CREATING CRIMINALS: LAW ENFORCEMENT CULTURE AND IDENTITY IN THE FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION'S COUNTERINTELLIGENCE PROGRAMS

by

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ABSTRACT

In the 1960s and 1970s, J. Edgar Hoover and the agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) were on the hunt for subversives - but what, beyond political considerations, made someone a "subversive" and why were they so determined to find them? This dissertation examines why the FBI targeted groups based on categories such as age, race, and personal expression. It argues that the FBI investigated individuals and groups to perpetuate their idea of what it meant to be a respectable American worthy of the privileges of citizenship. This dissertation first examines the unique culture of the Bureau and the way in which FBI officials and agents saw themselves as defenders of white middle-class values. It then examines the way the FBI used racial stereotypes and tensions to interfere with groups such as the Black Panthers and ultimately argues that class distinctions often meant more to the FBI than racial distinctions. Next, it analyzes the FBI's interaction with the Students for a Democratic Society and reveals the way groups were explicitly targeted due to forms of personal expression. Fourth, it analyzes the Bureau's investigation of the American Indian Movement, and argues that these interactions demonstrate that even while the Bureau changed its practices 1970s, its desire to police particular definitions of "American" continued to influence their interaction with social movements. The FBI's focus on respectable behavior resulted in the investigation of law-abiding individuals and diverted the FBI's manpower and

resources away from those who presented a real threat to the safety of the United States. Throughout American history, the federal government has often justified unconstitutional actions by claiming that they protected American citizens. However, the FBI's narrow view of who could claim "citizenship" actually served to harm, in very direct ways, a great number of the citizens they were charged to protect.

For my grandfather, Roy Wallace Logan

CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION

When the Federal Bureau of Investigation transferred Agent Billy Bob Williams to the newly opened Jackson, Mississippi office in 1964, he quickly came into contact with the civil rights groups working in the area, including the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). In his first encounter with the group, Williams described them as "hostile" and said that because of their "uncooperative" attitude, he made no attempt to help them. In fact, Williams admitted that one of his duties in Mississippi involved "funneling the information about the troublemaking …SNCCs" to his FBI superiors.[1] However, Williams's description of civil rights activist Charles Evers, a member of the NAACP (and brother of murdered activist Medgar Evers) stands in direct contrast to his description of SNCC. Williams describes the work of Evers and his colleagues as "dignified" and Evers as friendly and easy to work with.[2]

Agent Williams's attitude toward SNCC echoed a sentiment expressed by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover six years earlier. Speaking to the FBI National Academy on November 4, 1957, Hoover declared, "Crime has multiplied, not because people no longer respect the law, but because they no longer respect respectability." According to Williams, the young people of SNCC were undeserving of the FBI's help not because

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[1] Billy Bob Williams, Interviewed by Brian R. Hollstein, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, February 13 and February 16, 2007.
[2] Ibid., 66 -67.

they were black or because they were breaking the law, but because they were "troublemakers," or as Director J. Edgar Hoover might have said, the kind of people who had "no respect for respectability." Clearly, Williams did not view Evers as being in the same category as SNCC, even though he was black and was advocating similar kinds of social change. In this case, SNCC serves as an example for a number of individuals and groups whose tactics, attitude, age, style of expression, and/or appearance fell outside what the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and a portion of the American people, viewed as acceptable. As a result, the FBI targeted and punished these groups regardless of the level of unlawful behavior in which they engaged.

While issues of race cannot be dismissed from the equation, the importance of the construction of a "troublemaker" or "subversive" other, based not on criminal activities but on forms of expression, is a key factor in understanding the behavior and policies of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and their actions against particular social movements during the infamous years of the domestic Counterintelligence Programs. The FBI initially focused these programs, known as COINTELPRO, to investigate and punish those groups associated with the perceived communist threat. Later, the FBI expanded these programs to surveill and punish groups they felt were "subversive." Those people who by their class, race, age, and/or behavior fell outside of the FBI's definition of the legitimate American citizen and were, in the Bureau's, eyes unworthy of the same rights and protections as more "respectable" citizens.

More broadly, this research highlights a debate in American society since the foundation of the United States, namely the conflict between liberty and security in a free society. In 1798, President John Adams signed the Alien and Sedition acts to protect the

Federalist Party, and in many minds the nation, from what his party felt were dangerous forms of expression. During World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the order for American citizens of Japanese descent to be unfairly imprisoned. In recent years, President George W. Bush signed into law the Patriot Act and justified forms of torture as a way of dealing with a terrorist threat. Throughout American history, Presidents and other governmental powers have, especially during times of war, overlooked constitutional protections such as freedom of speech and freedom of the press in favor of national security. During the late Cold War years, this tendency was magnified by a belief that this threat came as much from "subversive" elements at home as from any foreign power.[3] The Federal Bureau of Investigation was one way in which the government sought to deal with that threat, and the FBI did so by making judgments based on race, class, age, and gender as to who and what constituted a "subversive" or "troublemaker."

In addition, a discussion of the FBI's counterintelligence programs and the enforcement of white middle-class values sheds light on the history of conservatism in the late 20th Century. As Alan Brinkley pointed out in his essay "The Problem of American Conservatism," postwar liberal consensus historians were unable to see conservative ideas and movements as a part of the mainstream of American political thought.[4] In recent years, historians have successfully demonstrated that conservatism remained an important part of American political ideology; for example, historian Lisa

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[3] William Keller, *The Liberals and J. Edgar Hoover: Rise and Fall of a Domestic Intelligence State* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989). Keller argues that liberal legislators even encouraged the FBI's handling of subversive groups because it was seen as the desirable alternative to invasive or extreme legislation.

[4] Alan Brinkley, "The Problem of American Conservatism," *The American Historical Review* 99, no.2, (April 1994): 411.

McGirr discussed the ways in which conservative ideals survived at the grass roots level. These ideals consisted of a dedication to anticommunism, a limited federal government, low taxes, law and order, and in most cases, Judeo-Christian values. McGirr states that, "Ironically the grassroots mobilization of the Right in the early 1960s was a result of the conservative's lack of influence in Washington."[5] This dissertation demonstrates that not only was conservatism alive and well on the grassroots level as McGirr suggests, but conservative ideas remained a mainstay of at least one federal government institution – the Federal Bureau of Investigation. This is not to say that the Bureau's policies were a perfect fit with conservative ideology; on the contrary, the Bureau's actions constitute one of the most intrusive examples of federal power. However, The Bureau did seek to enforce ideas about anticommunism and the morality of the nation which echoed trends in grassroots conservative thought.

The idea that the interaction between the FBI and the people surveilled and punished by the organization was a negotiation over what it meant to be a citizen has been recognized by historians of the Bureau's early years. In her book *War on Crime: Bandits, G-men, and the Politics of Mass Culture,* Claire Potter argues that in the early years of the Bureau, "The figures of the policeman and the criminal were…deeply political, discursive locations for exploring the relationship between state and citizen." In addition, Potter argues that the FBI's early rise to power was due in large part to cultural fears about the spread of violent crime. Similar fears were at work during the 1960s and 1970s, and that these fears often allowed the FBI greater freedom than it would have otherwise enjoyed. However, one important distinction is that unlike the organized crime

[5] Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the New American Right* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001), 113.

and celebrity bandits of the 1920s, the "subversives" of the 1960s were often punished for noncriminal behavior. In addition, I look at the way the FBI constructed its view of criminality based on specific categories of identity, such as race and class, and specific forms of expression such as dress and speech.

During the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s the FBI launched this series of counterintelligence investigations known collectively as COINTELPRO. These operations were well-organized ongoing programs primarily designed to infiltrate groups that the FBI felt had "subversive" ties. Speaking of this time in the FBI's history, Clarence M. Kelley, who was the Director from 1973-78, wrote, "In some cases, there were excesses in the FBI's treatment of radicals."[6] These "excesses" included a number of questionable tactics, such as preventing the distribution of social movement newspapers and attempting to cost activists employment and educational opportunities. Since the FBI designed these tactics to disrupt the often entirely legal operations of the groups targeted and not to investigate criminal behavior, the Bureau made no distinction between criminal and noncriminal acts.

The first chapter analyzes the exacting and unique culture of the FBI and the ways in which it reinforced and differed from middle-class white society as a whole, and begins to examine the ways in which FBI culture influenced the Bureau's views on social movement groups. In order to understand how and why the FBI punished and surveilled certain social movement groups, it becomes important to understand how the FBI defined the nature of a respectable, legitimate American citizen.

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[6] Clarence M. Kelley and James Kirkpatrick Davis, *Kelley: The Story of an FBI Director*, (Kansas City: Andrews, McNeel, Parker, 1987), 59.

FBI Agents, college educated, middle-class men, were less likely to target, or in some cases, more likely to assist those they saw as similar to themselves. While it is true that the FBI investigated many middle-class groups and individuals, such as the well-known actions against Martin Luther King Jr., the FBI more heavily targeted those groups dominated by people whom the FBI viewed as lower class. In addition, the FBI's shift in focus from middle-class groups to younger more expressive groups reflected the growing acceptance of groups such as Martin Luther King's SCLC amongst white middle-class Americans.

This uneven response to social movements reflected the "law and order" attitude of the Bureau. The groups investigated maintained connections with civil rights and later with the anti-Vietnam War movement. The chief "evil" of these groups lay not so much in their opinions or stance, but rather with their willingness to disrupt the status quo of American society which, to the FBI, included any threat to their own organization. One well-known example of this is the way the FBI, and specifically J. Edgar Hoover, targeted Martin Luther King, Jr. Though the FBI kept King under surveillance from early in his career, it was not until King made public comments against the Bureau that they really sought to interfere with King and his work. This very public and publicized conflict was one of the first actions that turned the liberal press against J. Edgar Hoover.[7] Since it was the director's prestige that shielded the FBI from suspicion, a charge against Hoover was a charge against the entire Bureau. In this case, it was not King's civil rights activities that made him such a target of the Bureau, but instead the FBI's perception of King as a threat to the Bureau and therefore to society as a whole.

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[7] Keller, *Liberals and J. Edgar Hoover*, 106.

In addition, FBI Agents, trained to sort people into the hard categories of "victim" and "criminal," found it difficult to understand the actions of those people they felt were "disorderly." This focus on appearance behavior meant that the FBI and its agents largely ignoring the motivations behind these "disorderly" actions. This helps explain the FBI's actions against the Ku Klux Klan during the same years that they investigated civil rights groups. Because the FBI often cared more about a person fitting into their definition of what it meant to be "respectable," they often failed to see real injustice.

The second chapter examines this intersection between race and class, and specifically examines the way the FBI used racial stereotypes and tensions to interfere with groups such as the Black Panthers and SDS. This chapter also includes a comparative analysis of the FBI's actions against African-American social movements such as the Black Panther Party and extreme right-wing groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and argues that class distinctions often meant as much or more to the FBI than racial distinctions.

Much of the current historiography on this era emphasizes the racist nature of J. Edgar Hoover and by extension the organization he so rigidly controlled. While race remained part of the equation, as the 1960s and 1970s unfolded, and white middle-class society became more accepting of the mainstream civil rights movement, class distinctions had as much, and possibly more, to do with which groups the FBI chose to target. In addition, those class distinctions tied directly to the FBI's conception of what was "respectable." The chapter begins by charting these complex changes in the FBI's attitude toward race, and goes on to analyze the ways in which race- and-class based

stereotypes were used to interfere with African-American groups, especially the Black Panther Party.

In addition, since Hoover's battle was with any group he felt undermined the peace and order of the United States, it is important to look at the FBI actions against the Ku Klux Klan. In 1964, the FBI launched the "White Hate Groups COINTELPRO" and by 1965, the FBI had placed 600 FBI informants inside the Klan.[8] Some of these informants were so deeply involved in the Klan that they actually participated in Klan attacks. By comparing the FBI's efforts against both white and black groups they felt were extremist, it becomes even clearer that class distinctions played an integral part in how the counterintelligence programs functioned.

The third chapter discusses the way in which age and generational difference played a part in the FBI's targeting of social movement groups, with a primary focus on the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and fully explores the idea that behavior, such as language and dress, affected the FBI's perception of who was a "respectable" American. The FBI's preoccupation with respectability and order may help to explain the FBI's overwhelming interest in, and efforts against, SDS. With the possible exception of the Black Panthers, the FBI focused more effort on SDS than any other group. Like many groups, the FBI was concerned with SDS's connection to other protest groups and by the fact that SDS was garnering national media attention; however, these documents also reveal it was the group's age, language, appearance, and behavior that most concerned the FBI. In the perception of the Bureau, the age and behavior of these protestors also marked them as being outside the bounds of the respectable citizen, and,

[8] Ibid., 81.

because they were often from the same race and class background as the agents themselves, made these young protestors the ultimate enemy within.

The final chapter looks at the FBI's interaction with the American Indian Movement (AIM) and serves three purposes. First, it further complicates the issue of race by analyzing the FBI's response to the American Indian Movement in comparison with the response to the African-American social movements, and especially considers the complicated "otherness" of native people and culture and how that "otherness" influenced the FBI's interaction with AIM.

Second, this chapter goes beyond existing scholarship on AIM and the FBI to place it firmly within the context of the larger issues surrounding federal law enforcement power and the policing of cultural values. For example, while the targeting of the American Indian movement can rightly be seen as another chapter in the long line of abuses perpetrated on American Indians by an Anglo-American dominated federal government, it can also be seen as part of a larger pattern of the FBI response to groups they viewed as outside the definition of legitimate American citizenship. The Bureau's actions against AIM at Wounded Knee in 1973 and the manhunt and trial of Leonard Peltier for the murder of two FBI Agents represent perhaps the agency's most controversial actions of the 1960s and 1970s. Though there are studies which evaluate the American Indian Movement and its interaction with the FBI, most scholarly works dealing with the FBI and social movements as a whole often fail to examine these events. By comparing the FBI's actions against AIM to those taken against other social movements, the potential implications for the ongoing conversations about race and

governmental power, and the difficulties of maintaining the balance between freedom and security in a democratic society become clear.

Third, and perhaps most importantly, this chapter serves as an opportunity to study the ways in which counterintelligence evolved in the post-COINTELPRO years. When social and political pressure forced the FBI to discontinue the official COINTELPRO programs, the Bureau made significant procedural changes and attempted to ensure that FBI activities fell within the bounds of the law. However, in examining FBI documents about AIM, it becomes clear that the FBI's underlying desire to police particular definitions of "American" continued to influence their interaction with domestic social movements.

A number of existing works of scholarship successfully argue that the counterintelligence programs of the era were repressive and illegal. Peter Mathiessen's *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse* details the actions the FBI directed toward the American Indian Movement. Nelson Blackstock in *COINTELPRO: the FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom* focuses on the FBI's investigation of the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance. These works effectively expose the FBI's actions and the harm inflicted on social movement groups as a result.

Other scholarly works dealing with the topic of the FBI and race emphasize the top down structure of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Kenneth O'Reilly in *Racial Matters: The FBI's Secret File on Black America, 1960-1972* argues that while individual agents did help the civil rights movement, the overall politics of the Bureau generally represented the racist, and often paranoid, perceptions of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover. Similarly, David Cunningham's book *There's Something Happening Here: the New Left,*

the Klan, and FBI Counterintelligence goes beyond documenting the FBI's actions to start to look at how the institutional, top-down structure of the Bureau helped contribute to these abuses. Richard Gid Powers, whose book *Broken: the Troubled Past and Uncertain Future of the FBI* argues that modern intelligence failures stem from an aversion to the FBI errors of the past, not only makes a strong case that these issues are still relevant to modern society, but also provides one of the best histories of the FBI as an institution.

Like Cunningham and O'Reilly, I argue that the top-down system of the FBI affected the work on the ground. However, neither of these works fully examines the way in which the FBI's very specific culture and their definition of what constituted a proper American citizen had an impact on the way in which they targeted social movements. In addition, as a departure from Cunningham, I argue that this top-down situation, and perhaps more disastrously, the persistent disconnect between the situation on the ground and the Bureau hierarchy, actually served not only to create egregious abuses of power, but actually hindered the proposed purpose of the Bureau to investigate and prevent criminal activity and foreign attacks in the United States. This not only led the Bureau to waste resources on groups whose activities were legal, but as a result turned hard working FBI Agents into criminals arguably more dangerous than anyone being surveilled, as they routinely violated the constitutional rights of American citizens.

Though criticism built against the FBI throughout the late 1960s and 1970s, the catalyst for change occurred when a group known as the Citizens Committee to Investigate the Federal Bureau of Investigation broke into a Media, Pennsylvania office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and stole large number of classified documents.

These documents, when leaked to the press and Democratic Senators George McGovern (South Dakota) and George Mitchell (Maine), revealed that not only had the FBI spied on subversives, but Congress as well.[9] Though these members of Congress had not faced the same interference from the FBI as the social movements targeted in the COINTELPRO programs, the leak of these documents pushed Congress to investigate the FBI's activities.

The information revealed by the Media, Pennsylvania, documents substantiated many claims that civil rights groups had been making against agencies such as the FBI. The documents also enlightened Congress as to the pervasive abuses that had been going on in the arena of domestic intelligence. The evidence found in Pennsylvania was bolstered by a Supreme Court ruling which declared that wiretapping U.S. citizens without a warrant was unconstitutional. In 1974, Congress tried to pass the Privacy Act designed to reinforce the rights of Americans, but dispute between the Senate and House resulted in nothing more than an ineffective compromise.[10]

Finally, in 1975, the Senate established a temporary fifteen-month Senate Select Committee on Intelligence to investigate abuses within the federal intelligence agencies. Headed by Idaho Democrat Frank Church, the Committee began to investigate United States intelligence agencies and found rampant and widespread abuses perpetrated by several agencies.

The Church Committee's own findings also support the idea that the FBI's counterintelligence programs served to police and punish legal forms of expression. When coming to conclusions about the COINTELPRO programs, the committee stated,

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[9] *Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1971,* (Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1971), 811.
[10] *Congressional Quarterly Almanac 1974*, (Washington D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1974) 294.

"The acts taken interfered with the First Amendment rights of citizens. They were explicitly intended to deter citizens from joining groups, 'neutralize' those who were already members and prevent or inhibit the expression of ideas."[11] Further, later in the Final Report, the Church Committee declared that, "The unexpressed major premise of the programs was that a law enforcement agency has the duty to do whatever is necessary to combat perceived threats to the existing social and political order."[12] The report then goes on to give examples of this "social order" that the FBI sought to protect, including an example of the FBI targeting two students for their use of profanity.

Though it is clear that the FBI did seek to police society in this way, what is less clear is why it did so. The FBI, its leadership and agents, sought to defend a particular definition of what it meant to be an American citizen and made themselves the arbiters of who and what was part of the legitimate political and social order. This definition, outlined in Chapter 1, molded by a unique FBI culture championed not just white, middle-class, male society, but also a peculiarly rigid version of that culture.

In my research of the counterintelligence programs, I relied on a number of sources. FBI documents came primarily from two sources, a collection on the Counterintelligence Programs from the National Security Archive at George Washington University and a collection of FBI Documents on the American Indian Movement published by University Publications of America. Both collections often have large portions of the documents redacted for security reasons, however, because I was less

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[11] Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, United States Senate, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, April 26 1976, Book II: Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, 211.

[12] Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, United States Senate, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, April 23 1976, Book III: Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, 3.

interested in the particulars of the FBI's operations, these documents remained extremely valuable at assessing the FBI's attitudes toward social movement groups. Many FBI documents, however, still remain inaccessible without extensive and costly Freedom of Information Act requests, so it should be noted that the author is aware that these conclusions are drawn from a partial, though extensive, sampling of the total records of the COINTELPRO programs.

This project owes a debt of gratitude to the oral history project of the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI, currently housed at the National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum. This project provides excellent access to the thoughts and perceptions of hardworking FBI agents, and was essential to understanding the culture of the FBI during the 1960s and 1970s. Often, the agents on the ground had a different perspective than the FBI hierarchy and this oral history project provided access to understanding these differences.

The project also draws on holdings from the National Archives of the United States, specifically the subject files of the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security, which as a byproduct of investigating and targeting social movements created an extensive archive of materials on those same movements. In addition, the ACLU archives at the Mudd Manuscript Library at Princeton University provided another point-of-view on the FBI's activities in this era. In order to gain access to the perspective of the social movements themselves, the research for this project included the use of social movement publications such as the Students for a Democratic Society newspaper *New Left Notes* and the *Black Panther* newspaper as well as numerous published writings by leaders and members of these social movements.

The motto of the Federal Bureau of Investigation is “Fidelity, Bravery, Integrity,” and as the next chapters will show, the idea that while the first two ideals “fidelity” and “bravery” did, at least in some respects, represent the FBI officials and agents who worked in counterintelligence, “integrity” remained a questionable commodity, especially when the FBI interacted with individuals and groups they felt fell outside their definition of what it meant to be American.

CHAPTER 1

J. EDGAR AND HIS G-MEN: FBI CULTURE IN THE 1960s AND 1970s

In an article in the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin regarding the recruitment and selection of law enforcement officers, J. Edgar Hoover wrote, "We feel that our personnel do not work for the FBI, but rather we consider that they are the FBI…The Agent applicant in particular must meet rigid physical and educational requirements; he must have a real interest in a career of service and his private life must withstand the closest scrutiny."[13] These "rigid" requirements were about more than just ensuring an educated and physically fit officer; they reflected the complicated way the leadership and agents of the FBI sought to define themselves, the agency, and what it was to be American.

This focus on rigid requirements and a life that could "withstand the closest scrutiny" indicates an FBI culture that was obsessed with order and the appearance of order. This served not only as a demonstration of their definition of what it was to be a "respectable" American, but also speaks to the obsessive need of FBI officials and agents to reinforce their own power by maintaining an image of respectability and control. This rigid definition of "order" was also something they sought to impose on American

[13] "Police Management: Recruitment and Selection of Personnel," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* , January 1967, 25.

society, and led to the investigation and punishment of groups and individuals who largely lived within the law.

