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Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, D.C. 20535

December 21, 2016

MR. JOHN GREENEWALD JR.



FOIPA Request No.: 1361608-000
OGA Name Tracking No.: 84182-RI
Subject: Intellipedia: COINTELPRO

Dear Mr. Greenwald:

While processing your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, the United States National Security Agency located FBI information in their records. This material was referred to the FBI for direct response to you.

Enclosed are copies of the referred material. Deletions have been made pursuant to Title 5, United States Code, Section 552 as noted below. See the enclosed form for an explanation of these exemptions.

Section 552

Section 552a

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7 pages were reviewed and 7 pages are being released.

For questions regarding our determinations, visit the www.fbi.gov/foia website under "Contact Us." The FOIPA Request number listed above has been assigned to your request. Please use this number in all correspondence concerning your request. Your patience is appreciated.

You may file an appeal by writing to the Director, Office of Information Policy (OIP), United States Department of Justice, Suite 11050, 1425 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20530-0001, or you may submit an appeal through OIP's FOIAonline portal by creating an account on the following web site: <https://foiaonline.regulations.gov/foia/action/public/home>. Your appeal must be postmarked or electronically transmitted within sixty (60) days from the date of this letter in order to be considered timely. If you submit your appeal by mail, both the letter and the envelope should be clearly marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal." Please cite the FOIPA Request Number assigned to your request so that it may be easily identified.

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Sincerely,



David M. Hardy
Section Chief,
Record/Information
Dissemination Section
Records Management Division

Enclosure

EXPLANATION OF EXEMPTIONS

SUBSECTIONS OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 552

- (b)(1) (A) specifically authorized under criteria established by an Executive order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy and (B) are in fact properly classified to such Executive order;
- (b)(2) related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency;
- (b)(3) specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than section 552b of this title), provided that such statute (A) requires that the matters be withheld from the public in such a manner as to leave no discretion on issue, or (B) establishes particular criteria for withholding or refers to particular types of matters to be withheld;
- (b)(4) trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person and privileged or confidential;
- (b)(5) inter-agency or intra-agency memorandums or letters which would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency;
- (b)(6) personnel and medical files and similar files the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;
- (b)(7) records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes, but only to the extent that the production of such law enforcement records or information (A) could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings, (B) would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication, (C) could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, (D) could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of confidential source, including a State, local, or foreign agency or authority or any private institution which furnished information on a confidential basis, and, in the case of record or information compiled by a criminal law enforcement authority in the course of a criminal investigation, or by an agency conducting a lawful national security intelligence investigation, information furnished by a confidential source, (E) would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions if such disclosure could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law, or (F) could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual;
- (b)(8) contained in or related to examination, operating, or condition reports prepared by, on behalf of, or for the use of an agency responsible for the regulation or supervision of financial institutions; or
- (b)(9) geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells.

SUBSECTIONS OF TITLE 5, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 552a

- (d)(5) information compiled in reasonable anticipation of a civil action proceeding;
- (j)(2) material reporting investigative efforts pertaining to the enforcement of criminal law including efforts to prevent, control, or reduce crime or apprehend criminals;
- (k)(1) information which is currently and properly classified pursuant to an Executive order in the interest of the national defense or foreign policy, for example, information involving intelligence sources or methods;
- (k)(2) investigatory material compiled for law enforcement purposes, other than criminal, which did not result in loss of a right, benefit or privilege under Federal programs, or which would identify a source who furnished information pursuant to a promise that his/her identity would be held in confidence;
- (k)(3) material maintained in connection with providing protective services to the President of the United States or any other individual pursuant to the authority of Title 18, United States Code, Section 3056;
- (k)(4) required by statute to be maintained and used solely as statistical records;
- (k)(5) investigatory material compiled solely for the purpose of determining suitability, eligibility, or qualifications for Federal civilian employment or for access to classified information, the disclosure of which would reveal the identity of the person who furnished information pursuant to a promise that his/her identity would be held in confidence;
- (k)(6) testing or examination material used to determine individual qualifications for appointment or promotion in Federal Government service the release of which would compromise the testing or examination process;
- (k)(7) material used to determine potential for promotion in the armed services, the disclosure of which would reveal the identity of the person who furnished the material pursuant to a promise that his/her identity would be held in confidence.

