instant judgments on great public characters," Levi told reporters. "I don't think history can be written so easily and quickly."

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GUDE'S CAMPAIGN is the kind of ploy made to order for the many unthinking and hysterical Hoover haters, and I think Gude knows it because he tends to play to the glandular liberal crowd.

The new \$126-million FBI building is built of yellow concrete and bronzed-tinted glass and rises to a height of 11 stories around a central courtyard. It looks like the kind of place dictators construct to house their torture chambers. For his sins, J. Edgar Hoover deserves to have his name tacked onto such a monument to brutish vulgarity.