For most Americans in the 1960s, the idea of an FBI Agent or "G-Man" would have conjured up a very specific image; an extremely clean-cut white man in a crisp white shirt, with a dark suit and dark tie, usually with another identical agent at his side. Television and films featuring FBI agents widely popularized this image, and though attitudes began to shift by the 1960s, many Americans, especially white middle and upper-class Americans, would have seen the FBI Agent as a patriotic symbol of the effective and appropriate power of the federal government to protect its citizenry.

Forged in the era of gangsters and bank robbers, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and J. Edgar Hoover had cultivated a position of enormous power within the United States government. Hoover exercised complete control over the Bureau and neither the Attorney General nor Congress subjected the Bureau to any real form of outside review.[14] As the Cold War raged, many saw the FBI as the answer to the problems of Communism and internal security. William W. Keller explored the links between the Bureau, Hoover, and liberal government in his book, *The Liberals and J. Edgar Hoover.* "Liberal senators," wrote Keller "celebrated the director and his agency, invoking his power and prestige to bolster their approach to internal security."[15] In addition, Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones argues in his book *The FBI: a History* that though the FBI eventually became "the darling of the neoconservatives" in the 1950s, the FBI was

[14] Keller, *Liberals and J. Edgar Hoover*, 26.
[15] Ibid., 45

seen as the "saner, more professional" organization to deal with the perceived threat of communism.[16]

In light of McCarthyism and the fear among liberals that such sentiments would lead to invasive and extreme legislation, such as the existing Alien and Sedition Act, liberals saw the highly reputable Federal Bureau of Investigation as the lesser of two evils.[17] This freedom made the FBI one of the most insulated government agencies in the history of the United States and led to the creation of a very specific culture and environment within the agency.

In order to understand the FBI's interaction with the social movements of the 1960s and 1970s, one must understand the culture and worldview from which FBI officials and FBI agents operated. Though the standard G-Man image depicted only one face of an incredibly complex organization, it was not wholly an illusion; instead, it represented the specific culture and life of the FBI and its agents.

As sociologist David Cunningham persuasively argued in *There's Something Happening Here*, the leadership of the Federal Bureau of Investigation created an entirely top-down managerial structure, with the national offices imposing policies and programs onto the local field offices. The Bureau had a clear pecking order, and agents who wanted to thrive, or even survive, in their careers had to play by the rules of this hierarchical system. FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover acted as the undisputed head of this system. During his nearly five decades as Director of the FBI (and its predecessor the Bureau of Investigation), Hoover built an early reputation for himself and the Bureau as fighters of organized crime. He later became a loud voice in the juvenile delinquency

[16] Rhodri Jeffrey-Jones, *The FBI: a History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2007), 11.
[17] Ibid., 27-29.

and anticommunism hysteria before turning his full attention to any kind of perceived "subversion" by the end of the 1960s. Though individual agents and officials in the FBI found ways to work within and around Hoover's system, the director, and to a large extent the director's own political interests, set the priorities for the entire organization.

One example of this can be seen in the fact that the Director's office reprimanded local field agencies of the FBI when they did not respond appropriately to the mandates from FBI headquarters, and praised those individuals who made the director's agenda a priority. In a letter from the Director's office to the Special Agent in Charge of the Cleveland office, the Director's office commended Cleveland for its "imaginative and aggressive approach" toward disrupting protest groups. The letter goes on to reinforce that Cleveland's "exceptionally aggressive approach" at "neutralizing the New Left" should be encouraged. [18] Clearly, those local offices that followed Hoover's agendas could expect praise and support.

Hoover often made statements that the FBI defended the values of a majority of Americans, and the Bureau's emphasis on morality and anticommunism did reflect the values of many conservatives of the era. Historian Lisa McGirr discusses the way conservative groups considered Hoover's own book *Masters of Deceit* as part of their standard reading material not just for its anticommunism, but for the way that it focused on deceit from within and the idea that Christian religious values were needed to fight communism and other kinds of subversion.[19] She also states that for grassroots conservatives concerns over "law and order" were a "dominant part of political

[18] Director, FBI to SAC, Cleveland, unknown document type, 25 October 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[19] McGirr, *Suburban Warriors,* 95-96.

discourse."[20] Clearly FBI rhetoric and priorities did match those of some Americans. However, it is difficult to thoroughly pigeon hole the FBI in terms of political views because the Bureau's dedication to its public image and the protection of the Bureau's power actually overrode clear political alliances. For example, the FBI might surveill any political figure, regardless of their party affiliation, if the Bureau felt they in any way threatened the agency's power.

Though Hoover's politics undoubtedly skewed right, Hoover often made the claim that the FBI protected the values of a majority of Americans from the extreme politics of both the right and the left. In a speech in 1964, Hoover said, "These dangerous elements are at work in American today, subverting our traditional democratic processes and undermining respect for law and order. In all too many instances, they have been aided by a body politic incredibly indifferent to the demands of civic responsibility."[21] In the same speech, Hoover went on to say, "The FBI will never be intimidated by the illogical criticisms and pressures of those detractors who would have us exceed some areas of our authority and grossly neglect others."[22] Later, Hoover, and the officials that led the FBI after his death, would use this same logic to justify spying on subversive groups, claiming that such actions protected public safety. While the FBI did in fact investigate extreme right wing groups like the Klan, this strategy is similar to the one that William H. Chafe describes taking place in Greensboro, North Carolina when the civil rights movement challenged the area's moderate image on race relations in the early 1960s. Chafe argues

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[20] Ibid., 186.
[21] Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, News Release, 12 December 1964, Records Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary.
[22] Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, News Release, 12 December 1964, Records Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary. Emphasis in original.

that many white citizens in Greensboro, by rhetorically positioning themselves between the civil rights movement and violent white supremacy groups, made the status quo seem like the only respectable position and suggested that the civil rights movement was as extreme and dangerous as groups like the Klan.[23] By using this same sort of rhetorical positioning, the FBI reinforced its idea of the status quo and suggested that the FBI's position was the only logical and respectable choice.

The FBI also clearly expected the American people to do their part to support the programs of the Bureau. A poster on the back cover of the January 1961 *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* gave citizens a list of things they could do to fight crime. This included instructions to "constantly obey all laws," "report …information you have about any criminal activity" and "educate your children to respect law and order."[24] That the FBI would suggest the obedience to of all laws is understandable, if it a bit exacting. However, the other recommendations illustrate interesting aspects of FBI mentality. The FBI felt that Americans should not only be law abiding citizens, but they must also be willing to report on others and ensure that their children not only followed the laws but had an attitude of "respect." As the FBI saw this attitude of "respect" as key to determining who was worthy of FBI assistance and who had the right to live without FBI surveillance. Because the members of SNCC acted "disrespectful," Agent Williams saw them unworthy of assistance and as "troublemakers" who needed to be investigated.

FBI officials, including Hoover, often suggested that those who wanted to live in a world of safety and freedom needed to be ready to support the actions of the Bureau. Hoover wrote, "A solid front of citizens behind the law enforcement officer who stands

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[23] William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press USA, 1981).
[24] "What You Can Do to Fight," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, January 1961, back cover.

face to face with the criminal is the prerequisite for turning back the forces of crime."[25] In addition, he suggested that security was essential to maintaining freedom. Hoover wrote, "To be free and to remain free, man must be relatively secure. He must rely on the stability of order created and maintained by the rule of law."[26]

On the surface, the suggestion that individuals should support law enforcement agencies in order to deter crime seems logical. However, in the hands of the powerful FBI, and in light of the abuses of the counterintelligence era, these statements have a more complex meaning. These statements, and the actions of FBI officials and agents, led to an attitude that those worthy of law enforcement help and protection actively and verbally supported law enforcement agencies like the FBI. Again, in order to be true Americans eligible for the benefits of citizenship, the FBI argued that one must support the power structure as well. This self-reinforcing logic further led to the belief that anyone who did not offer this unflagging support was not worthy of the benefits of freedom in a civilized society. This helps explain why the FBI felt justified in investigating civil rights and other protest groups even when their behavior fell within the boundaries of the law.

Hoover, and his handpicked top officials, sought to define the role of the agency in very specific ways. Hoover constantly fed the flames of crime hysteria invoking gangsters, juvenile delinquents, and "urban terrorist" subversives. As an extension of that idea, FBI officials often painted the FBI and agents as beleaguered public servants, constantly at war with deadly crime and facing unprovoked attacks from every side.

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[25] J. Edgar Hoover, "Message from the Director," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin,* January 1961, 1.
[26] J. Edgar Hoover, "Message from the Director," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin,* May 1963, 1.

William C. Sullivan, Assistant Director of the FBI, in a paper given at the 1966 North American Judges Association Conference, said of law enforcement officers:

> Nearly always, they are overworked; often, they are underpaid. They are cursed if they act too quickly and condemned if they hesitate too long. They are looked upon with suspicion and mistrust if they are present, but if they are absent when trouble strikes, they are reviled....Law enforcement agencies throughout the land, including the FBI, have repeatedly come under attacks of the communists. Charges of police brutality, 'unfair tactics' and 'police state' are not uncommon charges hurled against law enforcement agencies and officers in this day in time.[27]

The FBI promoted this same image in regard to civil rights investigations in the South. In speaking before the House Appropriations Committee in 1968, J. Edgar Hoover played up the difficulties FBI Agents faced: "I may also say that our men practically worked around the clock.…They worked in the swamps which were infested with rattlesnakes and water moccasins. We got no assistance in the area and every effort was made to frustrate the work of the agents. Many of our agents went without summer vacations. Only a few got home for Christmas."[28] Ample evidence suggests that individual agents did work incredibly long hours under heavy workloads, but the constant need of Bureau officials to portray their agency as one under siege may have been an attempt to mask the growing power of the FBI and/or over-emphasize the professed dangers of the groups and individuals the FBI policed.

The FBI also claimed that it played a purely investigative role. FBI publications and FBI officials often used this rhetoric to discuss the way in which the FBI dealt with civil rights investigations. In the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Annual Report of 1968 under the subheading "Racial Strife and Rioting," it states:

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[27] William C. Sullivan, "Communism, Law and Enforcement in America" (paper presented at the North American Judges Association 1966 International Conference, 31 October 1966), 9.

[28] "Testimony of John Edgar Hoover, Director Federal Bureau of Investigation Before the House Subcommittee on Appropriations," 1966, Records Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary, 23.

> Basically, the FBI's responsibility in this field is the development and dissemination of intelligence information while, of course, being ever alert to the detection of violations of Federal law over which it has investigative jurisdiction. The FBI does not have jurisdiction to protect persons and property nor does it have responsibility to police or control riotous conditions.....Certain organizations claiming to be civil rights groups but which in fact preach hatred for the white race, demand immunity from laws, and advocate violence, constitute a serious threat to our country's internal security.[29]

This is a line of rhetoric that the FBI frequently used, especially in regard to their work with civil rights violations. FBI officials, and agents, almost always put the emphasis on the number of cases investigated and, if there was any hint of criticism, often reminded the public, and even other political officials, that they faced extremely fearsome opponents. In addition, the FBI often stated that to do any more than simply "investigate" risked the freedom and safety of Americans. Ten years earlier in the 1957 Annual Report, it stated, "The Bureau constantly strives to protect the civil rights of individuals. Its operations are under such constant scrutiny that the FBI could never become what the Communists and their sympathizers like to refer to as the American 'Gestapo'."[30] Official FBI documents and statements from FBI officials often made a significant point of stating, especially in regard to civil rights, that they did not have the mandate or jurisdiction to act as a national police force. However, the FBI extended far past a purely investigative role in so many other areas that invoking the "investigative only" mantra in regard to civil rights clearly indicated an unwillingness to fully invest Bureau time and resources defending the cause of civil rights.

This idea that the FBI could not risk becoming a national police force often appeared in FBI documents and in statements and speeches given by FBI officials. In a magazine interview, J. Edgar Hoover said, "The danger of a national police force is that it

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[29] Annual Report, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1968.
[30] Annual Report, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1957, 346.

centralizes into one place and into the hands of one man too much authority. The Federal Government, of course, has no cure-all for the crime problems existing in any community."[31] However, the FBI had an undeniable role in shaping the nature of the nation's law enforcement capabilities and in defining what constituted criminal behavior.

One example of the Bureau's role in national law enforcement was the FBI's extensive network of law enforcement training programs which in 1967 alone trained over 200,000 law enforcement officers from throughout the country and offered various training schools, classes, and conferences.[32] The *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* featured articles on state-of-the-art police facilities, police procedures, investigative techniques, and other law enforcement topics. The FBI's extensive crime lab and data system, arguably the agency's most significant and valuable contribution to law enforcement, gained momentum during this era. In January 1967, the Bureau started the computerized National Crime Information Center, providing previously unheard of access to criminal files and information for law enforcement groups throughout the country.[33]

The FBI often worked closely with law enforcement groups throughout the United States. In fact, they worked so closely with those groups that the FBI hesitated to interfere with those agencies accused of civil rights violations. An FBI Annual Report stated:

> When civil rights investigations involving law enforcement officers or personnel of other public agencies are instituted, the FBI carefully avoids interfering with the orderly operation of the agency concerned. At the outset, contact is had with the head of the agency, as well as the Governor if a state institution is involved, and he is advised of the complaint received and the FBI's responsibility to

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[31] "Interview with J. Edgar Hoover," *U.S. News and World Report*, 21 December 1964, 36.
[32] Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, News Release, 5 January 1968. Records Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 1951-1975, Individual Name Files, Stokely Carmichael, January-June 1968, 10.
[33] Ibid., 12.

> investigate. These cases, like all others within the FBI's jurisdiction, are handled in a thorough, factual and impartial manner.[34]

This highlights two very important aspects of the FBI's attitude toward law enforcement. The first is the FBI's close relationship with local police departments. Though jurisdictional tensions did exist, the FBI involved itself, through training and support, with local and state police departments. In addition, J. Edgar Hoover's influence could affect the careers of local police officers.[35] This close professional involvement fostered a tendency to view local and state police officers as part of the law enforcement family to which the FBI agents and officials themselves belonged.

In addition, though the claim here is that the FBI handled the cases in a "factual and impartial" manner, the very fact that the FBI made the "orderly operation of the agency" a priority shows that the FBI cared more about the dangers of disrupting local and state police departments than it did about investigating violations.

Another point that FBI officials frequently emphasized, especially in terms of domestic intelligence, was the idea of "preventative measures." As early as 1958, the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* justified FBI efforts against subversion, and the secrecy and lack of concrete results, by arguing that the methods were preventative and therefore could not be revealed or quantified. The report stated, "The very nature of the FBI's intelligence and counterintelligence activities is such that a detailed public appraisal cannot be made …Security operations are primarily preventive in nature. Accordingly, the information gathered and disseminated by the FBI frequently causes protective

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[34] Annual Report, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1958, 10.
[35] William W. Turner, "An Insider's View of the FBI" (paper presented at the Federal Bureau of Investigation Conference Papers, 1971), Series AC312, Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 40.

measures to be taken before a violation of the law has occurred."[36] In 1966, the Bureau used the exact same rhetoric to explain why the "nature and effectiveness" of the FBI's counterintelligence operations "cannot be publicly recorded." [37] This constant claim of "preventative measures" not only helped keep the FBI safe from oversight, it also allowed FBI officials and agents to spend their time and resources investigating who they wanted, however they wanted, largely without interference or accountability.

Another method that the FBI used to keep its objectives and methods away from public scrutiny included severely limiting the information that the agency released to other government agencies and to the public. Even if the FBI had incriminating evidence on a group or an individual, they hesitated to share it with other agencies, preferring to carefully leak information through favored congressional resources like the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security or media outlets that they considered to be friendly to FBI interests. One example of this was the Cleveland office which worked with a "reliable" media source. The Bureau deemed this journalist as reliable because he, unlike other media in the Cleveland area, remained willing to portray SDS in a negative light. The Cleveland office also pointed out that it worked with this journalist because he was willing to speak to "civic and church groups" about the dangers of SDS.[38] Similarly, when the Special Agent in Charge of the Springfield, Illinois office suggested that it could use an Illinois Congressman Thomas F. Railsback and another individual as "excellent outlets for material … which the Bureau may deem appropriate for public

[36] Annual Report, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1958, 21.
[37] Annual Report, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1966, 23
[38] SAC, Cleveland to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 16 January 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

consumption."[39] By using media sources and governmental officials friendly to the FBI to leak information, the FBI could push its own agenda while staying out of the public eye.

However, even when working with sources they deemed to be reliable, the FBI protected its own files. One FBI office discussed a "reputable member of the community" who wanted to start an "educational program" about the dangers of SDS. This member of the community wanted to combat what he felt was the tendency of the media to portray SDS as "idealist." The director's office made it clear that it could not give him information from FBI files but directed him to several public information sources, including news articles, Hoover's speeches, and a hearing conducted on the New Left by the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security. The agents running the operation told the man to keep his contact with the FBI a secret, but to let them know how things went.[40] Clearly, the FBI perceived its image and reputation as directly related to power and control.

Though the FBI's rationale behind protecting its files and methods stemmed from the belief that it protected the Bureau's reputation, the rhetoric it used to defend such actions often went back to the idea that the FBI acted as an "investigative" agency. Title 28 of the United States Code indicates that those appointed by the Attorney General, including the agents and officials of the FBI, were to "detect and prosecute crimes against the United States," but the FBI clearly went past that original mandate, especially in regard to its famous interactions with organized crime. However, the FBI called on this

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[39] SAC, Springfield to Director, FBI, unknown document type, 23 March 1970, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[40] SAC, Cleveland to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 19 December, 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

rhetoric as a sort of shield, claiming it could not release information or make judgments about individuals. In response to a letter from a women who wanted to know if the National Organization of Women was subversive J. Edgar Hoover replied, "this Bureau is strictly an investigative agency of the Federal Government, and as such, neither makes evaluations nor draws conclusions as to the character or integrity of any organization, publication or individual."[41] In using this rhetoric, the FBI clearly put on a false front for the sake of maintaining its reputation, and its claims of objectivity. Behind the scenes, the FBI evaluated and judged organizations on a daily basis, and beyond that, Hoover spoke publicly about organizations such as the Panthers and SDS as dangerous threats to America.

A statement by Hoover in the Washington Post reflected another related rhetorical screen used by the Bureau. He said, "An FBI Agent is not authorized to pass judgment on the guilt or innocence of a person. He can only gather the facts and let the facts speak for themselves."[42] This was clearly a rhetorical strategy only, as FBI documents make it clear that the FBI routinely made judgments about who or what was "dangerous" and "subversive." Once the FBI made such judgments, it then took active steps to disrupt the activities of these groups and punish the individuals involved.

One of the key issues surrounding J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI during this era involves the level of racism present in the FBI and how that racism may have affected the Bureau's daily operations. Race will be further explored in Chapter 2, but an overview of the institutional culture on this count is important to understanding how FBI officials and agents functioned. Though issues of race evolved in the Bureau during the time

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[41] To Unknown Recipient from J. Edgar Hoover, Letter, 12 July 1971, Subject File: National Organization of Women, Electronic Reading Room, Federal Bureau of Investigation.
[42] "Hoover Ridicules Retirement Talk, Defends FBI Role," *Washington Post,* 5 December 1964, A4.

reflected in this study, the FBI, especially the leadership, saw itself as a white middle-class organization. Like many institutions in America, for the FBI, whiteness existed as a normative category; FBI documents and reports, unless talking specifically about individuals involved with civil-rights groups, rarely identified an individual as "white" but often described other individuals based on their skin color and/or physical characteristics. In addition, the FBI did not explicitly list being "white" as a requirement for an FBI Agent, the vast majority of the agents and employees depicted in FBI publications had fair skin and embraced white racial identity. The very fact that FBI documents and publications rarely discuss race demonstrates that most employees embraced white racial identity as the norm with non-white groups representing the "other."

Some historians, especially Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, argue that racism constituted one of, if not the, most important factor in understanding the counterintelligence programs. Both Jones and Kenneth O'Reilly accurately point to the Bureau's history of spying on black Americans. Jones sees this as proof of the FBI's virulent racism and O'Reilly considers it a sort of "respectable racism" that was part of the "culture at large."[43] O'Reilly further argues that while racism was undoubtedly part of Hoover's makeup, especially when it came to his revered special agents, Hoover's attitude toward race was quite complex and that he was willing to have personal and nonagent FBI employees who were non-white.[44] Chapter 2 will further discuss issues surrounding the institutional racism at the FBI, and the personal feelings and practices that agents and officials of the FBI had toward non-white communities and protest groups; however, by

[43] Kenneth O'Reilly, *Racial Matters: The FBI's Secret File on Black America, 1960-1972* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), 11.
[44] O'Reilly, *Racial Matters*, 17.

the late 1960s and early 1970s attitudes towards race both at the institutional level and the personal level were changing in the FBI.

By the 1960s, some level of acceptance for African-American agents existed within the Bureau. Agent William H. Billups, an African-American who joined the FBI in the mid-1960s said, "I was one of two black guys in a class of sixteen and never had a problem….there was never an ugly word."[45] Billups went on to talk about his work in offices in Pennsylvania and West Virginia and said, "I was fully accepted – I never had a problem." This did not mean that Billups felt that the Bureau had a positive reputation within the black community. In fact, Billups stated that people in the African American community had, "some concern that I was somehow joining the enemy" due to the "negative reputation that black folks had about police and the FBI."[46] Billups experience may have been fairly singular, but it does suggest that racial attitudes for both the Bureau and its director evolved in this period.

In addition, individual agents often took their charge to investigate civil rights complaints very seriously, especially those that involved extreme violence. Many agents did in fact work significant overtime and sacrificed personal and family time in order to seek convictions against perpetrators of violence against civil rights workers. As individuals, each agent also carried his own perspectives about race and power which, in some cases, were more progressive than the institutional position.