(U) Cointelpro

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From Intellipedia

You have new messages (last change).

COINTELPRO (an acronym for Counter Intelligence Program) was a series of covert, and often illegal, projects conducted by the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) aimed at investigating and disrupting dissident political organizations within the United States. The FBI used covert operations from its inception, however formal COINTELPRO operations took place between 1956 and 1971.^[1] The FBI's stated motivation at the time was "protecting national security, preventing violence, and maintaining the existing social and political order."^[2]

*Intelligence Lessons Learned and History Portal*

FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover

According to FBI records, 85% of COINTELPRO resources were expended on infiltrating, disrupting, marginalizing, and/or subverting groups suspected of being subversive,^[3] such as communist and socialist organizations; the women's rights movement; militant Black nationalist groups, and the non-violent civil rights movement, including individuals such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and others associated with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Congress of Racial Equality, the American Indian Movement, and other civil rights groups; a broad range of organizations labeled "New Left", including Students for a Democratic Society, the National Lawyers Guild, the Weathermen, almost all groups protesting the Vietnam War, and even individual student demonstrators with no group affiliation; and nationalist groups such as those "seeking independence for Puerto Rico." The other 15% of COINTELPRO resources were expended to marginalize and subvert "White hate groups," including the Ku Klux Klan and National States' Rights Party.^[4]

On 8 March 1956 FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover briefed President Dwight D. Eisenhower and the National Security Council on "The Present Menace of Communist Espionage and Subversion." Hoover noted that the Communist Party USA (CPUSA) was vulnerable and riven by infighting over the implications of Soviet leader Nikita Krushchev's recent denunciation of Joseph Stalin's crimes. The time was right, Hoover argued, to strike the CPUSA and further neutralize its capacity to serve the aims of the Soviet Union. He asked for permission to use any tactics necessary to do this. Asked what this might entail, he listed double agents, surveillance, surreptitious entries, and other tactics. The President and the Council gave at least tacit approval, thus in effect approving a covert action against American citizens.

By August, more than a dozen FBI field offices where communist activity was prevalent had been tasked with coming up with ideas for disrupting the CPUSA and increasing the pull of factionalism in the party. These actions were subsumed under the code name **COINTELPRO** or Counterintelligence Programs. Many of the

earliest COINTELPRO ideas sought to support the attempts by the Socialist Workers' Party—a Trotskyite rival to the CPUSA on the Left—to draw off disillusioned Communists from its rival.

Over the next fifteen years, other COINTELPROs were initiated as the Bureau adopted similar tactics to disrupt the Socialist Workers' Party, White hate groups, Black Nationalist groups, and the New Left. Most such operations were aimed at groups that espoused revolutionary violence. Those against the Ku Klux Klan were especially effective in fragmenting the Klan movement and isolating its most violent members from support that would give them the freedom of action to plan and execute violent attacks.

On the other hand, the actions taken under the COINTELPRO threatened the liberties of American citizens. Operations against the New Left and the Socialist Workers Party, moreover, were targeted on individuals whose connection to violence was too often minimal. COINTELPRO had clearly gone too far.

On 8 March 1971, 15 years after Hoover's NSC presentation, a group calling itself the "Citizens' Commission to Investigate the Federal Bureau of Investigation " broke into the Bureau's resident agency at Media, Pennsylvania, a satellite of the FBI's Baltimore Office which focused, among other things, on radicalism at the University of Pennsylvania. The burglars stole thousands of pages of FBI material and selectively leaked documents to the press, Congress, and several academics. Some of the documents referred to the COINTELPRO and, within a matter of months, reporter Carl Stern had made a Freedom of Information Act request for additional information. Although Hoover immediately halted all COINTELPRO operations, public pressure grew and led to a full disclosure of the program. Widespread denunciation of these activities, lawsuits, and Congressional oversight of these programs and other activities of the FBI caused a precipitous drop in public support for the Bureau. In response, the Attorney General and the FBI radically changed the Bureau's approach to domestic security and instituted a series of guidelines to delimit the FBI's legitimate investigative and enforcement functions in such areas.

References

1. † Churchill, Ward, and Jim Vander Wall, (1990), *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret Wars Against Domestic Dissent*, Boston: South End Press, pp. xii, 303.
2. † <http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/cointelpro/churchfinalreportIIla.htm>
3. † Jeffreys-Jones, Rhodri. *THE FBI*, Yale University Press, 2008, p. 189
4. † Various Church Committee reports reproduced online at ICDC: Final Report, 2A (<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/cointelpro/churchfinalreportIIa.htm>) ; Final Report, 2C b (<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/cointelpro/churchfinalreportIIc.htm>) ; Final Report, 3A (<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/cointelpro/churchfinalreportIIla.htm>) ; Final Report, 3G (<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/cointelpro/churchfinalreportIIlg.htm>) . Various COINTELPRO documents reproduced online at ICDC: CPUSA (<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/cointelpro/cpusa.htm>) ; SWP (<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/cointelpro/swp.htm>) ; Black Nationalist (<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/cointelpro/blacknationalist.htm>) ; White Hate (<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/cointelpro/whitehate.htm>) ; New Left (<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/cointelpro/newleft.htm>) ; Puerto Rico (<http://www.icdc.com/~paulwolf/cointelpro/pr.htm>) .

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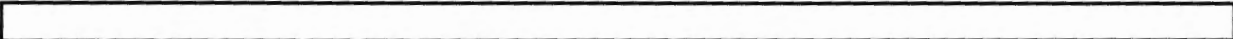
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(U//FOUO) Cointelpro

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From Intellipedia

Counter Intel Program (cointelpro)

COINTELPRO is an acronym for numerous actions undertaken by the FBI. The acronym stands for "counterintelligence program." Despite its name, the program consisted of covert operations conducted by the FBI against United States citizens and domestic organizations, not foreign intelligence operatives. Targets of COINTELPRO operations were normally individuals who were believed to be communists or influenced by communists. Organizations targeted by COINTELPRO operations were those suspected to be infiltrated by communists or communist sympathizers. COINTELPRO operations began in 1956 and continued until 1971. The program emerged from the FBI's jurisdiction to investigate the activities of foreign intelligence agents within the United States.

By defining the infiltration of communism into the United States as the activity of Soviet foreign intelligence, the FBI was able to open COINTELPRO actions against domestic organizations. Originally, the program and its goals seemed quasi-legitimate. COINTELPROs against the Communist Party, USA, were done under the auspice of national security. In testimony before the Church Committee, the chief of the COINTELPRO unit stated that "[w]e were trying first to develop intelligence so we would know what they were doing [and] second, to contain the threat to stop the spread of communism, to stop the effectiveness of the Communist Party as a vehicle of Soviet intelligence, propaganda and agitation."² Unfortunately, no strict standards were used to determine if an individual or a group legitimately qualified as a group penetrated by this vehicle of Soviet intelligence. In general, COINTELPRO operations became an excuse to investigate and disrupt the activities of individuals seen as a threat to the social order of the country at the time. As a result, many civil rights organizations and black movement leaders were subjected to COINTELPRO actions.