The FBI not only hired predominantly white agents, they hired only men. Women did serve in clerical and even scientific positions within the Bureau, but the FBI

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[45] William H. Billups, Interviewed by Brian R. Hollstein, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 11 November 2008.
[46] William H. Billups, Interviewed by Brian R. Hollstein, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 11 November 2008.

reserved the role of agent and by extension FBI leadership for men. In a letter responding to the President of the National Organization of Women, J. Edgar Hoover wrote, "If the credibility of the FBI is to be maintained in the eyes of the public…and if we are to continue a flexible, mobile, ready-for-anything, force of Special Agents, we must continue to limit the position to males."[47] In singling out males for the position of special agent, Hoover argued that agents needed to "be qualified for strenuous physical exertion."[48] These quotations demonstrate not only the fact that the FBI felt that being male was essential to the duties of a special agent, but also suggests the particular type of masculinity associated with being an agent, an almost total dedication to the job as well as being physically fit. This definition of law enforcement masculinity was not unique to the FBI; in talking about the historiography of masculinity and law enforcement, Susan Broomhall and David G. Barrie discuss the ways in which historians have seen a pattern of connection between "force, physique, men, authority and danger" in the construction of law enforcement masculinity.[49] In essence, the idea that men were inherently more capable of asserting physical force and therefore were more suited to law enforcement tasks. In addition, Broomhall and Barrie argue that law enforcement agencies publicized specific forms of masculinity to improve the public image of law enforcement officers in order to make them more accepted in the societies they policed. This concept ties in well with the idea that the FBI saw its public image as key to maintaining its power and authority in American society.

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[47] To Faith A. Seidenberg from J. Edgar Hoover, Letter, 10 June 1971, Subject: National Organization of Women, Electronic Reading Room, Federal Bureau of Investigation.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Susan Broomhall and David G. Barrie. "Introduction" in *A History of Police and Masculinities, 1700-2010* ed. Susan Broomhall and David G. Barrie (New York, NY : Routledge, 2012), 2.

In understanding Bureau culture, it is also important to analyze the class backgrounds of FBI officials and agents. Though some agents did come from working-class backgrounds, the educational requirements to be an agent and the salary provided to FBI agents put them firmly in the middle class. In addition, as historian Roland Marchand argues, in the 1950s, white Americans, however wrongly, believed that America was evolving to become a classless society. The "homogeneous" popular culture of the 1950s echoed this belief positioning white upper-middle-class suburban families as the American norm.[50] Likewise, FBI agents and officials clearly viewed white middle-class culture and ideas not as one part of a more racially and economically diverse America, but as part of what it meant to be a respectable American.

The FBI also reflected the idea of "homogeneity" in the way Bureau leadership sought to control the lives of FBI agents. Hoover not only controlled the institutional priorities of the Bureau, he could also control the lives and careers of the individuals and agents who worked for him. This meant that FBI agents worked in an environment where respect for rules, regulations, and authority, in the form of Hoover, were required for survival on the job. Though Agent Roger S. Young voiced his admiration for the director, he also stated that he was extremely nervous to meet him: "Obviously I was terrified in the meeting because here was a man who, with one stroke of the pen, or one word, could have thrown my whole career out the window. And that's the way things were in those days."[51] FBI agents had to accept that it was up to the leadership of the

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[50] Roland Marchand, "Visions of Classlessness, Quests for Dominion: American Popular Culture, 1945-1960," in *Reshaping America: Society and Institutions 1945-1960*, ed. Robert H. Brennen and Gary W. Reichard (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1982), 165.

[51] Roger S. Young, Interviewed by Clarence H. Campbell, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 10 August 2004.

Bureau, especially Hoover, to decide who had the qualifications, attitude, and appearance to represent the powerful FBI.

Another example of this occurred when trainers took new agents to meet J. Edgar Hoover for the first time and gave them special instructions about what to wear and how to behave. New agents heard stories about men who had been fired due to sweaty palms or a failure to look the director in the eye. Agent Thomas E. Bishop said, "A lot of guys, I found out, even the fellas in my class, were nervous as hell and couldn't say anything to him. They didn't know what to say."[52] This fear was not restricted to new agents; one agent reported being afraid to ask Hoover for clarification of instructions that were written on a memo.[53] FBI employees, especially agents, worked in a world where respect, to the level of fear, for authority was a daily requirement.

This is not to suggest that at an individual level Hoover's power made it impossible for agents to exercise a degree of agency. Hoover's power was an institutional reality, but some agents did find ways to work around it. In fact, the very ubiquity of the director's criticism made some agents less inclined to take it seriously. Agent William B. Anderson talked about the fact that he had thirty letters of commendation and six or seven letters of censure, "I took a cavalier attitude toward that, I thought just do what's right and, if they wanna criticize you, well, just do it right again and the next time and get a good night's sleep. What the hell. Frankly it was very helpful to have that attitude."[54]

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[52] Thomas E. Bishop, Interviewed by Clarence H. Campbell and Michael M. O'Brien, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 13 January 2004.
[53] Thomas J. Baker , Interviewed by Susan Wynkoop, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 2 November 2009.
[54] William B. Anderson, Interviewed by Brian R. Hollstein, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 14 February 2008.

For some agents, the frequency and capriciousness of Hoover's criticism made it seem inevitable and therefore something not to be feared.

However, whatever the reaction to Hoover's reputation and disciplinary standards, there is no doubt that the FBI hierarchy expected agents to look and behave according to very rigid standards. Before becoming agents, they had to face a number of exams and an extensive background check. FBI employment applications requested detailed information in over "50 different categories" in order for them to help conduct background investigations on those who applied to the FBI. [55] A cartoon in the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin declared, "Public opinion of a police department is greatly influenced by the personal appearance of its officers."[56] FBI officials clearly felt that the reputation and respectability was closely tied to the way that agents looked.

Everything about an agent's appearance could be called into question. In the early 1960s, Hoover declared that some of the agents looked like "truck drivers" and singled out an individual because his eyebrows grew together and ordered that he have them groomed into two separate eyebrows. Hoover threatened the training agents of the group with "disciplinary transfers" for not "weeding out" the individuals who did not fit the image of an ideal agent.[57]

As long hair and facial hair became more in fashion in the late 1960s and 1970s the short haired and clean shaven appearance of FBI Agents became even more distinctive. In a *Time* magazine interview December 14, 1970, the Director observed,

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[55] "Police Management: Recruitment and Selection of Personnel," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin,* 36: 1 (January 1967): 26.
[56] "Helpful Hints," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, April 1964, back cover.
[57] Rogers S. Young, Interviewed by Clarence H. Campbell, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 20 August 2004.

"You won't find long or sideburns a la Joe Namath here. There are no hippies, the public has an image of what an FBI agent should look like.'"[58] Though this will be discussed further in a later chapter, the short hair and clean shaven chin of an FBI Agent could have as much meaning to both the individual agent, and the organization, as the long hair of a student protestor or the "natural" hair style of a black activist. For FBI agents in the 1960s and 1970s, a clean-cut image represented their ideas about respectability and community.

The physical appearance that the FBI expected an agent to maintain included more than eyebrows and hair. Agents had to meet exacting physical fitness standards. FBI officials considered this more than just a matter of respect and appearance, they also argued that it was essential for the agents to do their job. Hoover said, "Sickly, obese, out-of-condition peace officers cannot expect to cope with the arduous exertion required to fight against today's vicious criminals."[59] In effect, he expected agents to dress the same way, wear their hair the same way, groom the same way, and have a largely similar body type. In addition, since the large majority of FBI Agents had light skin, this added another mark of visual similarity and conformity to the ranks of the G-men.

This created an environment so exacting and specific that it impacted the way Hoover and agents reacted to other government officials who did not keep up the same high standards. One agent told a story about meeting Attorney General Robert Kennedy and made a specific point that Kennedy was in his "shirt-sleeves" and tossing a football while they talked. The agent put that information in his report to Hoover because he knew

[58] Turner, "An Insider's View," 22-23.
[59] J. Edgar Hoover, "Message from the Director," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin,* July 1961, 1.

Hoover would disapprove of that kind of behavior.[60] Though the agent did not discuss his own opinion of Kennedy's attire, it is clear that FBI culture was so rigid and specific that the agent knew that even the lack of a suit jacket would be an unacceptable breach of professionalism in the director's eyes.

Language usage is another interesting aspect of FBI culture. FBI documents and articles in the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* indicate an interest in understanding the "slang" of criminal, subversive, and even sometimes simply young and urban environments. This stands in direct contrast to the language the Bureau expected of FBI Agents. Though written by a police officer, an article in the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* encouraged law enforcement officers to speak and write "the King's English" and advocated "flawless" pronunciation, spelling, and penmanship.[61] The emphasis on proper language clearly extended to the written word; Agent Thomas E. Bishop received several letters of censure due to misspelled words in reports and the Assistant Special Agent in Charge warned him that if he did not correct his behavior they would "put [him] on probation and bounce [him] outta here."[62] The Bureau expected agents to use the language that they viewed as being indicative of white, educated, middle-class America, further reflecting the Bureau's ideal of American respectability.

In looking at a collection of FBI oral histories, it is clear that both agents and FBI officials did use colorful language on occasion; however, the subtext indicates that while such language might be used in private conversation, it was not the language that law

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[60] Fred C. Woodcock, Interviewed by Joseph L Tierney, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 14 September 2004.
[61] James Mancusi, "Policemen Should Make Proper Use of the King's English," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin,* June 1961, 21.
[62] Thomas. E Bishop, Interviewed by Clarence H. Campbell and Michael M. O'Brien, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 13 January 2004.

enforcement officers, including FBI agents, should be using in public. Within the Bureau, a belief clearly existed that middle-class respectability was key to the Bureau's reputation and power.

Beyond language and appearance, the Bureau expected FBI Agents to adhere to a wide array of behavioral rules and regulations. They required agents to account for their hours using a painstaking paperwork process. In fact, one agent reported that the agents often had to "fudge" the numbers on the forms just to be able to have the time needed to perform the functions of their job.[63] Several agents reported that Hoover, and FBI supervisors in general, focused on statistics, including demanding that agents maintain a certain level of convictions and other quantifiable results, sometimes to the detriment of the quality of the work.[64] Here is a prime example of a way in which the FBI leadership's emphasis on appearance and reputation actually prevented agents from being able to do their jobs effectively.

The Bureau regulated almost every aspect of an agent's life both on the job and off. Something as simple as drinking coffee in the office could be cause for reprimand. Supervisors routinely inspected the desks of agents to ensure that any personal effects that sat on an agent's desk were on an "approved list." The Bureau disciplined one agent for having a single airline brochure in his desk drawer.[65] Everything about the way an agent represented himself had to reflect vigilance, order, and to a certain degree, conformity.

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[63] Turner, "An Insider's View."
[64] Richard H. Ash, Interviewed by Stanley A. Pimentel, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 15 July 2004.
[65] Turner, "An Insider's View."

Agents also knew that, especially at headquarters, supervisors also monitored their activities off the clock. Agent William M. Baker said:

> I'll be very candid with you. I did not want and I turned down administrative advancement while Mr. Hoover was alive. I was single. I had read stories about the actions he took against clerical employees for having fiancés spend the night and so forth. And quite honestly, I was in no position to want to become high profile at the time. I didn't want my personal life looked at and I was very happy being in the field. And it really wasn't until his death that I accepted a transfer up the ranks.[66]

Though Baker clearly enjoyed working as an FBI Agent, the Bureau subjected the personal lives of FBI Agents to close scrutiny, and Baker felt forced to alter his career and turn down advancement in order to maintain the personal life of his choice. FBI agents were keenly aware that their supervisors monitored and evaluated their behavior against the Bureau's and Hoover's standards of American respectability.

Though the Bureau prided itself on being the chief proponent of law enforcement training in the United States, those agents assigned to deal with civil rights, white hate, and domestic intelligence cases often felt unprepared. Agent Billy Bob Williams, in addition to stating that he knew nothing about the Klan or civil rights activities prior to being send to Mississippi, also described his first bombing investigation. In relating the incident, says that he, “got out my Agents manual,” and followed the instructions as to how to investigate. In fact, in order to take the pictures required by the manual, Williams had to borrow a camera from people living near the site of the bombing. None of the FBI oral histories mention any special training required assignment to civil rights cases nor was any previous experience in working in such a complex situations required. Civil rights cases often required agents to question and investigate members of their own race

[66] William M. Baker, Interviewed by Michael N. Boone, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 23 February 2006.

and class for crimes committed against those viewed as being less respectable due to their race, class, and/or behavior. This factor may explain some of the reasons why the agents had such a difficult time interacting with, and working to protect, civil rights workers, whom they may have viewed as being unworthy of citizenship and therefore of the law enforcement protection that came with it.

In spite of exacting working conditions, agents within the Bureau viewed FBI culture as integral to their social networks and even their own identity. At one point in Williams's oral history, he recounted a time when he was in an accident and the Bureau responded to help him very quickly. He said, "The Bureau, in those days, was that much of a family."[67] In addition, Williams said, "When I tell stories about the Bureau, I very seldom speak in the first person because the Bureau was a team."[68] James O. Ingram, likewise commented that "all our friends that we have, our close friends, are FBI Agents and their families scattered from the west coast to the east coast."[69] For many agents, their work as FBI Agents was more than simply a job; it provided a sense of community and even helped to define who they were as individuals.

Many agents also expressed how much they admired and respected the FBI leadership and the Bureau as a whole. Williams stated that he had the "greatest respect" for J. Edgar Hoover. He also stated that Roy K. Moore, head of the Jackson Mississippi Agency, was "one of the greatest leaders that I've ever worked for." [70] Other agents from

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[67] Williams, 8.
[68] Ibid., 17.
[69] James O. Ingram, Interviewed by Avery Rollins, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 12 January 2005, 1.
[70] Williams, 17, 18.

the Jackson office also had high praise for Moore, calling him a "tremendous man" who was "almost like a father."[71]

Agents also praised the agency as a whole. Ingram stated, “I realized then that we were the premier law enforcement agency, and, in my opinion we still are.”[72] Not only does Ingram’s comment reflect that he had the same opinion of the Bureau as the other two agents, but as Williams’s discussed, Ingram consistently refers to the FBI as “we,” clearly demonstrating that he saw this organization as part of who he was.

Agents often saw joining the FBI as a noble goal, and prided themselves on the FBI's reputation. Agent Roger S. Young put it this way; "I admired the FBI and, this isn’t meant to be corny, but I wanted to be on the first team. I wanted to be on the first team against crime, the first team against a Communist threat at that time."[73] Clearly, Young demonstrated a personal investment in the prestige of the FBI and the reputation it held for some as being the premiere law enforcement agency in the United States.

This sense of closeness and emphasis on reputation could also have a dark side. As mentioned previously, the loyalty of the majority of the agents and employees of the Bureau, and Hoover's ability to keep the agency from being subjected to close scrutiny, contributed to the disturbing activities of the COINTELPRO period. Even more than any particular political agenda or philosophy, FBI officials and agents sought to maintain the power and prestige of the Bureau.

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[71] James W. Awe, Interviewed by E. Avery Rollins, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 3 November 2005, 7 and Ingram, 3.
[72] Ingram, 2.
[73] Roger S. Young, Interviewed by Clarence H. Campbell, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 10 August 2004.

The FBI's reputation granted such a level of power that agents could gain access to personal information on individuals without bothering to obtain warrants or other proper authorization. One FBI agent reported that he was able to obtain an individual's bank information without a warrant or any kind of legal document, just by flashing his FBI credentials and asking to obtain the information.[74] The fear and respect that people held for the Bureau meant that its agents expected that individuals would ignore basic constitutional protections in order to provide the Bureau with what they needed. Given this attitude, one can see how easy it was for the abuses of the counterintelligence era to be perpetrated against those the Bureau deemed dangerous to their view of the American way of life.

In talking about the Bureau prior to 1978, Agent William M. Baker stated, "There seemed to be a method of brushing it under the carpet, if there were some allegations."[75] This statement most likely refers to allegations directed at the Bureau as a whole, but there is also evidence that the Bureau would cover up crimes committed by FBI agents, or simply fire agents who had any kind of brush with the law, in order to maintain the illusion that the FBI remained free of any hint of wrongdoing.[76]

J. Edgar Hoover and other FBI officials seemed extremely concerned about potential "embarrassment" to the FBI if their counterintelligence activities became known to the public. Even while leaking information to individuals they saw as trustworthy, they emphasized limiting that information to public record.[77] Though the Bureau

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[74] Deposition of FBI Agent Anthony E. Constantino, Fifth Avenue Peace Parade v. Hoover, American Civil Liberty Union Records, 1917-Present, Series MC001, Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University.
[75] William M. Baker, Interviewed by Michael N. Boone, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 23 February 2006.
[76] Turner, "An Insider's View."
[77] SAC, Boston to Director, FBI, memorandum, 12 September 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

hierarchy was determined to discredit "troublemakers," it was even more conscious of maintaining its own image and reputation. In an interview in 1964, Hoover stated:

> I don't enjoy a controversy and I don't go looking for one. I have tried for years to avoid public disputes. But I cannot let attacks on the FBI go unchallenged when they are not justified. If I didn't speak out in defense of my agents, I would have no morale left in this organization....Public trust in the FBI is an important part of law enforcement and national security. [78]

Hoover was willing to create controversy and make controversial statements in defense of the Bureau and its agents. This controversial style of defense, however, often led to the opposite effect than the director intended, and demonstrated the inappropriate lengths FBI officials went to ensure their own power.

One example of this behavior can be seen in Hoover's public, and quite damaging, media feud with Martin Luther King Jr. Though the FBI had been investigating King in a casual manner, following comments King made about the FBI's too friendly relationship with the local police force of Albany, Georgia in 1964, Hoover viciously went after King both publically and privately. For example, Hoover reacted to reports that King was receiving the Nobel Peace Prize by sending a number of letters to the White House and the State Department claiming that King did not have the correct character to win the award and publicly called King a "liar" to a group of reporters. In addition, FBI officials drafted a note to King urging him to commit suicide and sent it to King along with a copy of a surveillance tape of "bawdy remarks" and "people engaging in sex" purportedly from King's hotel room.[79] In keeping with the FBI's circular logic that anyone who criticized law enforcement deserved to be punished, Hoover saw King's statements

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[78] "Hoover Ridicules Retirement Talk, Defends FBI Role," *Washington Post,* 5 December 1964, A4.
[79] Kenneth O'Reilly, *Racial Matters*, 142-152.

against the FBI as proof that the man needed to be investigated and punished. Ironically, Hoover's stand against the respected leader led to an erosion of the FBI's credibility.

Hoover was not the only FBI official who declared the importance of maintaining the FBI's reputation; William C. Sullivan, the Assistant Director of the Bureau stated in a paper given at the 1966 North American Judges Association Conference, "The realization of success by law enforcement agencies in fulfilling their obligations depends largely on a single aspect of our national life -- respect for law by the people. This is the vital factor which must never change if we are to survive as a free nation."[80] Here Sullivan equates the respect for law and law enforcement directly with the freedom of the United States.

The idea that the respect for law, and by extension law enforcement, constituted a vital aspect of American values was another key piece of FBI culture and values. In discussing the FBI's actions during the COINTELPRO years, legal scholar Thomas Emerson said, "The Bureau tends to equate national security with the preservation of the traditional way of life….Any serious disagreement with the principles underlying this way of life is likely to be viewed as 'disloyalty,' and any conduct which seeks substantial alteration of its institutions is viewed as 'subversive.'"[81] An example of this can be seen in speech which Hoover gave to a conference on crime prevention in 1967. He said, "In a democracy such as ours, respect for law and order is one of the highest expressions of patriotism. Freedom cannot long survive where defiance and contempt are tolerated or condoned." [82] Later in this speech, Hoover specifically lists the Student for Democratic Society, civil rights organizations, and anyone who opposed the Vietnam War as those

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[80] Sullivan, "Communism, Law and Enforcement in America," 9.
[81] Thomas I. Emerson, "The Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bill of Rights," Federal Bureau of Investigation Conference Papers, 1971, Series AC312, Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University.
[82] Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, News Release, 8 June 1967. Records Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary.

whose behavior risked the freedom of American society. This kind of rhetoric becomes important to understand as it demonstrates the ways in which the FBI sought to delegitimize protest groups, and justify their own unethical acts, by claiming that certain forms of expression fall outside the boundaries of what is considered "American."

Another important aspect of J. Edgar Hoover's was the frequent connection he made between "discipline," "law and order," and patriotic ideals. He believed that a lack of discipline, not racism or poverty, constituted the real problem in the United States. "Crime and subversion," he said, "are formidable problems in the United States today because, and only because, there is a dangerous flaw in our Nation's moral armor. Self-indulgence -- the principle of pleasure before duty … is undermining those attributes of personal responsibility and self-discipline which are essential to our national survival."[83] In addition, Hoover often railed against "civil disobedience," calling it "a seditious slogan of gross irresponsibility" and those who espoused it as "mentally and emotionally immature." [84] Often in the same speeches, Hoover, without any sense of irony, honored the founding fathers. This blindness towards protest as a part of American history went so far that in the same speech, Hoover lauded a quotation on citizenship by Ralph Waldo Emerson while also blasting "civil disobedience." To Hoover, any protest, no matter how just the cause, was suspect and could led to "anarchy." It was proof that those protesting had no respect for law enforcement authority and fell outside of the FBI leader's idea of who an American citizen should be.

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[83] Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, News Release, 9 October 1962. Records Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary.
[84] Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, News Release, 19 October 1965. Records Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary.

Hoover specifically stated that this included the civil rights movement; "I am greatly concerned that certain racial leaders are doing a great disservice by suggesting that citizens need only obey the laws with which they agree. Such an attitude breeds disrespect for the law and even civil disorder and rioting."[85] Here Hoover again equates proper citizenship with law and order, without any consideration for whether the laws in question were moral or just. By narrowly defining "justice" as the obeying of written law, Hoover and others who worked for the FBI saw civil rights protestors, especially those who flouted social conventions, as threats to America. Due to this narrow vision, the FBI refused to consider the fact that the law of the United States often supported injustice, especially against the poor and those who were not middle-and-upper-class white Americans.