Over the fifteen years of the COINTELPRO program, five presumed threats to social order were targeted. The "Communist Party, USA" was targeted from 1956 to 1971, the "Socialist Workers Party" was targeted from 1964 to 1969, "White Hate Groups" were targeted from 1964 to 1971, "Black Nationalist-Hate Groups" were targeted from 1967 to 1971, and the "New Left" was targeted from 1968 to 1971.²⁶ The titles of some of these supposed threats hint at the ambiguous nature of the COINTELPRO's mission. Well-respected groups such as the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) were targets of COINTELPRO operations. The SCLC was identified by the FBI as a "Black Nationalist-Hate Group."²⁷ The "New Left" program barely had a working definition of what qualified as a "New Left" organization. "The New Left movement [was considered to be] a loosely-bound, free-wheeling, college-oriented movement spearheaded by the Students for a Democratic Society and [included] the more extreme and militant anti-Vietnam war and anti-draft protest organizations."²⁸ By not having a tight framework for the scope of the program, the FBI left open the possibility of targeting organizations for reasons tied to First Amendment protected speech rather than terrorism or threats to domestic security.

The prevention of violence was another supposed goal of the COINTELPRO program. As with the general theme, however, many of the groups targeted by COINTELPRO operations exhibited no indications of violence. Instead, the FBI assumed that these organizations had a predisposition for violence that was waiting to develop. As a result, COINTELPRO operations often attempted to prevent the membership

recruitment efforts of these organizations under the premise that smaller organizations pose less of a violent threat than large organizations.

Once again the FBI used a broad definition for the phrase "possibly violent" (not, as that vacillated clearly non-violent positions were still targeted because their position "might someday change").³⁰ While it is recognized that a facet of the role of law enforcement is to prevent the violation of the law, COINTELPRO operations overstepped set constitutional limits for this role.³¹ The Bureau used every technique imaginable in its COINTELPRO operations. Most of the techniques used to be reserved for use against foreign spies.³² Some of the techniques were mild in nature, such as anonymous mailings of newspaper articles, which were often written by the Bureau, to members of an organization in an effort to show them the danger of belonging to that group; other techniques revolved around the following: making of anonymous letters to spouses alleging that their partners have been unfaithful, requesting an employer to fire an individual, having reporters interview individuals secretly on behalf of the FBI, using informants to disrupt meetings and incite disorder, and falsely labeling a member of a targeted group as an informant.³³ Over the course of the fifteen years of the COINTELPRO program, 2,370 counterintelligence operations were conducted using techniques similar to those listed above. Why did the FBI conduct these COINTELPRO operations, often violating the law its agents swore to uphold?

The main explanation offered by witnesses before the Church Committee stated that the COINTELPRO program was an outgrowth of the pressure the Bureau was under to deal with the perceived threat of Communism and extremism of that era. In deposition before the Church Committee, one COINTELPRO unit chief stated that there was a general view among the public that the Bureau would protect the country from communism. Despite this desire for the Bureau to combat the perceived threat of communism in this country, there existed little to no statutory basis upon which the Bureau could take action. The FBI occupied the awkward position of either doing nothing in response to the pressures to combat communism and face criticism for that decision, or attempting to confront the threat and be reproached for that choice.³⁵ As the courts narrowed their interpretations of the statutes so that became impossible for the FBI to take overt action against subversive organizations, the Bureau chose to develop covert COINTELPRO programs. Regardless, no rationalization can be offered for the extreme to which the Bureau took the COINTELPRO program. It's important to get a feel for the level of surveillance and disruption that the Bureau used during its COINTELPRO operations in order to fully understand the reaction of Congress and the public to news of the COINTELPRO program's techniques and targets. Let us examine briefly the operations the FBI conducted related to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The FBI's actions related to Dr. King began in October of 1962 under a COMINFIL, meaning "communist infiltration," designation. The program was later raised to full COINTELPRO status in 1966. The FBI conducted covert operations related to Martin Luther King, Jr. from 1962 until after his death in 1968. The motivation for the Bureau's campaign was to diminish Dr. King's role and status as a leader in the civil rights movement.³⁷ All of the techniques described in the COINTELPRO section above were put to use in the Bureau's investigation of Dr. King. It is important to state why the Bureau felt it was necessary to investigate Dr. King. Present day views of the Reverend are quite favorable and do not suggest any justification for the Bureau's actions. Similar to the rationale for the COINTELPRO programs, the FBI's Dr. King investigation was based on the concern that Dr. King was the subject of communist influence.³⁸ Not identified for privacy reasons, the advisors are referred to in all public documents as "Advisor A" and "Advisor B." The belief that these two advisors were Communists permitted the FBI to open a COMINFIL, "an investigation of legitimate noncommunist organizations, suspected by the FBI of having been infiltrated by communists, to determine the extent of the communist influence."³⁹ The allegations concerning these two advisors led to the FBI's establishment of a formal investigation of Dr. King in 1962.⁴⁰ With the initiation of a formal COMINFIL, against him, Dr. King was placed on the Reserve Index as an individual to detain during a