This narrow vision constituted only part of the reason for the abuses of the counterintelligence and domestic intelligence programs. Though motivated by their particularly narrow vision of what it meant to be an American, FBI officials and agents clearly knew that they violated their own purposed standards and ethics. In looking at the public statements of FBI officials, it is clear that FBI officials said one thing and did another. The FBI's Law Enforcement Officer's Pledge which appeared in several issues of the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* stated that, among other things, law enforcement officers should, "uphold the rights of every individual" and "avoid favoritism – race, creed and influence have no place in the scales of justice."[86] In 1958, the FBI Annual Report claimed that, "The traditions of thoroughness, impartiality and ethical conduct are

[85] Ibid.
[86] "Law Enforcement Officer's Pledge," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin,* February 1960, back cover.

zealously enforced at all times." The report went on to claim that the FBI did not "step beyond its carefully defined authority." [87]

In 1965, though FBI documents clearly reveal otherwise, Hoover still claimed that the FBI was not investigating civil rights groups. In a magazine interview, the Director stated, "The FBI does not investigate the legitimate activities of civil-rights groups, but from an intelligence standpoint it is concerned with determining the extent of any possible communist infiltration."[88] As the subsequent chapters will demonstrate, though the FBI did investigate communism, FBI agents and officials investigated people because of their class, race, and age, as well as the way they wore their hair or the language that they used.

Even by the FBI's own purported standards, those investigating "dissent" needed to be careful not to overstep their bounds. William C. Sullivan argued that, "It is the very essence of liberty that these rights be asserted in an orderly, lawful manner. Care must be exercised to protect the right of legitimate dissent at all times…. Freedom of dissent is a cherished heritage of our Nation. Steps must never be taken to curb or abridge it." [89] As the FBI actively sought to disrupt meetings and curtail the economic and educational opportunities of black activists and antiwar protestors, they did everything they could to "curb [and] abridge" these people's constitutional rights of assembly and speech. Perhaps, though for people like Assistant Director Sullivan, the key word here is "legitimate." FBI officials like Hoover and Sullivan often stated that members of groups like SNCC and SDS were not legitimate members of society and did not meet their

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[87] Annual Report, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1958, ii.
[88] "Communist Gains Among Youths - J. Edgar Hoover Reports," *U.S. News and World Report*, 1 November 1965, 6.
[89] Sullivan, "Communism, Law and Enforcement in America," 9.

definition of American because they advocated for social change. However, the FBI's mandate was not to determine which individuals deserved their constitutional rights and which did not. In addition, FBI documents reveal that unlike Assistant Director Sullivan's claims, the FBI certainly did not take "care" as FBI agents investigated and interfered with social movement groups.

As details about the counterintelligence programs came to light, many began to question the Bureau's actions and the insulated nature of the agency. By 1971, it became clear that Hoover's reputation and power were beginning to decrease. A *Washington Post* article reported the fact that Hoover's authority waned and that while Nixon and Attorney General John Mitchell still defended him in public, they hoped for his resignation.[90] Another newspaper story the same year reported that the Justice Department had admitted to a congressional committee that FBI Agents, "follow no 'specific, published, or regular guidelines' when they spy on civilians they suspect of being troublemakers."[91] Clearly, the license that had been granted to the FBI to be the safer and more professional option for fighting communism and subversion had backfired.

Several FBI Agents who looked back on the period defended the Bureau's domestic intelligence operations. Ingram said, “I want to compliment the Department of Justice. As you well know, in the seventies, everything turned around. With counter-intelligence programs, the Church committee, everyone else, the CIA, the FBI were all

[90] Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "Boss of FBI Knows Who's Boss," 2 June 1971, *Washington Post*, A19.
[91] Frank Van Piper, "Reveal FBI's Snoops Carry No Guidelines," 18 March 1971, *New York Daily News,* 48.

under attack for their investigations."[92] In stating this, Ingram did his best to defend the Bureau in light of his knowledge of these criticisms. In another oral history interview, without being asked by the interviewer, Williams spoke directly about the accusations of the FBI, "We didn't…we didn't do too much out of the way, down there, in the way of civil rights violations, but I'd just like to put that in if I could."[93] Clearly Williams felt that he needed to defend the Bureau; however, he does not deny them completely but says that they did not do "too much." This implies that some violations occurred but that Williams did not think they were serious in scope.

Another agent stated that he felt criticism of the FBI came not from legitimate concern over abuses of power, but simply as a result of political differences. Agent Richard H. Ash said, "There were people who had gripes and were trying to make political hay out of surfacing what they described as misdeeds of the FBI." Ash clearly felt that much of the reaction to COINTELPRO was politically motivated and that these allegations simply caused trouble without resulting in anything constructive.[94] However, for Ash to single out the political motivations of the Bureau's enemies seems like a poor defense as the counterintelligence programs themselves were clearly political in nature. In a letter to L. Patrick Gray in 1972, Ash also argued against the creation of a Directory's Advisory Committee made up of individuals outside the Bureau. Ash wrote, "The esteem of the FBI and public respect has been attained by our achievements and our record as an unbiased, independent, professional, efficient, apolitical agency. Our strength has been the acceptance of the over-all constituency, the grass roots, the heartland of American

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[92] Ingram, 22.
[93] Williams, 17.
[94] Richard H. Ash, Interviewed by Stanley A Pimentel, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 15 July 2004.

society." [95] Here Ash holds to the standard line of FBI rhetoric; the "heartland of American Society" must be defended, and only the FBI could defend it.

The directors that followed Hoover after his death in 1972 continued to defend the counterintelligence programs, and as will be explored in Chapter 4, domestic intelligence operations continued to occur long after the supposed official end of the program. In 1974, Director Clarence Kelley told the New York times that, "For the F.B.I. to have done less under the circumstances would have been an abdication of its responsibilities to the American people."[96]

However, some agents did talk about the fact that they felt the COINTELPRO programs created a problem for the Bureau. Though he was speaking about an earlier period in counterintelligence, when the FBI taped Martin Luther King Jr., Agent Thomas E. Bishop said, "I didn't approve of it and thought it was bad policy. And it would come back to haunt us, and really, it did."[97] Though he does not elaborate on his reason for these views, clearly Bishop was aware that the counterintelligence programs would be bad for the FBI's legacy as the premiere law enforcement agency.

Another former FBI agent, William W. Turner, stated the opinion that the FBI had no business being involved in counterintelligence at all. The agent stated, "On the face of it counterespionage and criminal investigation are as immiscible as oil and water. They demand different approaches, different degrees of sophistication, different techniques. The FBI is not capable of doing both competently. It should not be expected to." [98]

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[95] Ibid.
[96] John M. Crewdson, "Saxbe Says Top Officials Knew Something of F.B.I. Drive on Various Groups," *New York Times*, 19 November 1974, C27.
[97] Thomas E. Bishop, Interviewed by Clarence H. Campbell and Michael M. O'Brien, Society of Former Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 13 January 2004.
[98] Turner, "An Insider's View," 29.

Turner also stated that Hoover, because of his "cop" mentality, "oversimplified" issues and was unable to understand the "subtleties" necessary to successfully manage counterintelligence work. [99] This idea of oversimplification fits well with the argument that so many of the problems of the counterintelligence era were created by Hoover's narrow definition of what constituted a respectable American citizen.

As the following chapters will demonstrate, Turner's comments represent a true picture of the Bureau. Though FBI agents worked extremely hard, and most were honestly dedicated to stopping crime and defending America, the counterintelligence programs placed them in a position in which they enforced not the constitutionally and legally created law of the land, but a system which sought to surveill and punish non-criminal and benign behavior based on class, race, age, and forms of personal expression.

[99] Ibid., 36.

CHAPTER 2

BLACK EXTREMISTS AND DIE-HARD REDNECKS: RACE AND CLASS IN THE COUNTERINTELLIGENCE PROGRAMS

In 1970, the Buffalo, New York office of the Federal Bureau of Investigation wrote to the Director's office to discuss a counterintelligence proposal. The Buffalo office hoped the proposal would create public pressure against a high school teacher who was using the Black Panther newspaper as part of his Black History curriculum. The Buffalo office specifically stated that the manufactured letter should appear to be from a "black educated and concerned parent" and would be mailed to "appropriate responsible community leaders who, in turn, it is expected, would exert pressure and influence to eliminate any use of BPP literature at taxpayer's expense from being available in the Rochester School System." The proposed letter read as follows:

> Dear Sir:
> My son is a student at East High School, Rochester, N.Y. I am a long-time resident, home owner, and taxpayer of Rochester. I am proud of my family, our city and our school system. I make every effort to raise my family in a Christian manner and to help them become good citizens of our community. I want to be proud of my family and I want them to respect me. I want my children to have all the benefits of a good education that were not available to me. I write this letter because I think it is my civic duty and I want people to know about what I think is a bad situation. It is bad because it can influence my son in a way which is exactly the opposite of the way our son is being raised. I am talking about this Panther Party newspaper which preaches violence and hate that is available at

> East High School...I don't like the idea of spending our tax money for such trash that can poison the minds of our kids and possibly lead to more violence between the races. Our racial problems can be solved, but certainly not by reading the Black Panther Party newspaper.[100]

This letter demonstrates two vital points about the FBI's interaction with black protest groups like the Black Panthers. First, it demonstrates the FBI's level of animosity toward groups like the Panthers, and the resulting tactics they used to prevent the Black Panthers and those who valued their message from participating in their most constitutionally given rights, such as freedom of the press. Second, and more importantly for this discussion, it demonstrates what, exactly, the Bureau felt constituted a respectable member of the black community - middle-class, Christian, and civically minded - and the way in which the FBI tried to use this image in their fight against the Panthers.

In defining class, a number of factors must be considered, especially when looking at the FBI's counterintelligence programs. First, the most classic definition of class, that of levels of society divided by economic income, does come into play. In the letter above, the individual being portrayed is a "home owner" and "taxpayer" which suggests that the FBI's definition of class did in fact include how much money an individual had and what they chose to do with it. However, conceptions of class are much more complicated and include a number of social factors such as how a person behaves or the type of language they used. In the FBI's definition of "respectable" social status, one needed to be supportive of law enforcement and government authority. In addition, the FBI sometimes saw things such as intelligence and levels of violent behavior as indicative of a person's class status.

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[100] SAC, Buffalo to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 5 February 1970, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

This is not only important in understanding the FBI's interaction with class, it also important in understanding African-American definitions of class as well. As identified by historians like Victoria W. Wolcott, in her book *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit,* ideas of "racial uplift" often connected certain social behavior to class status.[101] Because African-American communities had little opportunity for economic advancement, appropriate social behavior could be considered as an equally, if not more important, marker of social class. Therefore, for the purposes of this discussion, the idea of "class" includes not only economic status but of social behavior as well.

The Bureau's rocky history with the civil rights movement started early and has been well documented by historians. For example, in *The Struggle for Black Equality,* Harvard Sitkoff discussed how the FBI refused to help control the violence directed at civil rights groups and discusses the COINTELPRO actions dedicated to disrupting civil rights organizations. Historian Kenneth O'Reilly examined the way that the Bureau targeted Martin Luther King Jr.[102] There is no doubt that the COINTELPRO programs had a negative effect on civil rights organizations and their members. There is also no doubt that racially based attitudes played a role in the organizations and individuals targeted by the FBI. However, in looking comparatively at the FBI's interaction with various groups including Black Panthers, SDS, and the Ku Klux Klan, it becomes clear that the FBI's attitude toward race evolved during the late 1960s and early 1970s and that in this period, class biases had as much, if not more, to do with the FBI's actions as race.

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[101] Victoria W. Wolcott, *Remaking Respectability: African American Women in Interwar Detroit,* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).
[102] Harvard Sitkoff. *The Struggle for Black Equality.* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993).

As discussed in the previous chapter, the FBI often claimed that it was purely an investigative agency as a way of justifying their lack of action in civil rights cases. Hoover stated publically that the FBI could not use its resources to protect civil rights workers because the protection of individual citizens fell outside their investigative mandate. Hoover said, "There have been demands made upon the FBI for protection of many civil-rights workers who have gone into some of the Southern States. All we can do in an alleged civil-rights violation is gather the facts from witnesses, victims, suspects and others -- then report these facts to the Department of Justice."[103] Clearly, this was a rhetorical device. The FBI had authority to arrest anyone violating a federal law and in the absence of Federal law breaking, had ample influence with local and state police departments. It is entirely possible, that had the FBI made protecting civil rights workers an institutional priority, it could have significantly improved the safety of those participating in civil rights protests.

Hoover further claimed that the FBI could not act as "bodyguards" for civil rights workers because "our agents can not be used as instruments for social reform."[104] This statement, while still something of a rhetorical shield, does get at the heart of how the FBI saw themselves in relation to the civil rights movement. As a defender of the middle-class white status quo, they felt they could not be expected to protect or defend those who sought to change the social, political, and economic realities of the country. In the 1950s and into the early 1960s, this included almost all civil rights groups; however, as these groups and their goals became more accepted by that white middle class, FBI efforts shifted from civil rights in a broad sense to targeting black radicals.

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[103] "Interview with J. Edgar Hoover," *U.S. News and World Report*, 21 December 1964, 36.
[104] "Hoover Ridicules Retirement Talk, Defends FBI Role," *Washington Post,* 5 December 1964, A4.

Once the Civil Rights Act passed, Hoover continued to be resistant to involving the Bureau in civil rights cases. In his 1966 testimony before the House appropriations committee, Hoover simply claimed that the FBI did not have the resources to enforce the new law.[105] However, the violence level in southern states such as Mississippi did merit Bureau attention and in 1964, it opened the Jackson, Mississippi office to address these problems. This did not necessarily reflect a radical shift in FBI policies or culture however; instead, it continued to reflect the FBI's enforcement of an orderly status-quo society free from individuals who challenged law and order.

Agents in the field echoed Hoover's idea that the FBI did not have jurisdiction to protect civil rights workers. Agent James W. Awe said, "It was not within the Bureau's jurisdiction to provide protection. And we weren't in the position to provide protection. Maybe a hundred Agents in the area, we couldn't provide protection. That's a local matter. And that was one of the initial problems, I guess...is that there was a breakdown in law enforcement."[106] Awe noted that the FBI used its influence to remove from office Klan members who worked in local law enforcement, and that their removal helped create "good cooperation between local and Federal officials." Awe's focus on restoring order and good cooperation between agencies reinforces the idea that for the FBI much of their work in civil rights cases was done restore order rather than out of any desire to defend the civil rights movement.

One of the most interesting agent accounts of this era comes from Agent Billy Bob Williams, whose time with the Jackson, Mississippi office reflects the complex

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[105] "Testimony of John Edgar Hoover, Director Federal Bureau of Investigation Before the House Subcommittee on Appropriations," 1966, Records Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary.

[106] James W. Awe, interviewed by E. Avery Rollins, Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Memorial Museum, 3 November 2005.

character of FBI interactions with the civil rights movement. Williams indicated that a native Mississippian supervisor basically assigned him to handle anything having to do with the civil rights workers. Williams said, "He did not care for the civil rights workers, and he wasn't alone."[107] Even though Williams believed he could pass for a white Southerner because of his name and his parent's southern origins, he found the strict segregation of the South disconcerting. He describes an incident where he tried to shake the hand of a black business owner, and was later told by his partner that such a situation "made everybody uncomfortable."[108] Though Williams had the cultural street smarts needed to blend into white southern culture, he still found the strict segregation quite foreign to his upbringing in New Mexico where whites were the minority.

Also, Williams took the FBI mandate to prevent violence seriously. After the brutal killings of two local black men, Williams went to the Jackson office to request more help. According to Williams, he told one of his supervisors, "We're losing the battle down there…And somebody's going to get hurt pretty quick if we don't get a handle on this." In reaction to this, the supervisor requested that a number of agents be transferred to Natchez to help deal with the problem. Williams's story demonstrates two important aspects of the FBI's attitude toward racial violence, especially in the South. First, agents were individuals, and though the requirements of their job to some degree dictated their actions, their own personal opinions could effect how they did their job. Second, it shows the complicated relationship the FBI had with the civil rights movement: on one hand, the FBI saw the civil rights movement as the troublemakers causing the violence in the South, but on the other hand they, as enforcers of middle-class

[107] Ibid, 24.
[108] Ibid, 32.

peace and tranquility, felt a responsibility to control the violence occurring there even if they did not agree with the cause of civil rights. This idea of controlling violence and maintaining order is key to understanding the FBI's relationship with protest movements; any group, white or black, whom the FBI perceived as threatening law and order deserved to be surveilled and punished.

As the civil rights movement evolved, so did the FBI statements and attitudes regarding civil rights groups. In the 1968 Annual Report under the heading "Racial Strife and Rioting," the FBI again declared that it could not provide protection for civil rights workers and that it could only gather and distribute information on civil rights organizations and the violence against them. It then stated that this information pointed to a "growing militancy on the part of black extremists." The use of the word militant, both in FBI rhetoric and for the purposes of this discussion, requires analysis. The word does connote aggressive and unrelenting behavior, and as used by Hoover clearly suggests physical danger and violence in violation of the law. However, the word can also indicate an individual or group who is verbally and/or politically dogmatic and inflexible, and therefore whose behavior falls within the law. The slipperiness of the term may indeed be the very reason it was so often used in FBI documents, as it suggested that individuals might be dangerous without having to actual spell out if and how they were breaking the law.

To further discuss the FBI's definition of "militant" as violent, Hoover pointed to the rioting that occurred after the death of Martin Luther King Jr. as proof of this "destructive action and guerilla warfare." The report also declared that, "Certain organizations claiming to be civil rights groups but which in fact preach hatred for the

white race, demand immunity from laws, and advocate violence constitute a serious threat to our country's internal security."[109] The pairing of these two ideas, that the FBI could not protect civil rights demonstrators and the idea that civil rights protests were quickly becoming a danger to security, clearly served as a rationale for the FBI actions in investigating and punishing black protest groups who fell outside the FBI's definition of legitimate protest. In addition, the rhetoric used by Hoover, in calling rioters "guerillas" and black activists "militants," demonstrates his efforts to imply that there were true enemies to be faced. Ironically, the lack of security and protection for African American citizens such as Dr. King contributed to the riots Hoover decried.

While there is no question that racial views affected FBI practices and rhetoric through the entire period under study, the FBI did slowly become more accepting of the middle-class nonviolent civil rights movement and of the black middle class as a whole. This eventually led the FBI to commit, at least on some level, to investigating and prosecuting those guilty of racially motivated crime. John Doar and Dorothy Landsberg, who worked in the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department, reinforce the idea that the FBI's view of the civil rights movement evolved in this period. In a conference paper in 1971, they initially had a difficult time working with FBI investigators. They wrote that in one batch of cases from 1961:

> A singular characteristic of 34 FBI reports was that we got exactly the information we asked for -- no more, no less. In conducting the interrogation, the FBI agents did not use their knowledge of the [voting] registration process although most of them were registered voters in the states where they were conducting interviews. The specificity of the request itself, and the characteristic FBI practice of confining interviews to items requested, caused two disadvantages. First, it was impossible to predict, and therefore to specify in a request, all the types of practices which Negroes might be subjected to in a given

[109] Annual Report, Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1968.

> county. In such cases the Bureau's investigation would fail to bring out those practices.[110]

They also discuss another incident in which the FBI failed to ask important questions or collect needed evidence in five specific cases of violence against SNCC members. This information supports the idea that in the early 1960s, the FBI remained uncommitted to solving civil rights related cases.

However, Doar and Landsberg reported that 1964 marked a turning point in the FBI's attitude toward civil rights investigations. In that year, the Jackson office opened after the death of the three civil rights workers.

> The agents who were brought into the state to investigate ... were appalled by the breakdown in local law enforcement and the rise in terrorist activity. They were ashamed of the Bureau's prior performance, and I suspect, reported their dismay to Mr. Hoover."[111]

When these agents, like Billy Bob Williams, arrived in the state and witnessed the level of violence taking place against civil rights workers, the FBI began to be more diligent in their investigations.

Doar and Landsberg then provide multiple examples of the way the FBI, after 1964, effectively investigated civil rights cases. In summarizing their experience with the Bureau, Doar and Landsberg stated, "In evaluating the FBI's performance in protecting the right to vote, let us be sure we do not transfer our impatience with America itself, onto the FBI, simply because of its visibility -- or our prejudices -- or because we feel more comfortable criticizing a bureaucracy than criticizing ourselves."[112] Doar and Landsberg attribute this change in FBI to a number of governmental pressures from

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[110] John Doar and Dorothy Landsberg, "Performance of the FBI in Investigating Violations of Federal Laws Protecting the Right to Vote -- 1960-1967" (paper presented at the Federal Bureau of Investigation Conference 1971) Series AC312, Mudd Manuscript Library, Princeton University, 8.
[111] Ibid., 47.
[112] Ibid., 61.

outside the Bureau and to the escalating violence of the Ku Klux Klan. As FBI agents, especially those from outside the South like Agent Williams, viewed the outright crimes and horrific violence being perpetrated by the Klan, it must have been easier to begin using the straightforward law enforcement labels of “criminal” and “victim” to define the Klan and civil rights workers rather than seeing the situation as a complex cultural conflict. While this was in keeping with existing FBI values, in choosing to protect black and white civil rights workers over white Ku Klux Klan members, the FBI made a stand that behavior demonstrated by the Klan constituted a greater breach with the ideals of American citizenship than the nonviolent protests of civil rights workers.

As the civil rights movement gained support from middle-and-upper-class white Americans in the mid-1960s, the rhetoric of FBI leaders began to evolve. For example, in a 1964 speech to the Society of Pennsylvania Women, Hoover stated that the civil rights movement had "never been, dominated by the communists" and suggested that both “Negro and white” were concerned about the threat of communism. On its face, this is simply a quotation about communism. However, Hoover is drawing a line with communists on one side and legitimate Americans on the other, and at least rhetorically allowing that African Americans could be on the side of those who were defending American freedoms from the threat of communism.

This same speech also demonstrates a shift away from identifying “troublemakers” based on communism and race and toward identifying subversives by their class and behavior. Though Hoover uses "communism" as the dangerous specter in this speech, he singled out the "brick-throwing rabble, or the raucous hoodlums" who had "turned orderly protests into nightmares of violence and bloodshed." This change in

rhetoric not only suggested that nonviolent groups could be “orderly” which is nearly a glowing description coming from Hoover, but also allowed Hoover to put forward the idea that the groups the FBI continued to investigate were not civil rights groups per se, but only the communist, subversive, criminal, etc. elements who used these groups to their own purposes. [113] In addition, when talking about these "raucous hoodlums," Hoover accused them of advocating a "doctrine of hatred." By claiming that anyone who became disorderly at a civil rights protest advocated hatred, Hoover turned rhetoric of the civil rights movement on its head, making the black protestors the creators of the "doctrine of hatred" rather than the victims of it. In addition, Hoover’s emphasis on violent behavior points to the FBI’s increasing scrutiny of those groups whom they considered militant.

With the possible exception of the Students for a Democratic Society, there was no group of “raucous hoodlums" whom the FBI vilified more than the Black Panthers. The FBI official description of the Panthers emphasized the fact that the group was run by individuals with criminal records, advocated the killing of police officers, and had links to the communist party.[114] It is no surprise that the Bureau targeted the Panthers so heavily. For the FBI, the Panthers embodied the ultimate combination of attributes which placed them well outside the Bureau’s definition of what it meant to be an "American" young, black, disorderly, and lower class. While there is no doubt that race played a factor in the FBI's view of the Black Panthers, it is also clear that conceptions of class strongly affected the course of the counterintelligence programs.

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[113] Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, News Release, 12 December 1964. Records Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary.
[114] SAC, New York to Director, FBI, Airtel, 1 February 1971, Records Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary.

The Black Panther Party and its role in regard to the history of the civil rights movement is a source of debate for historians of the 20th Century. As historian Robert O. Self discusses in his "The Black Panthers and the Long Civil Rights Era," early historiography and commentary of the 1960s civil rights movement suggested that the Panthers "embodied the wrong turn taken by activists after 1965 toward a violence, bravado and radicalism incapable of redeeming the nation."[115] However, other historians such as Nikhil Pal Singh have placed the Panthers in a "shared radical tradition" that encompasses the larger timeline of the civil rights movement from the 1930s to the 1970s. [116] This radical tradition stems from the question of whether African Americans should seek inclusion in the social, economic, and political systems of the United States or whether black activists should fight for changes in that system.[117] The Panthers, like Marcus Garvey and to some extent W.E.B. Dubois, argued for changes rather than inclusion. As a result, this dissertation also sees the Panthers as part of a longer timeline of black activism that sought to secure political and economic rights for black Americans. This is not purely out of a desire to prevent the historical marginalization of the Panthers, which the FBI itself sought to do, but also to see the evolution of the FBI's attitude toward and actions against various racially based groups.

The Black Panthers emerged from a frustration on the part of many activists who had been part of earlier groups. After losing faith in the efficacy of nonviolent protest, Stokely Carmichael pushed SNCC in the direction of advocating direct action and armed self-defense and worked to create Alabama's first all-black political party, which came to

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[115] Robert O. Self, "The Black Panther Part and the Long Civil Rights Era," in *In Search of the Black Panther Party: New Perspectives On a Revolutionary Movement* ed. Jama Lazerow and Yohuru Williams (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 15.
[116] Ibid., 16.
[117] Ibid., 23.

be known as the Black Panther Party because of its use of the animal as an icon.[118] Shortly afterward in May 1966, SNCC elected Carmichael, not yet 25 years old, to be the group's president. As president of SNCC, Carmichael began to recognize the usefulness of Black Nationalism as an organizational tool and advocate ties with Third World revolutionaries.[119]

Later that year during a protest march, Carmichael gave a speech publicly introducing the idea of black power, "This is the twenty-seventh time that I've been arrested. I ain't going to jail no more. The only way we gonna stop them white men from whippin' us is to take over. What we are gonna start sayin' now is Black Power!"[120] Though Carmichael later clarified that the focus of his statement was black political power, many within the civil rights movement and in the national media criticized the statement as an indication that he advocated violence. Martin Luther King Jr. also spoke out against the slogan warning that "grave consequences" were likely to occur if the movement did not maintain its dedication to nonviolence.[121]

In October 1966, another group in Oakland California, led by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, took on the Black Panther symbol to become the Black-Panther Party for Self-Defense. The group initially focused on armed self-defense to protect blacks from the very real threat of white violence, especially police violence. However, those goals would later expand to advocating for better economic and educational opportunities for African Americans.

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[118] Peniel E. Joseph. *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour: a Narrative History of Black Power in America* (New York: Henry Holt & Company, 2006), 127-129.
[119] Ibid., 131.
[120] Ibid., 142.
[121] "Dr. King Deplores Black Power Bid." *New York Time,* June 21, 1966, 30.

The Panthers also created what they called the "The Ten-Point Program" which emphasized "power to determine the destiny of our black community," and stated that they wanted the "capitalist" government and system to provide the things that had been taken from that black community – things like employment, housing, education, and justice. The Ten-Point Program also called for blacks to be exempt from military service and release of blacks from prison due to the injustices of the political system.

This incarnation of the Black Panthers offered Carmichael a leadership position in the group in December 1967, after Huey P. Newton was arrested for the murder of a police officer.[122] However, Carmichael's relationship with the Oakland based Panthers was rocky and after several disagreements he distanced himself from the Black Panther Party.

However short his association with the Panthers, in his autobiography, Carmichael discussed why the Panthers became such a target for police forces, including the FBI. "

> Their theatrical militance and high visibility would make them the approved target of every big-city police force they came up against. What, a black street gang with politics? No way, José! We can't have that!"[123]

As Carmichael argues, it was not just the threat of violence the Black Panthers embodied that worried the police, it was the fact that those individuals sought to be part of the political process. In essence, they wanted their agenda to become an acceptable part of what it meant to be American.

The FBI counter intelligence programs against "Black Nationalist Hate Groups" had specific goals. In an April 1968 FBI document, it listed four goals of them:

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[122] Joseph, *Waiting 'Til the Midnight Hour,* 206.
[123] Stokely Carmichael with Ekwueme Michael Thelwell, *Ready for Revolution: The Life and Struggles of Stokely Carmichael [Kwame Ture]* (New York: Scribner, 2003), 664.

> 1) Prevention of a coalition of militant BNG [Black Nationalist Group] 2) Prevention of the rise of a 'Messiah' who might be able to unify or electrify a BNG movement 3) Prevent violence on the part of BNG 4) Prevent militant BNG and leaders from gaining respectability by discrediting them to responsible Negro groups, to the white community, to 'liberals' who may possess vestiges of sympathy for them.

It is important to emphasize the fact that of these four goals, only one has any connection with the FBI's responsibility to investigate those involved in federal crime, and that even the goal to "prevent violence on the part of the BNG" indicates that the FBI saw it as their right to police any hint of violence by groups like the Panthers, even if it fell outside their jurisdiction. Even this "prevention" indicates a mindset of a pre-emptive strike and not the investigation and prosecution of an existing crime.

Even more telling is the fact that the FBI's other three goals are all attempts by the FBI to police a social movement group for noncriminal behavior. The FBI wanted to punish any attempt by these groups to form associations with other groups, any attempt by these groups to create strong leadership, and perhaps most important for this discussion, prevent groups like the Black Panthers "from gaining respectability." Because the FBI saw "respectability" as one of the key pieces of being an American citizen, they actively sought to control who and what white middle-class society considered respectable. To their minds, the "troublemakers" of groups like SNCC and the Black Panthers fell outside their definition, and therefore, it was essential to discredit these groups, especially in front of the "respectable" community the FBI felt they represented.

The other essential point this quotation illustrates is that, at least by 1968, the FBI seemed willing to include "responsible Negro groups" as part of the middle class that they represented. As middle-and-upper-class blacks became more acceptable in white

society, the FBI seemed to be willing to expand their definition of respectability to include certain members of the African American community. This willingness indicates the fact that the leaders and agents of the FBI were willing to include blacks as long as they were middle-class and behaved "responsibly."

While it is clear that the rhetoric surrounding well-behaved, respectable blacks has echoes of paternalism and Jim Crow, it should be noted that the FBI expected this sort of behavior and loyalty from every person who wanted to claim American citizenship. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the FBI was equally zealous in punishing middle-and-upper-class white students who crossed the boundaries of what the Bureau felt was respectable.

The Bureau used a number of tactics against the Panthers, including the usual writing of anonymous letters and cultivating informants from within the group, but sometimes took things a step further. The Bureau actively sought to prevent the distribution of the Black Panther newspaper and other literature, and the New Haven office of the FBI made the even more heinous suggestion that the food being donated for Black Panther use (potentially for the Panther's children's breakfast program) be poisoned in a manner that while not lethal, would make people sick.

The FBI also developed an extensive informant program, and FBI officials bragged about the "dissension" caused within the Panthers by the use of these tactics. "In the present interviews with purged member...he had advised that members are continually suspicious of each other and quite security conscious. . . . It is therefore suggested that [redacted] be targeted in an effort to the false impression that he is an FBI informant by

placing stories with selected existing informants."[124] The FBI specifically stated that the most suspicious individuals had become those who asked a lot of questions or who seemed to do more than they were assigned. The FBI likely intended to target the most active individuals and would have been invested in making members with greater initiative out to be informants.

The Panthers were very aware of the policing and punitive actions taken against them by the FBI and other law enforcement agencies. In 1969, the *Daily World* reported, "The degree and kind of federal involvement in the persecution of the Panthers is clearly signaled in FBI director J. Edgar Hoover's description of the Black Panther Party... 'Leaders and representatives of the Black Panther party travel extensively all over the United states preaching their gospel of hate and violence.'" The article also reported that the Justice Department admitted to the existence of a "special task force" to study the Panthers and then stated, "A Panther spokesman in New York said that 'the harassment we normally receive from the pigs (police) is intensified,' as a result of the federal probes."[125] The Panthers clearly knew that law enforcement agencies like the FBI were targeting them. When Roscoe Lee of the New Haven Black Panther Party spoke of the FBI and the Justice Department, he said, "They're going to try to run us to the ground and kill us." Lee also said that when the Justice Department labeled the Panthers as "subversive," it was a "declaration of war on the party." This was a war, in some ways in terms of real violence, but also over who could be legitimate participants in American citizenship and which group's priorities, the Panthers or the FBI, would win out in the

[124] SAC, New Orleans to Director, FBI, Airtel, 11 February 1971, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[125] "Panther Leader Snatched by FBI", 21 August 1969, *Daily World,* 3.

hearts and minds of Americans, black and white, middle and lower-class. In some ways, if the war was about long-term respectability, both the Panthers and the FBI lost.

Panther statements especially decried the FBI's use of informants to try and stir up trouble for the group. In 1969, the Panthers released a statement that spoke to their anger over these tactics:

> The Black Panther Party, existing as a true representative of the most down trodden class of poor black and oppressed peoples living in the confines of this racist, exploitive [sic], decadent America, comes forth to denounce those provocateur agents, kooks, and avaricious fools who found their way into the membership...These conspirators and opportunists who violate the rules and principles of the Black Panther Party have acted foolishly and raised confusion by acts of banditry.[126]

In using words like "banditry," the Panthers sought to depict the law enforcement informers as the villains and criminals and also attempted to reinforce the way they saw themselves as "representatives of the most downtrodden class." This conception of class was the one thing that the Panthers and the FBI had in common. They both saw the social problems of the nation in terms of class. However, the FBI saw the problem as low-class "troublemakers" at the heart of the issue, while the Panthers viewed it as a result of "exploitative, decadent America."

While it is undeniable that racism, on both the individual and institutional level, played a large role in the counterintelligence programs, as the nonviolent civil rights movement became increasingly acceptable to white middle-class America, class and respectability began to play an ever greater role in the FBI's actions against "black nationalist groups." When it came to ideas of class and community, the FBI sought to cast groups like the Panther and SNCC in one of two ways, either as the "troublemakers"

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[126] Black Panther Press Release, Ministry of Information Bulletin No. 9, 6 February 1969, Black Panthers, January-June 1968, Records Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 1951-1975, Subject Files.

not worthy of the attention and support of the middle-class community, black or white, *or* as traitors to the impoverished black community through their "lavish" lifestyle.

The FBI also used sexuality in a number of ways to both discredit and destabilize the Panthers. One attitude of the Bureau that is reflected in its rhetoric is the idea that the Black Panthers violated the Bureau's perceived ideas about sexual morality and that this behavior marked them as being lower-class. For some FBI officials and agents, the lack of "respectability" among members of the Black Panthers, and lower-class black Americans in general, is clear in a 1969 memo from the Los Angeles office to the Director's Office, which cautioned against field offices disseminating information about the perceived lack of morality of the Black Panthers to community leaders. It reads:

> It is felt that to anonymously provide the information to clergy, businesses or educators in the black community would serve no end, as immorality, infidelity, and common-law marriages among the lower class Negroes are commonplace occurrences, perhaps to the extent of being the norm. To disseminate such information within the BPP [Black Panther Party] would be fruitless, as not only is there no stigma attached to sexual promiscuity, but it is expected and even honorable conduct for a true 'revolutionary... it would not be productive to apprise white sympathizers and supporters of the BPP of such conduct as, again, there is no stigma attached, and in all probability, they are both aware of it and/or indulge in similar activity to an equal degree.[127]

The Los Angeles office felt that "lower class" blacks were the type to join a group like the Panthers. As such, no claim to respectability could serve as a motivating factor for these "lower class" individuals, even the leadership among them, to think badly of the Panthers. Interestingly enough, for however damning and stereotypical this comment is, it demonstrates that the FBI, or at least officials of the Los Angeles office, understood that choices in behavior and lifestyle could have "revolutionary" meaning for members of groups like the Panthers. In his book *I Am A Man!: Race, Manhood, and the Civil Rights*

[127] SAC, Los Angeles to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 10 October 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

Movement, historian Steve Estes discusses the fact that breaking the sexual boundaries traditionally dictated by white men could be a revolutionary act for the men of the Black Panthers.[128] However, while the FBI recognized that sexual behavior could be part of "revolutionary" behavior, they still saw this behavior primarily as an indication that Black Panthers and other perceived lower-class backs were beyond the bounds of respectability.

The FBI also publicized incidents, real or fictitious, of sexual relationships between black men and white women, and believed that even individuals from within the Panthers would see sexual activity between a black man and a white woman as a source of conflict. The New Haven office proposed sending an anonymous letter to the Black Panther National Headquarters claiming that a member of the New Haven chapter was, "skimming money from BPP contributions and having sex relations with white girls."[129] Though the New Haven office does not reveal why they thought this allegation of sexual relationships with white women would cause trouble, they clearly believed that by promoting the idea they could cause trouble for this individual. They also took the time to point out that while they could not confirm that the individual was in fact stealing from the Panther organizations, they did know that the man was having sexual relationships with white women.

The Director's office also told the Boston office to send a similar memo to the Panthers claiming to be from someone in SDS. This telegram was to read, "The June twenty-eight issue of 'The Black Panther' read with disgust, especially after hearing your

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[128] Steve Estes, *I Am A Man!; Race, Manhood, and the Civil Rights Movement* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 159-160.
[129] SAC, New Haven to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 27 February 1970, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

speaker concerning the 'use' of white women by Panthers. Your cause doomed because of animal reactions. SDS will not be able to operate within your group in view of your attitude toward female members."[130] These tactics reveal the intense level of scrutiny that the FBI focused on the Panthers, in that even their intimate relationships were the subject of FBI reports and conjecture. They also demonstrate the ways in which the FBI used time worn sexual, racial, and ideological stereotypes about sexual relationships between black men and white women to further its own goals.

The FBI also particularly used sexual metaphors in the fake leaflets and letters they created in order to degrade the image of the Panthers. One leaflet, which the Bureau labeled as "obscene," featured two rats having sex with the one on top marked as a member of the SDS offshoot, the Progressive Labor Party, and the one on the bottom being marked SDS. However, at the bottom of the leaflet was the caption, "the Panthers is under both of them" and in large letters, "Screw the Panthers" and "Screw the Movement."[131] The FBI clearly hoped to anger the Panthers, and to create a specific attack on the masculinity of the Panthers, by suggesting both that they were in a passive female position to their potential white allies and/or that they were homosexual.

In addition, the Bureau also took the opportunity to exploit the natural tensions of most romantic and sexual relationships in order to create even more difficulties within the movement. In one instance, the New York office targeted a woman working in the Black Panther headquarters whom they stated was "one of the hardest working girls, who

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[130] SAC, Boston to Director, FBI, Airtel, 9 July 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[131] SAC, New York to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 2 October 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

displays intelligence on the job."[132] This young woman had become annoyed with leader Bobby Seale's alleged relationships with "mostly teen-aged girls." The FBI stated that it would look for opportunities to exploit the situation to make this female member of the Panthers "disillusioned." Though the Bureau redacted several portions of the document, the New York office revealed that they did not know if this woman's annoyance of the situation was a result of her own attraction to Seale or other considerations, but in either case, they lamented the fact that "so far there has not appeared any point where this could be further exploited."

The FBI also targeted married couples, hoping to use the suspicion of affairs to cause a split between the couple. In one incident, the Bureau targeted Eldridge and Kathleen Cleaver. They wrote, "KATHLEEN appears to have a genuine feeling for ELDRIDGE and if it could be shown he was interested in another female, a split might ensue. There have been indications of 'spats' between the two, but nothing definite as to the cause is known."[133] In these cases, the FBI was clearly looking for opportunities to use any difficulty in a romantic relationship as a way of creating dissent within the Black Panthers.

The FBI also promoted the idea that the connection between the Panthers and white protest groups exposed black women to the advances of white men and that it led to connections with white homosexual men. In an anonymous letter, the FBI created a fictional Howard University student who wrote, "How can a Black man relate to anything when he is surrounded by a wild bunch of honkey queers and bearded goats trying to

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[132] SAC, San Francisco to Director, FBI, Airtel, 21 April 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[133] SAC, San Francisco to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 10 October 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

make out with black sisters? No real black revolutionary organization would place a sister in such a position and no black man should allow such a situation to pass unchallenged."[134] In this case, the FBI was trying to appeal to an idea of black masculinity that required the protection of black women. From the FBI point-of-view, this was seen as the most "respectable" form of black masculinity, and the FBI clearly felt that by appealing to these ideas it might be able to convince black men, especially college-educated black men, to withdraw their support from the organization.

As indicated by the quote above, the FBI also suggested that respectable black men should not be involved with a group that associated with "honkey queers." Homosexuality definitely became an issue that the FBI was highly interested in, especially as some Panther leaders advocated the support of women's and gay rights initiatives. For example, the San Francisco office sought permission from the Director's office to write letters to Panther leader David Hilliard alleging that Huey Newton's stand in support of gay rights "relates to his prison term" and in a later suggestion that Newton's beliefs were "unmanly and not 'revolutionary.'"[135] The Bureau intended these letters to look like they came from Black Panther supporters and other community members. Other offices also wanted to promote the idea that Newton was homosexual, in spite of his "female liaison[s]."

The idea that accusations of homosexuality could disrupt the Panthers was a sound one. Historian Steve Estes discusses the fact that different ideas over how to respond to homosexuality and gay rights did create problems in the Panther organization.

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[134] SAC, Washington Field Office to Director, FBI, Aitel, 11 January 1971, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[135] SAC, San Francisco to Director, FBI, Airtel, 31 August 1970, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

Estes states that though the early years of the Black Power movement benefited from the contributions of gay men, both black and white, the "masculinist liberation" ideology of the Panthers in the late 1960s "encouraged anti-gay rhetoric and sentiment."[136] By accusing various Panthers of homosexual behavior, the FBI clearly hoped to discredit them within the movement. In addition, the FBI is suggesting that these leaders were beyond respectability by participating in homosexual behavior, which at the time was considered outside the bounds of white, middle-class society.

Though the FBI used these kinds of tactics, to some extent, in all of the counterintelligence operations, the Bureau's interest in using the dynamics of sexual and romantic relationships to create tension is more prevalent in documents relating to black protest groups. Though it is not entirely clear why this was the case, it suggests a number of possibilities. First, this fascination with black sexuality may be one way in which white male agents used sexuality as a weapon against black male activists. Historian Chad Heap discusses white male interest in black sexuality in his book *Slumming: Sexual and Racial Encounters in American Nightlife, 1885-1940*. Heap argues that white, especially white male, fascination with black sexuality, "offered numerous occasions to take advantage of the supposed freedoms of black nightlife while simultaneously reinforcing a sense of white superiority."[137] This feeling of superiority may also have made FBI agents and officials feel that because they considered these individuals outside the bounds of respectability, they were not entitled to the same respect and privacy as other American citizens.

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[136] Estes, *I Am a Man,* 162.
[137] Chad Heap, *Slumming: Sexual and Racial Encounters in American Nightlife, 1885-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 191.

While the FBI felt that these lower-class individuals were beyond help, they clearly believed that the middle-and-upper-class community, both black and white, could be appealed to for help in combating the Panthers. The Director's office wrote to the Baltimore office and stated that it felt that Chambers of Commerce and "other socially conscious organizations" might be able to help in countering the work of "black extremists." They ordered various offices, including Baltimore, to submit letters with "observations as to how the Chamber of Commerce (nation and state) can make a worthwhile contribution within the law enforcement context through its associations and activities among citizens, both black and white, and through businesses in ghetto areas or otherwise."[138] This suggests that for the FBI even a business in a "ghetto neighborhood" could be respectable if it was a member of a middle-and-upper-class organization like the Chamber of Commerce. In addition, the FBI clearly felt that these types of organizations would be willing to see the Panthers and other black protest groups as a problem to be dealt with. This meant that the FBI saw middle-class blacks as a potential ally in defeating the Panthers, and likely to be part of "respectable" society.