national emergency ~t Attorney General Kennedy approved an order for wiretaps of Dr King's home telephones from 1963 to 1965 W~retaps were also established on the telephones at the Southern Chrstmn Leadership Conference's (SCLC) headquarters, the organzation for which Dr King served as president The telephones of Dr King's adwsors were also tapped ~2 This was only the beginning.

Over the course of both the COMINFIL and COINTELPRO investigations, microphones were placed in Dr King's hotel rooms. Upon learning that Dr King was to receive the Nobel Peace Prize, the FBI tried to undermine his reception with ambassadors and foreign dlgmtanes as he traveled abroad. On one occasion, the FBI tried to prevent Dr King from meeting with the Pope, contacting a cardinal of the Roman Cathohc Church hoping to persuade him to convince the Pope that a meeting with Dr King would cause the Pope international embarrassment. 43 In other actions, the FBI tried to prevent the pubhcation of newspaper articles favorable to Dr King. The Bureau maded copies of microphone recordings to Dr King's home with the intent of causing tension in Dr King's marriage. Field offices were quite creative in their efforts to generate ideas for new actions against Dr King One field office recommended that the Bureau forge Dr King's signature to a letter drafted to financial supporters of the SCLC. The letter was to state that the Internal Revenue Service was investigating the SCLC. The FBI on a number of occasions offered to leak damaging reformation and allegations concerning Dr King to reporters and White House officials." The FBI also made attempts to convince the membership of the SCLC and other Civil rights organizations to remove Dr King from leadership and ehnumate his status in the civid rights movement. 4~ The FBI possibly even sent to Dr King's home a letter whose only logical interpretation was as a threat that Dr King should commit suicide or face the consequences.

An official COMINFIL investigation should have targeted Dr Martin Luther King's alleged communist advisors. The investigation's efforts should have attempted to verify whether Dr King's advisors were indeed communists. Yet the record clearly reflects that Dr King was the focus of the COMINFIL investigation. Attempts to discredit individuals always focused on Dr Kang The FBI conducted all of its efforts despite any evidence to suggest that Dr King himself was a commumst. Later in hearings before Congress, the FBI admitted that its efforts to discredit Dr King were totally unjustified. If the FBI was not investigating Dr King for the purpose of discovering whether he was being influenced by communists, what was tl, ' purpose of the operations.9 Out of a desire to protect the image of the Bureau and Dr King, most of the FBI records related to Dr King are classified. Director Hoover died before it was possible to question him about why Dr King had been targeted Therefore, statements about possible motwatmons for the operation other than determing whether Dr King was subject to communist influence are quite speculative. The FBI's operations could have been for the political intelligence benefits. Nearly all of the reformation collected and prepared by the FBI from its covert operations concerning Dr King dealt with the civil rights movement This information would be quite valuable to the President of the United States in planning a strategy for approaching civil rights reform. Another speculation is that Director Hoover was motivated by personal bins towards Dr Kmg In numerous Memorandums, the Director made it clear that he did not like Dr King. Unfortunately, it is not clear as to whether his dislike for Dr King came from his association with allegedly communist advisors, statements about the Bureau, or from a personal resentment of the Reverend. [1]

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