The FBI also specifically sought out opportunities to brand the Panthers as traitors to lower-class blacks. The Minneapolis office wanted to distribute a news clipping about two Panthers who were involved in robbing an elderly couple to the Black Panther Party with a fictitious note that said, "To Black Panther Officers I read a couple times your paper in which you tell how your going to help our community in citys and how you is agian robbin by the Panthers again the Poor. This clippin I'm sending ain't going to help us poor blacks one bit and if I ever catch one of your guys sellin papers round here again

[138] Director, FBI to SAC, Baltimore, unknown document type, 21 October 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

watch out."[139] In another example, a memo to the Director the Los Angeles office observed, "It is felt that where sympathy for the Panther program has grown it is usually because the intentions expressed are popular in the ghetto community." To solve this problem, the LA office suggested that a rumor be created that the leaders of the Panthers took "advantage of the ghettos" and were "stealing from the party and their 'Brothers.'" The express purpose of this tactic was to "promote greater factionalism and dissension."[140]

This example also points to another reason why the FBI wanted to fuel class tensions in the black community, not only did it cause dissension between the community and the Panthers, but it created problems within the Panthers as well, especially between Panther leadership and the members of the organization.[141] In a 1968 message, the Director's office stated that "consideration should be given as to how factionalism can be created between local leaders as well as national leaders and how BPP organizational efforts can be neutralized."[142] The FBI also distributed cartoons which suggested that the Panther leadership exploited their own "rank and file members" and were specifically designed to "further differences" between the members and the leadership.[143]

One key method used by the FBI to fuel class tensions within the Panthers consisted of promoting the idea that Panther leaders lived in luxury while ordinary members remained in poverty. The Director's office wrote the Seattle office that,

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[139] SAC, Minneapolis to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 10 March 1970, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C. Original spelling retained from document.
[140] SAC, Los Angeles to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 1 July 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[141] For a thorough discussion of this topic see O'Reilly, *Racial Matters.*
[142] Director, FBI to San Francisco, unknown document type, 30 September 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[143] SAC, San Diego to Director, FBI, Airtel, 27 February 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

"Comments about leaders' new cars, new clothes, and living style can effectively neutralize them with the rank and file membership. It is also valuable to show that BPP leaders are little dictators, interested in power for its own sake and offer nothing constructive to the negro community."[144] In the minds of the FBI, this tactic proved effective. In a teletype to the Director in 1971 the San Francisco office said, "Rank and file within the party have been disillusioned by recent publicity concerning [Huey] Newton's high standard of living ... The above developments are attributable to the Bureau's coordinated counterintelligence program"[145]

To add insult to injury, the FBI took this tactic a step further, targeting activist leader Stokely Carmichael with a series of rumors that not only claimed he was a government informant, but that as an informant, he was identifying "racial militants" for the government so they could be denied government employment and benefits. Moreover, the rumor claimed that he was "being rewarded greatly by the government for his efforts which permits him to...live lavishly."[146] Again, the idea that Carmichael was "living lavishly" suggested that he had betrayed the impoverished members of the black community.

These tactics had not only ramifications for the Panthers as a group but for the individuals as well. Stokely Carmichael wrote about the personal attacks the FBI leveled against him:

> The FBI had been shadowing me for years, so that was nothing new. But what I was now seeing was of a different order: the evidence -- rather the effects -- of all

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[144] Director, FBI to SAC, Seattle, unknown document type 4 November 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[145] San Francisco to Director, Teletype, 4 March, 1971, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[146] SAC, WFO to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 9 July 1963, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

> this covert action, this destabilization, was visible in every Panther chapter I visited. A mood of growing paranoia, an air of interpersonal mistrust and suspiciousness. But at this time, I of course had no real idea of the extent of the government's role in generating this atmosphere....The government framed innocent people. Got others killed. Killed some themselves. Almost succeeded in getting me killed. All of which is clearly established in official congressional records."[147]

By targeting these individuals, the FBI put them in real danger and effectively tried and punished them without the difficulty of arrest and due process.

The FBI believed that if they could get the black community to turn against the Panthers, it would lead to the failure of the organization. The Washington Field Office of the Bureau wrote:

> In the past, those black organizations which have failed, have failed because they did not recognize or properly interpret the changing mood of black people. A good example of this is SNCC, an organization which did not perceive the changing attitude of young blacks to a more militant stand and more militant language until too late and consequently lost its power base to more militant groups."[148]

Here the FBI lays out the belief that if the Panthers are, or perhaps even could be made to seem, out of step with community the organization would fail.

Whether directed at individuals or the group as a whole, the FBI felt that these tactics were effective. The New Haven Connecticut office reported success in "an awakening of the moderate Negro community to the threat the BPP poses to the tranquility that exists. Liaison sources have reported a concern over the rise of brash militancy and have begun to discuss the possibility of forming a moderate vocal group to combat the militants."[149] This might have been seen as the best kind of success, an

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[147] Carmichael, *Ready for Revolution*, 666.
[148] SAC, WFO, to Director, FBI, Airtel, 23 December 1970, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[149] SAC, New Haven to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 10 April 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

indication that the Bureau's efforts had effectively turned the moderate black community against groups like the Panthers.

One of the most interesting phenomenon to examine when looking at the intersection of race and class in the counterintelligence programs is the FBI's overwhelming concern about, and tactics against, a coalition of the Black Panthers and the Students for a Democratic Society. As noted above, the FBI viewed it as their number one goal to prevent "black nationalist groups" from uniting with other groups. On one hand, the FBI's concern made sense, both groups had violent factions and individuals, and the idea that such a coalition might make that violence worse was not entirely unreasonable. However, closer examination of FBI attitudes and ideas about the coalition of these groups again reveals a preoccupation with respectability and demonstrates the ways in which a combination of race *and* class played a large role in the FBI's attitudes and tactics.

The FBI recognized that an alliance between the groups seemed possible; in fact, one FBI document states that attempts to destroy an alliance between the two groups would have to consist of exploiting the "minor differences" between the two groups.[150] Ironically, as sociologist David Cunningham argues, overt and relentless FBI pressure may have actually encouraged the Panther/SDS alliances that did exist, as members of the two groups viewed the FBI as a common enemy that only their combined efforts could prevail against.[151] In addition, the FBI claimed credit for the eventual denouncement of the Panthers by the Weatherman, a violent faction that emerged from the split of SDS. This claim stood in direct contrast to the FBI's own claims about the violence of the

[150] SAC, Chicago to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 13 October 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[151] Cunningham, *There's Something Happening Here,* 58.

Panthers as it was the white student protestors of the Weatherman who participated in escalated levels of violence rather than the reverse.

Given the FBI's own obsession with respectability and its importance in definitions of American citizenship, its fear about the cooperation of these two groups is understandable. SDS was largely an organization of white middle-and-upper-class college students. Though the FBI had special concerns about SDS, which will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter, it makes sense that they would believe that an alliance between the Black Panthers and SDS would add respectability to the Panther cause. As with the nonviolent civil rights groups, the FBI may have believed, that if the Panthers could be seen as gaining support from a group of college-educated white people it might bolster their reputation with middle-and-upper-class whites.

The FBI also, due to racial stereotypes of black male violence, feared that if SDS allied with the Black Panthers, they would become more violent. For example, some in the Bureau believed that simply by an alliance with the Panthers, SDS would become more violent and that the Panthers were a "formidable threat." [152] The Chicago office offered concern that the "potentially strong alliance" between SDS and the Black Panthers created a "dangerous situation that could provide SDS with the capability to provide major acts of violence through the volatile BPP." [153] This same document expressed concern that the devotion of SDS to the Panthers was "slavish." Clearly, the FBI equated violence with the fact that the Panthers were black and feared that SDS would become more violent purely by their association with such individuals.

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[152] Director, FBI to SAC, Chicago, unknown document type, 21 May 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[153] SAC, Chicago to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 1 May 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

The racial attitudes about race and class held by the FBI helped determine the tactics that they took against each group. Though the basic tactics such as anonymous letter writing, disruptive informants, etc. remained the same, the FBI uniquely tailored those particulars to each group and the FBI used both class and racial tension to attempt to prevent the alliance of SDS and the Black Panthers.

When using anonymous letters geared toward groups that consisted of largely white protestors like SDS, the FBI sought to depict the Black Panthers as ultra-violent and stated that the Panthers planned to kill the members of these groups because they were white. In one letter talking about the Panthers and another predominantly white anti-war group, the Peace and Freedom Party, the FBI wanted to circulate an anonymous letter stating that, "When the time comes, they will 'line up the Caucasians in the PFP against the wall with the rest of the whities.'"[154] Here the FBI clearly sought to bring up old stereotypes and fears about black violence.

In efforts to make SDS look bad to the Panthers, the FBI put forth the image that members of SDS used the Panthers for their own purposes, often employing loaded language such as a statement that the Panthers were doing the "dirty work" for SDS. [155] Clearly, the FBI wanted to suggest that the Panthers were the manual laborers, or perhaps even slaves, to the white members of SDS. The Milwaukie office of the FBI stated that, "Consideration is being made to utilize anonymous letters, to be sent to BPP leaders and members from a 'Concerned Black Businessman,' which will point out the fact that the BPP is being used as a tool of the white radicals to further their causes with no real

[154] SAC, Los Angeles to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 14 October 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[155] Director, FBI to SAC, Chicago, unknown document type, 21 May 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

concern for the black man."[156] This same office went on to suggest the creation of a fictional organizational chart that would put SDS at the top and the Panthers in a "subservient role." In one particularly vivid image, the Chicago office suggested spreading leaflets that depicted SDS members "taming" a panther with a whip, riding a panther, and depicting the Panthers as a house cat with the phrase, "'The Black Panther - House Cat for the White Liberals.'"[157] The FBI also wanted to publicize the fact that many student protest groups were "not sincere" in their support of integration and civil rights causes and that they were "all-white and have no Negro members."[158] The FBI obviously hoped that by overtly portraying SDS as part of an exploitative white power structure, they could create animosity between the two groups, especially given the hyper masculine focus of much of the Black Panther Party and existing anger at whites over the painfully slow process of social and economic change.

Some of these manufactured leaflets and letters also specifically played on class tensions rather than racial ones. In one FBI document, the Special Agent in Charge of the New York office proposed sending out leaflets suggesting that the "vibrant effective SDS" could relate better to the black community than the Black Panthers who, the proposed leaflet stated, could not function without white support and financing.[159] Here, the FBI hoped to suggest that even in the Panther's own racial community, class interests and the money and respectability that came with it would put the affluent students of SDS in a better position to help the black community.

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[156] SAC, Milwaukee to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 24 September 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[157] Director, FBI to SAC, Chicago, unknown document type, 31 July 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[158] SAC, Charlotte to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 31 May 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[159] SAC, New York to Director, FBI, Airtel, 27 August 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

The FBI also clearly played on class-based distinctions as it repeatedly created documents to suggest that the rich white kids of SDS were unwilling to share their money with the Panthers. In using these tactics, the Bureau suggested that as members of the affluent middle and upper classes, the members of the SDS could not possibly understand or support the same goals as the Black Panthers. In addition, by suggesting that SDS was part of a rich white power structure, the FBI hoped to paint the student organization as being part of the very power structure the Panthers sought to overthrow.

The FBI also sought to play up the fact that the members of SDS were more educated than the Panthers. In fact, the FBI suggested that letters and flyers be created and distributed to the Panthers playing up the idea that while young white protestors went to college, young black protestors went to jail. [160] Here the FBI tried to reinforce the idea that because the members of the Black Panthers had less financial resources, they could not go to college and as a result were more likely to be sent to jail, presumably for the same protest-related offenses as SDS.

As discussed earlier, the black middle class and community played a large role in the FBI's tactics against the alliance of SDS and the Panthers. One way the FBI did this was to promote stories of SDS being unwelcome in the black community.[161] The Chicago office reported that and SDS office in a predominantly black area faced "verbal abuse almost daily from the Negro residents" and this same report stated that they used informants "to encourage the idea that SDS is a racist organization."[162] This letter

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[160] SAC, Chicago to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 1 May 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[161] Director, FBI to SAC, Chicago, unknown document type, 23 December, 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[162] SAC, Chicago to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 14 January 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

suggests that the FBI wanted SDS to seem unwelcome by "respectable" black citizens. This effort to portray both the Panthers and SDS as unwelcome to the black middle class and other "respectable" black citizens is in keeping with the argument that the FBI of this era could conceive of respectable black citizenship and that respectable citizenship had power to shape public perceptions of groups like the Panthers and SDS.

It is important to point out that not all FBI offices wanted to involve themselves in counterintelligence work. This was especially true of the Baltimore office which told the Director's office that since they had no informants in either the Panthers or SDS, they had no plans to take action against either group. [163] In a second separate memo a month later, they reiterated the opinion that, "No concrete evidence of a broadening of the split between the Students For A Democratic Society (SDS) and the Black Panther Party (BPP) ... Baltimore is not recommending any counter-intelligence measures at this time."[164] Clearly some agents and offices of the FBI did not see SDS/Black Panther alliance as the calamity that the Director's office claimed it might become.

One of the strongest examples of the way class and the FBI's idea of respectability could influence decisions as much as race was the close comparison between the FBI's treatment and view of the Black Panthers and their treatment and view of the Ku Klux Klan. As discussed in the previous chapter, the FBI's comparison of civil rights groups with extremist right wing groups was in a way a rhetorical device designed to make the FBI's rigid middle-class oriented view appear to be the middle ground and the only reasonable course. However, the FBI's opinion of and tactics against the Klan also reveal

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[163] SAC, Baltimore to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 6 November 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[164] SAC Baltimore to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 29 December 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

the ways in which class, and for a lack of a better word, behavior, could trump race in FBI perceptions of respectability and what it meant to be a proper American citizen.

The relationship between the FBI and the Ku Klux Klan had a long history. In fact, the rise of the Klan in the Reconstruction era was one of the key reasons for the creation of the FBI's parent organization the Department of Justice.[165] During the violence of the 1950s, the FBI was tasked with assisting in civil rights investigations which often involved Klan violence. The FBI found these difficult, not only because of their close relationship with local law enforcement but because southern white juries generally refused to convict whites guilty of violence against blacks no matter what kind of evidence the Bureau collected.[166]

This phenomenon also points to the difficulties over the nature of policing in society. Policing may mean the enforcement of written law, but it may also mean any system that enforces moral, cultural, or social codes. In essence, while the FBI's task was to investigate violations of federal law, the Bureau, especially under J. Edgar Hoover, clearly went farther to the point of policing societal norms and behaviors. In the South, this brought them into even greater conflict with the Klan, who for many white southerners also policed the social norms they valued, i.e., the enforcement of a racially segregated society. In a sense, both groups were policing what it meant not only to be "respectable" but intertwined with that idea what it meant to be "white." For the members of the Klan, being a respectable white person meant defending the white race against anything that might infringe on the existing racially based power structures. While the FBI maintained, to some degree, this same power structure, i.e., white agents

[165] Powers, *Broken,* 42.
[166] Ibid., 230.

and officials, the FBI viewed the murder, bombings, and beatings of the Klan as inappropriate for a respectable white man. This helps explain not only why white southern juries would acquit individuals arrested by the FBI, but also why the two organizations came into conflict in the American South. This conflict increased as the nonviolent civil rights movement garnered headlines and acceptance in middle-class white America and the FBI began to work harder to disrupt the efforts of the Klan.

The FBI also clearly had concrete reasons for viewing the Klan as a threat. Agent Williams described the tension of his first few days in Natchez, an area in which three separate Klan organizations operated as well as several civil rights organizations. In his first two days in Natchez, the Klan bombed the Mayor's house. A local resident, whom William suspected was a Klan member, told him, "Well, I'm sure we'll be doin' business together. I sell life insurance and burial plots."[167] These actions suggested not only the threat of harm to local white officials but to the FBI as well. Obviously, the Klan was becoming a threat, not only to the FBI but to the FBI agents themselves as representatives of the law.

During his time in Mississippi, Agent James W. Awe experienced the same tension that Williams did. When he and Agent James Ingram went to interview a Klan member suspected of a house bombing, "He met us with a double-barrel shotgun," Awe recalled. "He said, 'You Agents turn around and you better run otherwise I'm going to shoot and kill you both.'"[168] These overt acts of violence and the disrespectful and threatening attitude of the Klan obviously stemmed from a belief by the Klan that the FBI did intend to interfere with the Klan's efforts to maintain white supremacy in the South.

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[167] Ibid., 23.
[168] Ibid., 11.

However, this show of force, rather than intimidating the Bureau and its agents, only served to illustrate that the FBI's perception of the Klan as an organization with no respect for law and order was justified.

This lack of respect for authority by the Klan led FBI officials to repeatedly compare the white supremacist group to the Black Panthers. For example, in February of 1970, the *Chicago Sun Times* reported that William C. Sullivan, assistant director of the Bureau, said that "extremist minorities...engaged in violence and crime" fell into three categories, "the white groups, such as the Ku Klux Klan; the blacks, including the Black Panthers, and the New Left, composed of some 200 organizations." The story went onto quote Sullivan as saying, "The Mafia and the Ku Klux Klan aren't given favorable press and the Panthers should be treated like these two groups."[169] While this comment does reflect the sort of rhetorical positioning the FBI was fond of, it also suggests that the Bureau saw the Black Panthers and the Klan as examples of the kind of "extremist" behavior that had to be monitored and punished in order to preserve their idea of American society.

In addition, many of the tactics the FBI used against the Klan were similar to those used against the Panthers. Because the FBI viewed the Klan as a largely lower-class organization, they used tactics that they hoped would anger poorer Klan members. For example, one of the proposed mailings to be directed at the Klan was a post card with a message bearing, "Which Klan leader is spending your money tonight?" The FBI designed this message for the purpose of "creating dissension, distrust, and lack of

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[169] Paul Galloway, "FBI Man Likens Black Panthers to KKK, Mafia," *Chicago Sun Times*, Black Panthers February 1970, Records Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 1951-1975, Subject Files.

confidence in the klan and its leaders."[170] Similar to the tactics used to create an image of Black Panther leaders in luxury, the FBI wanted to prey on class divisions within the Klan and make the leaders seem out of touch with less affluent Klan members.

The Bureau also used tactics that they hoped would split off middle-class members. The FBI hoped to convince the more affluent membership to view their fellow members of the organization as beneath their level. Another suggested post card read "Are these the people in the community I really want to call my friends?"[171] These postcards were clearly effective at rattling more middle-class members of the Klan. A *Cincinnati Enquirer* article stated that Klan member had said that, "these cards have been 'very embarrassing' to many prominent businessmen and public officials who are secret sympathizers. He is quoted as stating that some postal authorities and neighbors of these people are getting juicy items for gossip."[172] Through these anonymous postcards, the FBI clearly sought to exert class pressures against members of the Klan in order to get them to behave in more "respectable" ways.

FBI documents reveal that FBI agents and officials believed the Klan to be of a lower class than they themselves were. As one document stated, "Our experience has indicated that klansmen are not intellectuals [and] that their activities are prompted by their emotions."[173] This suggests that the FBI believed Klan violence stemmed not from any strong ideological view but from a lack of intellect and self-control, something the disciplined FBI viewed as part of being a respectable citizen. By declaring that the Klan

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[170] F. M. Baumgardner to W.C. Sullivan, Memorandum, 24 February 1966, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[171] Ibid.
[172] F. M. Baumgardner to W.C. Sullivan, Memorandum, 31 May 1966, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[173] F. M. Baumgardner to W.C. Sullivan, Memorandum, 24 February 1966, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

was intellectually and social beneath them, FBI agents and officials could maintain the idea that white middle-class respectability was a marker of good American citizenship, and that the members of the Klan behaved in this way because they were of an inferior social or intellectual class.

In fact, even as they attempted these tactics, the FBI felt that the majority of the members of the Klan, like the Panthers, might be so beneath acceptable levels of respectability that class pressure would be an ineffective tool in motivating them to end their activities. In addition, as in the case with the Black Panthers, the FBI conflated the issue of sexual morality with class, and suggested that the "morals" of the Klan, or the lack thereof, proved that they were a lower-class organization. One FBI official wrote, "Perhaps the die-hard redneck will not be impressed, but possibly some of the members, particularly those in the more middle-class occupations who give the Klan an aura of respectability will be caused to doubt the validity of the Klan and the integrity of its leaders."[174] Agent James O. Ingram shared the idea that the Klan was clearly outside the bounds of respectability. "They had no morals, no standards," Ingram said of the Klan. "They had different women. So I don't want to use the word prey, but we did contact the wives and we would use these little subtle statements, 'Where's your husband?... He's with someone else.' We didn't have to make up stories...it was true."[175] The FBI also used the tactic of using romantic and sexual relationships against the Panthers. It is important to note though that Ingram clearly believed the behavior of the Klan membership put them outside the bounds of what it meant to be a respectable American citizen.

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[174] Ibid.
[175] Ingram, 12.

This also highlights a small, but still significant difference in the way the FBI viewed class in regard to the Klan and the Panthers, in that while the FBI tried to isolate the Panthers from outside black middle-class support, the FBI did feel that the Klan had members who were middle-class. This idea that there were two classes of people in the Klan appears elsewhere in FBI documents. In one document, discussing the use of FBI interviews as a method of deterrent to Klan members, the Memphis office stated:

> When interviewing hot-headed ignorant Klansman [sic], emphasis is placed on monetary and fiscal policies in the Klan…When interviewing seemingly intelligent Klansmen who are motivated by patriotism and anti-Communism, efforts are made to discreetly but pointedly demonstrate that while the UKA Imperial Wizard ROBERT F. SHELTON claims to be such an expert on Communism, in reality he has no personal knowledge of Communism.[176]

Clearly in the eyes of the FBI these "seemingly intelligent" Klansmen were more like the agents themselves, anticommunist patriots, who could be reasoned with in order to prevent them from supporting the Klan. Unlike these more middle-class individuals, the "ignorant" Klansmen were clearly going to be more persuaded by issues of money, marking these men as lower-class. This seems a subtle shift in tactics from the way the FBI responded to the Panthers, in that the FBI believed that some members of the Klan were in fact middle-class and that intellect and public shaming could be used to split them from the organization.

As the FBI dealt with the Klan, they made it clear that as an organization and as individual agents and officials, they felt that the violent and extremist behaviors of the Klan stemmed not from the things they had in common with the FBI, their race, their patriotism, etc. but from their "ignorant" and lower-class status. For those individuals in the Klan who did happen to be of middle-class status, the FBI thought that these people

[176] SAC, Memphis to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 1 April 1966, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

could be subject to class pressure or reason in order to deter them from supporting the Klan.

There is no doubt that the FBI's scrutiny and punishment of the Panthers had negative consequences for that organization. Stokely Carmichael described the results of the FBI's COINTELPRO tactics in this way. "This was way beyond government 'dirty tricks.' This here was some vicious, ruthless, and illegal stuff intended to create confusion, mistrust and suspicion in order to set up confrontations designed to get folks killed. And in some cases, they succeeded."[177] Further, in 1969, the Washington Post reported, "While police activity might be gaining some sympathy for the Panthers, it has also nearly stripped several of the organization's chapters of their leadership. In addition, continued charges of crimes by Panthers have served to alarm more moderate elements of black and white activists."[178] The FBI was probably delighted to hear this report from one of the countries most respected newspapers, because it meant that the FBI's tactics had been a success and these more "moderate" or perhaps one might say "respectable" protest groups had begun to consider the Black Panthers outside their definition of what it meant to be American.

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[177] Carmichael, *Ready for Revolution,* 665.
[178] Leroy F. Adams and Robert C. Maynard, "Panther Leadership Hurt by Sweeping FBI Raids," *Washington Post*, 25 June 1969, A9.

CHAPTER 3

"IRRESPONSIBLE YOUTH": AGE AND THE STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

At a June 1967 crime prevention conference, J. Edgar Hoover spoke about the dangers the United States faced in maintaining safety and security. He said, "Today, arrogant, demanding legions of irresponsible youth have rallied behind the banner of 'civil disobedience.' … such as Students for a Democratic Society." To the FBI Director, SDS was the vanguard of a movement of young Americans who threatened the peace and security of the United States with their arrogance and lack of responsibility. In direct contrast, SDS saw itself as a group of young people who, in the face of American institutional arrogance, tried to see the world in a new way. In the defining document of SDS, the Port Huron Statement, the members of SDS described themselves thus; "We are people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably into the world we inherit." These two statements demonstrate the very different way in which each group viewed what it meant to be a responsible American.

To Hoover and the FBI, responsibility meant obeying, largely without question, the laws of the land and demonstrating an enduring respect for law and order and the

middle-class, predominantly white, status quo. To SDS, responsibility meant examining existing institutions and laws and shaking up that very status quo as a method toward reaching what they viewed as a more just and democratic society. In a sense, both groups were fighting for justice and for America, but they each had a very different definition of what that meant. This difference was crucial, because as the FBI sought to enforce their version of justice, they surveilled and punished groups, like SDS, who fell outside the Bureau's boundaries of what it meant to be American.

By its very name, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), the headline grabbing college-based protest movement defined itself by age and generation. Though SDS did not coin the popular movement phrase, "Never trust anyone over thirty," it certainly could have. In a letter published in the SDS newspaper, *New Left Notes*, Jerry Rubin listed a number of important questions facing the student movement, the last of which was, "What will happen when we reach age 30 and 40?" In asking the question, Rubin identifies an anxiety that SDS and the ideas of the youth movement would be fundamentally changed by the process and concerns of full adulthood, and suggesting that youth defined the very heart of the movement.[179]

Born from the Student League of Industrial Democracy in 1960, from the beginning, the members of SDS designed the group to appeal to a college student base. As the group somewhat painfully broke away from an older more established labor oriented leftist base, the focus of SDS turned to the use of direct action such as sit-ins in and protests as a way of creating social change.[180] The group advocated for changes at a local level and sought to form alliances with other social movement groups, including the

[179] Jerry Rubin, "Letter to My Movement Friends," *New Left Notes*, 22 January 1969, 5.
[180] Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York, Bantam Books, 1987), 172-177.

civil rights movement. During its early years, middle-and-upper-class college students from an urban east coast background predominated the membership of SDS, and many of these students planned on academic careers.[181] Like the quotation above, SDS documents reveal an awareness on the part of its members that they came from "comfortable" and sometimes even privileged backgrounds.

In 1962, the group issued the Port Huron Statement, making it clear, as demonstrated in the quotation above, that the members of the SDS felt like they had inherited an America full of "events too troubling to dismiss" which included not only the problems of civil rights, but also the nuclear threat of the Cold War, an "apathetic" citizenry, poverty, and "pugnacious anti-communism." The statement went on to list a number of reasons why the student population stood in a unique position to combat those social ills. By 1965, SDS captured the spotlight as a moving force behind a number of campus demonstrations, such as those at Berkeley in 1964, and as one of leading groups in the growing protest against the Vietnam War. It also began to attract a new more anti-intellectual and anti-American group of members.[182] This is also the point at which SDS became the particular target of federal government groups concerned with "subversion," including the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), the Senate Subcommittee on Internal Security and, of course, the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The members of SDS knew the FBI was targeting them, at least by April of 1966, when *New Left Notes* ran an article about an FBI investigation. The article stated that the National Council of SDS knew that FBI agents had spoken with college officials about the group, cultivating informants, and providing information to national media outlets

[181] Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (New York: Random House, 1973) 88-89.
[182] Ibid., 204-205.

that the group taught guerilla tactics at their meeting, which the National Council denied.[183] In addition, the dean of Wesleyan College reported that FBI agents had asked for a list of names of students involved in the group. The dean told the agents that such a list did not exist because "we consider the student's activity his own affair." The dean went on to state that, "Things like this can be a danger to a free and open community if men change their behavior because of it."[184] SDS continued to be aware of the FBI's attention throughout the late 1960s, and in 1969 when HUAC announced an investigation into the group, members of SDS stated that the bulk of HUAC's evidence came from the FBI.[185] This meant that the Bureau was actively participating in efforts to punish and/or disperse the group.

While the basic interaction between SDS and the FBI has been well documented, especially in David Cunningham's *There's Something Happening Here*, these works have largely focused on the illegal and unethical nature of the FBI's operations. Cunningham's book argues that the FBI's actions in the COINTELPRO era were part of a longer history of political repression, and specifically argues that the FBI's counterintelligence actions which were targeted at the new left came from the FBI's belief in various perceived threats to the existing social order.

However, existing works on the counterintelligence programs do not fully explore the ways in which perceptions of age and generational difference impacted the interaction between the FBI and youth movement groups, especially the way in which the age,

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[183] Paul Booth, "National Secretary's Report: Resolutions for the NC," *New Left Notes,* 8 April 1966, 1.
[184] Peter Kihss, "F.B.I. Said to Be Investigating Student Group Opposed to War," *New York Times*, 19 April 1966, 6.
[185] Bernadine Dohrn, "HUAC Announces Attack on SDS," *New Left Notes,* 15 January 1969, 3.

appearance, and other factors led the FBI label certain groups over others as "troublemakers."

Though all categories of identity are socially constructed to some degree, and therefore malleable, age is peculiarly so. While an individual can have static views as to their gender or racial identification, it would be almost impossible to maintain the same tenacity in regard to age. Perhaps this is why age, though undeniably relevant to an individual's identity and their way of interacting with society, has attracted less scholarly attention. In looking at the interaction, or perhaps one might say battle, between the FBI and young protestors, however, evidence demonstrates that age and generational difference are essential to an understanding of this historical moment. The FBI viewed the members of SDS as unruly children, while the members of SDS saw their youthfulness as a weapon in their fight against American institutions. In addition, though the FBI undoubtedly wanted to subject SDS to political repression, this does not fully explain the FBI's overwhelming interest in the appearance, language, and "immorality" of young protestors.

Scholars have thoroughly analyzed the hysteria over juvenile delinquency in 1950s and 1960s Cold War culture, and this hysteria plays a vital role in understanding FBI perceptions of youth movement groups. Though experts, even at the time, made the case that no actual rise in juvenile crime occurred during the 1950s, public officials, psychologists, and various critics in the public sphere all sought to discuss and dissect the causes and effects of this "new" public menace.[186] Popular culture, including music, television, and film, reinforced the image of the wild teen, and at the same time parents

[186] James Gilbert. *A Cycle of Outrage: America's Reaction to the Juvenile Delinquent in the 1950* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 26-27, 67-70.

and authorities often blamed popular culture for the purported rise in juvenile crime. James Gilbert argues that as teens and young adults gained more social and economic independence from their parents, parents and authority figures used the word "delinquency" to describe noncriminal behavior that they found inappropriate.[187]

Gilbert, along with writer John Savage, argues that J. Edgar Hoover made himself one of the key figures in this hysteria over juvenile delinquency. Hoover consistently voiced warnings about the lack of morality in young people and the rise of not just crime, but brutal crime, committed by teens and young adults.[188] While Gilbert's book focuses on the late 1940s and 1950s, and argues that the 1960s largely brought an end to mass fears about juvenile delinquency, an analysis of J. Edgar Hoover's public speeches until his death in 1972 reveals that this remained a constant message in Hoover's rhetoric. In addition, one main theme of Hoover's monthly "Message from the Director" in the *FBI Law Enforcement,* from the 1950s through his death, was the "blight" of juvenile delinquency.[189] In the case of SDS, and unlike the interaction with African-American groups, most other officials and agents of the FBI seem to have felt the same way as their director; the members of SDS were college delinquents with no respect for their America.

As SDS and other college-based protest groups came to prominence, Hoover spoke of them as key examples of the trend toward immorality and irresponsibility, and in keeping with Gilbert's argument about delinquency and youth culture in the 1950s, the FBI began to place an extreme amount of focus on noncriminal behaviors that they felt demonstrated that irresponsibility. Though, as is common in political rhetoric, the FBI

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[187] Ibid., 40.
[188] Gilbert, *Cycle of Outrage*, 28, 71-72; John Savage, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth Culture* (New York: Viking, 2007), 291, 403, 406.
[189] J. Edgar Hoover, "To All Law Enforcement Officials," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin,* April 1960, 1.

did not fully define what they meant by "immoral" or "irresponsible," the behaviors the FBI targeted and punished revealed that the FBI sought to maintain a specific standard of dress and behavior that mirrored FBI culture and their perceived role as protectors of the white middle class.

FBI officials often referred to college protestors in childlike terms such as "rebellious youth" and "extremist minority of young people."[190] Because at least some percentage of these protestors attended graduate school, it is reasonable to assume that they may not have been significantly younger than the FBI's own younger agents. By characterizing the members of SDS and other protest groups as misguided children, FBI officials could further discredit the competing view of America put forward by these individuals by trivializing their social and political point-of-view. The FBI likely saw this effort to discredit and disrupt SDS as vital to maintaining the Bureau's political and even cultural authority, as SDS made it clear that they sought to change the existing political power structure.

The FBI's emphasis on the youth of members of groups like SDS also served as a way to separate the protestors from FBI agents and officials themselves. SDS members came from the same or similar race, class, and often even gender groups as the FBI agents and officials themselves. For the FBI, SDS was truly the enemy within. This helps to explain the FBI's fascination and condemnation of SDS members dress, speech, lifestyle, and "attitude," all of which would have served to draw a distinction between themselves and the "troublemakers" of SDS. According to Hoover, SDS protested the war as a way of seeking to "destroy the existing social order" and "undermine this Nation

[190] J. Edgar Hoover, "Message From the Director," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, September 1969, 1.; J. Edgar Hoover, "The SDS and the High School," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin,* April 1970, 31.

from within."[191] Because members of SDS came from a similar basic demographic base as the FBI, they may have been perceived as more threatening. These were not outsiders, in terms of race and class; they were insiders who were seeking to change many of the things that white middle-class Americans took for granted. The FBI and Hoover had built their power on a system that was led by white men, and SDS did serve as a direct threat to that way of life.

This also explains the FBI's willingness to go to such lengths to try and disrupt SDS as an organization. In a letter to the Director, the Newark field office wrote, "These individuals are apparently getting strength and more brazen in their attempts to destroy American society…It is believed therefore, that they must be destroyed or neutralized from the inside. Neutralize them in the same manner they are trying to destroy and neutralize the U.S." [192] The FBI believed SDS sought to "destroy and neutralize" the America in they had invested in.

As discussed in the previous chapters, individual agents and FBI officials often had different views of the efficacy and importance of the COINTELPRO programs. In the case of SDS, even if a local FBI office reported that little New Left activity occurred in their area, the Director's office still required them to come up with plans to neutralize these groups, and the Director's office reprimanded when they failed to do so. In a letter to the head of the Kansas City office, the office of the Director wrote, "Your letter goes on to state that no counterintelligence activity is pending and, as a result, no results can

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[191] Federal Bureau of Investigation, Press Release, 18 July 1968, Black Power July-September 1968, Subject Files, Records Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 1951-1975, United States National Archives Main Branch, Washington, D.C.

[192] SAC, Newark to Director, FBI, memorandum, 27 May 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

be expected. This reflects a very negative approach to this program by your Division. It is to be noted that the best time to attempt to neutralize the New Left is when it is weak and disorganized."[193] The leadership of the FBI viewed disrupting the New Left as a national priority and they therefore expected to be a local priority as well. This meant that the FBI directed funding and manpower at the problem even if no problem existed, and at the expense of other legitimate criminal investigations the local offices needed to pursue.

Individual agents often expressed the same kind of dismay over the rhetoric and behavior of young protestors as the FBI officials. When agent Richard H. Ash went to apprehend a man involved in New Left activities, he initially worried his interaction with the young protestors would become violent. In fact, as he described it, the entire time he was involved with the New Left protestors, they continued to "push and shove" him. Eventually, the man in question, whom Ash called "Uncle Sam" agreed to be arrested to prevent violence. News cameras captured the episode, and Ash stated that his daughter saw the footage. In describing his daughter's reaction to the protestors, Ash said, "These kinds of people were nuts, protest people were not for her." Ash went on to state that the incident, though largely nonviolent, caused the FBI "lots of bad press." Ash's irritation, in light of the threat of physical harm, is understandable, but it is interesting that though "Uncle Sam" was willing to be arrested to prevent serious violence, Ash had little sympathy for the protestor, and was relieved that his daughter did not want to be involved.[194] He like Hoover, clearly felt these protestors were "troublemakers."

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[193] Director, FBI to SAC, Kansas City, memorandum, 23 January 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

[194] Richard H. Ash, interviewed by Stanley A. Pimentel, Society of Former Agents of the FBI Oral History Project, National Law Enforcement Museum, 30 March and 15 July, 2004.

The effort to surveill and punish members of SDS went far beyond simply speaking against them in a public forum. The FBI particularly singled out SDS for counterintelligence efforts. One example of this was that the FBI actively sought to limit the educational and economic opportunities of these protestors. Leaders of youth protest movements became special targets of the FBI. In a reprimanding letter from the Director's office the Boston office was told, "You must realize that one of your prime objectives under this program is to neutralize those individuals whose relationship with the New Left movement has been so important as to warrant their designation as key activists…. You will be expected to be aggressive and resourceful." The letter went on to demand that the Kansas City office assign an agent to these duties who could act with "enthusiasm and ingenuity."[195] However, even being a member of the one of these groups made an individual a target of FBI actions. For example, the Bureau provided background information to colleges and universities about students and faculty involved with SDS and other antiwar groups.[196] Presumably, The FBI used this tactic to convince colleges and universities to take disciplinary action against these individuals or to prevent them from attending or working at the university. One office of the FBI succeeded in preventing an individual who had been expelled from another university for "passing out literature" from being admitted to the University of Tennessee, and in Milwaukie, the FBI office wrote an anonymous fictitious letter in order to prevent a graduate student who worked with the Committee to End the War in Vietnam from receiving a Carnegie

[195] Director, FBI to SAC Boston, memorandum, 21 October, 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[196] SAC, Boston to Director, FBI, memorandum, 12 September 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

Foundation scholarship.[197] As another example, Todd Gitlin discusses the way in which FBI agents harassed a young protestor's parents over the telephone and then proceeded to interrogate him, "scaring him so badly he never signed another petition or joined an organization despite his radical sympathies."[198] Clearly, the FBI used a variety of means to punish individuals for their constitutionally protected membership in a protest group.

One major tactic, which appeared to be limited to actions taken against New Left groups, involved the method of writing anonymous letters to parents to inform them that their children participated in protest activities.[199] Several FBI documents specifically state that they sent these letters to parents that they considered to be "well respected" or "reputable."[200] One document even states that the students in question may have been viewed as more respectable and "somewhat above the beatnik type individual."[201] FBI officials hoped and expected that by sending letters to the "respectable" parents of these students, the parents could influence the students to end their protest activities.

The FBI used the tactic of letter writing to parents almost exclusively against the young white protestors of SDS, suggesting that the FBI believed that at least some of these white parents were "respectable" enough to be shocked by their children's behavior.

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[197] SAC, Knoxville to Director, FBI, memorandum, 26 November 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C., SAC, Milwaukie to Director, FBI, memorandum, 10 September 1968, , Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

[198] Gitlin, *The Sixties*, 180.

[199] SAC, New York to Director, FBI, memorandum, 31 March 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

[200] SAC, Denver to Director, FBI, memorandum, 6 February 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.; SAC, Dallas to Director, FBI, memorandum, 22 May 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.; SAC, Dallas to Director, FBI, memorandum, 22 May 1968.

[201] SAC, Dallas to Director, FBI, memorandum, 22 May 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.; SAC, Dallas to Director, FBI, memorandum, 22 May 1968.

As discussed in the previous chapters, the FBI often used class issues in their attempts to neutralize groups like SNCC and the Black Panthers, suggesting that FBI agents and FBI leadership recognized the existence of a "respectable" class of African Americans. However, the fact that the FBI did not use the tactic of letter writing against young black activists from SNCC and the Black Panthers suggests several possibilities. The first possibility is that the FBI did not feel that the parents of young black activists were as "respectable" as their white counterparts, and therefore would be less shocked by inappropriate behavior, or to take the idea further, that both black young people and their parents fell outside the definition of what the FBI considered to be American, and therefore, with no investment in the status quo, they would be uninterested in maintaining it.

The second, and more likely, possibility is that individuals working for the FBI saw the behavior of young black activists largely as a function of race and/or class, rather than one of age. The FBI rarely classified groups like SNCC and the Black Panthers as "irresponsible youth" and solely relegated them to categories such as "black nationalists." This gives further credence to the theory that FBI agents and officials so strongly emphasized the youth and "inappropriate" behavior of young white radicals because, unlike groups such as the Black Panthers, members of SDS came from the same general race and class as the majority of FBI agents. This made it even more important to point out the youth and "improper" behavior of young white activists as the only way of separating them from the agents themselves. In fact, because the members of SDS came from the same basic race and class groups as the FBI agents themselves, the FBI may have felt even more upset and/or confused by the behavior of young white protestors.

Of course, as part of the COINTELPRO programs, the FBI constantly branded the members of groups like SDS with the label of "communist." As Cunningham argues, this effort is indicative of a larger FBI trend toward political repression. Even given that fact, however, the FBI singled out certain groups, especially SDS. In addition, while still undoubtedly a form of political repression, the label of "communist" when applied to SDS was more accurate than when applied to other groups. SDS did make a point of separating itself from the firm anticommunism of the League for Industrial Democracy (LID).[202] Though SDS had initial concerns about communists in the ranks, most of the members, and the institutional line of SDS, reacted to the label of communist or socialist with a rhetorical shrug. In an article on the introduction of an antisubversion bill, *New Left Notes* stated, "SDS has always had a membership overlap with the Socialist Party. Big deal."[203] However, beyond stating that SDS was an organization influenced or even populated by communists, the rhetoric of the FBI leadership had a number of ways in which they labeled SDSers as "un-American" that had very little to do with political beliefs. In a 1968 newspaper interview J. Edgar Hoover said:

> The new left's mood - and philosophy of life - is not one of support for America and its traditions, of upholding moral and democratic values. Rather it is one of defiance, hostility and opposition to our free society. It seeks to destroy, not to build. Its whole approach is one of negativism - to criticize, belittle, and denigrate the principles on which this nation was built.[204]

Here Hoover's indictment goes far beyond the specter of the red menace to attack SDS philosophy and beliefs, especially their willingness to criticize government institutions. The idea that SDS was purely negative and out for destruction is another rhetorical device used by the FBI to delegitimize the political and social policies of SDS. Hoover implies

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[202] Sale, *SDS,* 50.
[203] "Eastland Strikes at the New Left," *New Left Notes,* 6 May 1966, unknown page number.
[204] Richard Starnes, "We'll Take Control of Your World," 13 June 1968, *Washington Daily News*, 18.

that the policies SDS advocated would not simply change the American way of life, they would destroy it. Inherent in this is the assumption that because SDS challenged the FBI's very narrow definition of "democratic values" and "the nation," they acted as enemies rather than people participating in the legitimate discourse of free society.

As discussed in the first chapter, the FBI knew that not everyone would agree with their stance about SDS. Hoover, and other officials of the FBI knew that the actions they took against social movements like SDS had the potential to cause embarrassment for the Bureau, and frequently reminded SAC's and agents to protect the Bureau's reputation, and keep the FBI's involvement secret, even as they sought to undermine the credibility of youth movement protestors.[205]

So according to the FBI, what did constitute a good citizen? In June 1963 in response to letters from what he called "very impressive" youth asking about what it took to become a good citizen, J. Edgar Hoover listed several steps for a young person to follow to become "Citizen Leaders." These steps included getting an education, understanding that "law and order are the pillars of our society," and being "for what you know to be right, rather than against what you do not like."[206] In 1964, Hoover again discussed what young people needed in order to be prepared for college; "Graduating seniors should have no question as to the greatness of our way of life." Hoover then went on to warn that any attempt to speak badly of government officials constituted a key sign of questioning American greatness.[207] In other speeches and articles, Hoover lectured about the need for parents to instill their children with discipline and religious

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[205] SAC, Boston to Director, FBI, memorandum, 12 September 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[206] J. Edgar Hoover, "Youth of Today Become Citizen Leaders of Tomorrow," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin,* June 1963, back cover.
[207] J. Edgar Hoover, "Message from the Director," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin,* June 1964, 1.

principles.[208] These statements expand on the idea that for FBI officials, being a true "American" went far beyond simply being born in America and living within the law, and in addition when it came to young people, the FBI dictated how and what parents should teach their children.

According to the FBI, good citizens never, even in a moment of youthful passion, joined or expressed interested in "extremist groups." In a 1969 *Parade* magazine article, Hoover warned about the dangers of association with social movements like SDS; "Time and time again, we in the FBI has seen young people leave these groups in disgust, only to find that they are later typed by their former association or that some unfortunate incident connected with their membership, an arrest, for example, continues to embarrass them."[209] Though Hoover is noticeably vague about exactly how these past actions could come back to haunt rebellious young people, there is the clear implication that such actions were being watched and recorded. In their policing of SDS, the FBI seems to have been acting out a desire to be *in loco parentis,* taking on the role of the respectable and disciplining parent. As such, FBI officials would have seen their actions as the moderate and responsible actions of a surrogate parent responding to rebellious youth who, as children, needed guidance and supervision.

Not only did the members of SDS fail to live up to Hoover and the FBI's standards of a good citizen, aside from their education, but as discussed in Chapter 1, they went against Hoover's and other law enforcement officials beliefs that any kind of mass demonstration was inappropriate. Since one of SDS's key principles was direct

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[208] For one example: J. Edgar Hoover, "Message from the Director," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin,* August 1966, 1.
[209] J. Edgar Hoover, "An Important Message for America's Youth From J. Edgar Hoover," *Parade*, 11 July 1965, 12-13.

action, which the FBI would have seen as disorderly however good the cause, it is easy to see how the FBI viewed groups like SDS as worthy of investigation and neutralization by the order-obsessed FBI. In November 1966, Hoover wrote, "How is the cause of equal justice under law served by noisy, defiant mobs yelling slogans…. Can we seriously consider, even for a moment that this is the precious right our forefathers referred to as a peaceable assembly to petition the government for redress of grievances?"[210] By separating the actions of SDS from the "peaceable assembly" designated in the Constitution, the FBI actively sought to place student protests outside the boundaries of constitutional protection.

The FBI also knew that this same discourse would not work as a tactic to dissuade most of those who actually participated in SDS. The Special Agent in Charge of the Newark office in a letter to Director J. Edgar Hoover wrote, "Attacking their morals, disrespect for the law, or patriotic disdain will not impress their followers, as it would normally to other groups, so it must be by attacking them through their own principles and beliefs. Accuse them of selling out to the 'imperialistic monopoly capitalism.'"[211] This falls in line with the class based tactics in Chapter 2 and demonstrates at least some awareness on the part of the Bureau of the motives and philosophy of SDS. It also suggests that the FBI understood that standard patriotic rhetoric and attempts to persuade using conventional morality were unlikely to work on the members of SDS.

However, the idea that SDS viewed itself as "un-American" or that SDS saw no value in American ideals is overly simplistic, and in fact, SDS, like other protest organizations, used American history and rhetoric to support their own beliefs just as the

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[210] J. Edgar Hoover, "Message from the Director," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin,* November 1966, 1.
[211] SAC, Newark to Director, FBI, memorandum, 27 May 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

FBI did. In April 1975, during the March on Washington, SDS President Paul Potter gave a speech that used the language of patriotism and morality to defend the stance SDS had taken against Vietnam. Most surprising is the way Potter turned the term "activist" on its head by using it to describe the foreign policy that led to the war in Vietnam. Calling it "aggressive, activist foreign policy," Potter stated that the Vietnam War had "severed the last vestige of illusion that morality and democracy are guiding principles of American foreign policy." Like the rhetoric of FBI officials, Potter declared that immorality had played a role in the protestors' willingness to question the federal government; however, in Potter's argument, the government's greed and corruption constituted the "immorality," not the behavior and lifestyle of the members of SDS. Clearly "morality" like "justice" could be defined in different ways, so that both SDS and the government, through its agency the FBI, could claim that their opposition was "immoral." SDS also sought to connect with ideas about what being American meant by connecting themselves to what they viewed as the American ideals of protest and radicalism. They identified themselves as part of "the other American heritage" or a tradition of populism and progressivism that they felt connected them to the founding fathers and abolitionists.[212]

Members of SDS realized how definitions about what was "American" shaped the nation and the era within which the group functioned. In April 1966, an article in *New Left Notes* suggested that SDS create a study group on American ideology. The article suggested that this study group could look at topics such as liberalism, pluralism, capitalism, and anticommunism and try to determine how different groups understood the meaning of these ideas. The article proposed that the group study how these ideas "are

[212] Paul Booth, "The Other American Heritage," *New Left Notes,* 24 August 1966, 23-27.

used to narrow the range of 'legitimate' conflict and change alternatives and how they contribute to a false consciousness." The result of these studies, the article suggests, would be a series of pamphlets designed to provide "arguments and alternatives" to these principles that would support the goals of SDS. SDS hoped that this attempt to "de-mythologize" these concepts would allow SDS to "gain some leverage against the [b]inding force with which these ideas hold American[s] to the status quo."[213]

Local chapters also saw the issue in similar ways. An SDS group at George Washington University, talking about their takeover of a campus building, said, "It became clear to us that our role was to educate students about the contradictions in American society, the difference between the ideal and the reality. Americans talk about equality when it is clear that the middle and upper class has far greater opportunity than black and working class... SDS is very noticeably part of the American tradition." The group went on to state the fact that they felt like the represented the American tradition of "individual freedom."[214] Clearly though the FBI accused SDS of wanting to thwart American ideals and American government, many members of SDS saw themselves as equally a part of those ideals and were willing to go to great intellectual and philosophical lengths to prove it. SDS understood that defining what it meant to be "American" lay at the heart of their battle not only with the FBI, but with many members of the public as well.

As the FBI sought to push SDS out of the definition of a respectable American, they became increasingly bent on documenting and at times inventing ways to prove that the members of SDS really were troublemakers, that in spite of their middle-and-upper-

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[213] "Calls for Radical Reconstruction," *New Left Notes*, 22 April 1966, 5.
[214] George Washington University SDS Steering Committee., "Freedom is Our Concern," *George Washington University Hatchet,* 28 April 1969, 7.

class, white, college-educated upbringings, they could not to be listened to or trusted. In a 1966 conference address, FBI Assistant Director William C. Sullivan said of SDS:

> This movement is largely built on disdain of traditional concepts of social behavior and morality. It is further characterized by many of its followers with their untidy dress, repulsive language and manners, disregard for moral and spiritual values, and disrespect for law and order. It is indeed fortunate that the vast majority of our student youth are not attracted by the moral apathy, shallowness, confusion, and publicity seeking of much of the 'New Left.'[215]

Here Sullivan demonstrates the FBI's interest in documenting and decrying four particular areas of the lives of SDS members. The first category, often referred to by the FBI as the SDS "attitude," is a bit amorphous, but as it appears frequently in the FBI's discussion of SDS, it bears analysis. The other three categories: appearance, language, and "immoral" lifestyle are more concrete and give a clear picture as to just how detailed and at times, bizarre, FBI interest in the lives of young protestors could be.

One of the most interesting things about the FBI documentation of these four categories is that the Bureau put attitude, appearance, language, and "immoral" behavior on par with criminal activity as a reason to target SDS. FBI documents reveal that they investigated and punished youth protestors for reasons that had nothing to do with their political beliefs, and everything to do with how they expressed those beliefs. For example, in writing a letter to a young protestor's parents to reveal that their son had been arrested, the FBI placed emphasis not on the arrest itself but that the young man in question had been "wearing a hat band containing an obscenity."[216] In this case, it is not the criminal act that interested the FBI, it was the language that the young man used.

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[215] Sullivan, "Communism, Law and Enforcement in America."
[216] SAC, New York to Director, FBI, memorandum, 31 March 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

In looking first at FBI interest in the "attitude" of young protestors, the example of an interview given by Mark Rudd and two other members of SDS illustrates the FBI's preoccupation with the "attitude" of the protestors. The description, given by the Cleveland office, read, "The SDS trio exhibited an insolent, arrogant attitude and openly proclaimed their communistic philosophy and intent to 'smash' the United States Government."[217] The FBI report went on to say that they felt that this interview convinced many people viewing the interview of "the insidious nature of SDS." If the FBI policed SDS primarily due to their criminal activity, or even for their political agenda, one would expect that the emphasis would be on their antigovernment statements. Instead, the FBI official reporting on the interview is equally, if not more, interested in the "insolent" attitude of the men being interviewed.

The FBI constantly sought to reinforce the idea that these student protestors had what they considered to be an undesirable attitude. In suggesting a COINTELPRO operation, the Los Angeles Office wrote that they could create their own underground newspaper and ask for the submission of stories. Though the letter is unclear as to what the Los Angeles office hoped to accomplish with this newspaper, they stated that the publication should be "brash, crude and youthful."[218] Furthermore, the office suggested that the newspaper should not focus on any particular political theory but should be "strictly" anarchistic. Though anarchy is, in fact, a political theory, and though the LA office does not give details as to what this means, it suggests that the FBI wanted the paper not to espouse the ideas of any particular group, but should focus on violence and

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[217] SAC Cleveland to Director, FBI, memorandum, 3 October 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[218] SAC, Los Angeles to Director, FBI, memorandum, 9 September 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

disorder. To complete this manufactured newspaper, the letter declared that the paper should also include subjects such as marijuana and sex. This paper, which was presumably designed to cast a negative light on protestors, was clearly focused on "attitude."

The FBI may have interpreted this "insolent" attitude as a direct threat to authority, particularly to FBI authority. Since the FBI saw itself as the leaders, trainers, and finest example of law enforcement in the United States (in spite of its claims not to be a national police force), the SDS habit of questioning authority might have been seen not just as a threat to the larger order, but as a specific threat to the existence and nature of the Bureau. As the above quotation from Assistant Director Sullivan indicates, SDS's "disrespect for law and order" constituted one of the reasons they were so undesirable.

Since so much of the FBI's power had been, and in the 1960s to some degree continued to be, drawn from the automatic respect that the agency received from the powerful middle-and-upper-class whites in America, to have a group of individuals from this same social class openly dismissive of authority may have been perceived as particularly threatening. Since the white upper class had a history of defining what "American" meant, the FBI may have been worried that SDS did in fact have the power to change what it meant to be an American citizen, and to threaten the structure that kept them in power. As a result, the FBI sought to criminalize not just constitutionally protected behavior or speech, but even the way the public perceived that behavior or speech.

Beyond these more generalized comments about the attitude of young protestors, the FBI recorded and even punished three other specific categories of SDS behavior. The

first of these was the appearance, such as dress and hairstyle of the protestors. FBI documents and speeches reveal that the FBI sometimes targeted young protestors solely based on their appearance. The Knoxville office of the FBI wrote a letter to the Director expressing their concern that several students of the "hippie type" tried to organize a student group at the University of Tennessee.[219] While working with the Richmond Police Department, the Richmond office of the FBI stated that "anyone who might appear in a hippie-type dress, receive far from a friendly welcome."[220] This "far from friendly" welcome included a warning about narcotics raids which the Richmond FBI office specifically designed to create enough fear in these individuals that they would be reluctant to gather or participate in protest activities. While drug use was clearly illegal, the FBI used this strategy not to prevent crime but to prevent these individuals from participating in constitutionally given rights of freedom of speech and assembly. Again, the FBI did not target these individuals because of criminal behavior or even for known political views but for the clothing they chose to wear.

Beyond general comments about the appearance of members of groups like SDS, specific individuals became targets of FBI actions because of their choice of clothing. The FBI sent an anonymous letter to the Los Angeles school board for the purpose of preventing a young woman, who was a member of SDS, from being hired. The FBI punished her because they became aware of an instance in which the woman was reprimanded for wearing a mini-skirt and then wore an ankle length skirt the next day. They felt as if her wearing of the long skirt constituted an example of the way in which

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[219] SAC, Knoxville to Director, FBI, memorandum, 26 November 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[220] SAC, Richmond to Director, FBI, memorandum, 22 April 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

she was "resenting authority." The letter included not only information about her membership in SDS but also allegations that she had a "promiscuous personal life" and smoked marijuana. The document gives no indication that the FBI had information to support these allegations; in fact, it is likely that they did not, as the FBI worked with local law enforcement to have protestors brought up on drug charges when they had sufficient evidence. Clearly, beyond her membership in SDS, the FBI targeted this young woman for her choice of clothing, and for the fact that they believed she used that clothing to make a personal statement, not for any particularly violent or criminal tendencies, and not even for particularly vocal political beliefs.

However, within the FBI, opinions about the significance of appearance varied. While the above example shows that some offices viewed "hippy" dress and grooming as a sign of real trouble, another memo from the Cleveland office suggests that they viewed these kinds of young people as less of a threat. The SAC of the Cleveland office wrote, "The younger participants…were predominantly of the long-haired "beatnik" or "hippie" type whose actions during the demonstration reflected a greater interest in fraternization with each other than dedicated interest in the program presented during the rally."[221] In this case, the agent viewed the wearing of "hippie" clothing as indicative of a less threatening individual. This example points to the complexity in dealing with the issue of how the FBI interpreted the appearance of young protestors. As mentioned previously, if the FBI considered SDS to be more of a threat because of their racial and class similarity to the FBI, some agents and officials may have felt that those who clearly stood apart because of the hairstyle or clothing were less of a threat than those protestors who

[221] SAC, Cleveland to Director, FBI, memorandum, 27 May 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

looked more "respectable" and were therefore more likely to be taken as legitimate voices in the political and social debates of the period.

However, other documents clearly show that in spite of this letter from the Cleveland office, the FBI did actively seek to discredit members of SDS based on their clothing. One FBI document indicated that the FBI created a leaflet of "unkempt" SDS protestors, and captioned it "Planet of the Apes." By comparing the students' appearance to that of animals, the FBI clearly sought to delegitimize the movement by attacking their dress and grooming. [222]

The FBI also realized that the members of New Left groups like SDS would not view appearance in the same way. As one FBI official in Newark stated, "It is believed that the nonconformism in dress … filthy clothes, shaggy hair, wearing of sandals… tend to negate any attempt to hold these people up to ridicule."[223] The FBI realized that the appearance of young protestors did not hold the same meaning to the protestors themselves. Clearly, though the FBI viewed this appearance as unacceptable, the protestors did not.

Though not directly addressing the FBI's policing of their appearance, members of SDS realized the ways in which a person's appearance could be perceived as "subversive." In an article decrying the use of "grooming codes" in high schools, SDS member John H. Bennett wrote that school administrators who enforced such codes "are too afraid of revealing their grudge against authority to deviate from the standard of their middle-class community." Bennet goes on to argue that these grooming codes existed as

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[222] SAC, Newark to Director, FBI, memorandum, 25 June 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[223] SAC, Newark to Director, FBI, memorandum, 27 May 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

part of larger system in which people are so unwittingly frustrated by conformity that they take out this frustration by repressing other people. High school students, whom he repeatedly compares to slaves, are one of the key targets of this frustration.[224] According to Bennett, standards of dress and grooming represented the authoritarian structure that SDS protested against. Extending that logic it seems clear that some members of youth protest groups may have seen their long hair and unusual clothing as a method of protest. Clearly, both the FBI and SDS used clothing as a way of defining who they were and who could be, and could not be, part of their group.

Another category of personal expression that the FBI reacted to involved the language used by members of SDS. The FBI clearly knew about, and perhaps even had a fascination with, the language used by different groups. For example, in 1961, the *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* ran an article about the lingo of juvenile gangs. In this article it states, "Children, of course, frequently resort to a system of communication, not readily understood by adults, with another of their age group. This evolves into a form of slang common to the group….The police officer must, of necessity, be cognizant of the jargon." This glossary of words included definitions of largely innocuous words such as "bug – annoy; pester" and "Cool it! – Be patient, be calm, stop," but also include definitions for words describing criminal activity such as "hustle" and "stoned."[225]

The FBI also frequently cited the language used by protestors as an example of the way in which the protestors were "subversive." In one COINTELPRO operation, in which the FBI provided information on SDS to a member of the news media, the FBI agent involved made note that the media contact "expressed complete surprise at the

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[224] John H. Bennett, "The Teenage Scapegoat," *New Left Notes,* 26 June 1967, 9.
[225] "Juvenile Gangs and Underworld Have Own Lingo," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, January 1961, 22-23.

radical intentions of SDS and their use of lewd and offensive language in their publications"[226] Again, the way this sentence is written suggests that the use of "lewd and offensive language" is of equal concern to the potentially "radical intentions" of SDS. Here, the FBI condemned not just the politics or tactics of SDS, but suggested that the very way they spoke and wrote made them a justifiable target for COINTELPRO actions. Since language served as mark of class and respectability in the eyes of the FBI, the frequent and public use of profanity by SDS constituted yet another piece of evidence that these protestors did not live up to FBI ideals as to what was "American."

In an article in *New Left Notes*, the members of SDS directly challenged the judgment they received for their attitude and language, especially the tendency to call police officers "pigs":

> There are some people – mainly rich, mainly white, mainly soft – who say we shouldn't call other human beings pigs. We say to those people: 'You shouldn't make other human beings pigs, then we won't have to call them pigs. Don't pay off some people to beat on the rest of us, and we'll watch our manners.' It's simple: no pigs, no nasty words. The same people who are all uptight about dirty language and us not liking the pigs talk a lot about 'law n' order' and talk about how blacks and young people are getting to violent! Dig that. What we've thought about doing in our wildest dreams to get back at the schools and the army … and the pigs, is tiny next to what this country does before breakfast to the Vietnamese, the blacks and the rest of the world.[227]

In this article, SDS states that the bad language used by young protestors, and to a larger extent SDS tactics as a whole, acted as a reaction to the bad behavior demonstrated by those in authority. Like the example of Paul Rubin's "patriotic" speech, the author of this SDS article directly engaged the rhetoric used by groups like the FBI and suggested that those in authority were the ones acting and speaking in an irresponsible manner.

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[226] SAC, Cleveland to Director, FBI, memorandum, 11 October 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[227] "Violence & Pigs," *New Left Notes,* unknown date, 13.

Another aspect of "subversive" behavior that the FBI examined and documented was the "immorality" of the youth protest movement. FBI documents frequently commented on and condemned individuals of the opposite sex who lived together. The Director's office instructed the Knoxville office to obtain information on the "scurrilous and depraved nature of characters, activities, habits and living conditions connected with New Left adherents."[228] This "depraved" nature, was not just about free love either; by FBI definitions it expanded to include a number of other things as well. The Knoxville office even documented a newspaper article about students who "rebelled when told to improve their housekeeping and to observe dormitory sign-in and sign-out regulations." Clearly, since a messy dorm room did not constitute a federal offense or even a political statement, it is clear that the FBI is policing not just political beliefs or criminal behavior, but forms of expression as personal as how a college student chose to keep their dorm room. This may suggest that for the FBI "immoral" behavior may have been as much about order as it was about sexual behavior. In addition, it shows that the FBI's applied the word "immoral" in ways similar to their use of the word "delinquent" to cover a broad range of behaviors they felt fell outside the boundaries of acceptable behavior.

FBI documents reveal at least one additional motivation for pointing out the "immoral" character of student protestors. In a letter, the Director's office ordered the New York office to obtain details about the "flagrant immorality" of a demonstration at Columbia University. The Bureau wanted this information in order to "counter police brutality charges." [229] Clearly, the FBI believed that by labeling the demonstrators as

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[228] SAC, Knoxville to Director, FBI, memorandum, 13 June 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[229] Director, FBI to SAC, New York, Airtel, 27 May 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

immoral, they could justify overreaching actions taken by law enforcement officers who engaged the protestors. Again we see that the FBI viewed these young people not as victims of police corruption, but as immoral troublemakers undeserving of basic physical and constitutional protection.

Hoover, in a standard line of reasoning compatible with his role in policing juvenile delinquency, made it clear where he believed this "immorality" came from. In a 1965 speech, he talked about those he felt were being used as tools of the communists and as such had become dangers to the nation; "I refer to the unkempt characters of pliable minds and persuasion who eagerly attach themselves to any 'cause' which runs counter to convention -- and the morally corrupt opportunist who flagrantly exploit their naive enthusiasm and credulity for self-serving purposes."[230] To Hoover, not only were the members of SDS "unkempt" but that appearance marked a "pliable" mind that could be easily persuaded into un-American immoral behavior by any cause that came along. Hoover also perhaps pushes the FBI's position to its most irrational boundaries; it argues the members of SDS not only behaved and looked "unkempt," but that appearance served as an indication of their naive, even stupid, minds and a sign that all of their calls for change came not from legitimate political thought but from foreign influences.

The main battleground between the FBI and SDS was the college campus. J. Edgar Hoover wrote, "As the current academic year draws to a close, it should be readily apparent that the students in the New Left revolutionary movement are not on college

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[230] "Remarks of J. Edgar Hoover Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation Before the Supreme Council, 33 of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Right of Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction, USA in Washington, D.C.: 'The Faith of Free Men,'" Federal Bureau of Investigation, Press Release, 19 October 1965, Federal Bureau of Investigation 1964-1965 Folder 1 of 2, Subject Files, Records Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 1951-1975, United States National Archives Main Branch, Washington, D.C.

campuses to seek education. Rather, this conglomerate of malcontents is engineering a drive to destroy our educational system."[231] Both SDS and the FBI actively sought to influence and control the campus environment, but to very different ends.

Because the FBI saw college education as an essential part of a good citizen and a key part of FBI identity, the supposed corruption of the college environment seriously concerned FBI agents and officials. With the FBI relying on college campuses, especially programs in accounting and law, to train their agents, it became even more crucial to direct efforts toward battling what they viewed as subversive elements that not only physically took over college campuses, but demanded changes to university administration, programs, and policies. To the FBI, college produced good Americans and SDS was out to corrupt that system.

In a memo to the FBI Director, the head of the Dallas office suggested that the FBI needed to contact college administrators so that they could be, "brought to realize how important it is to take positive stands against unreasonable and anarchistic activities being espoused under the cover of academic freedom... the New Left is not seeking to reform society, but to destroy it; and that its overall aim is to have total and radical student autonomy of universities."[232] Two months later, the same office reported that there no "likelihood of violence" existed on any of the campuses in their area. Clearly, even though these groups posed no physical harm to the campuses, the FBI still felt threatened by their calls for changes in the university structure and administration.

The FBI's concern over college campuses even went as far as to monitor the kinds of courses being taught at various universities. In Cleveland, Ohio, the FBI received

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[231] J. Edgar Hoover, "Message From the Director," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin,* June 1969, 1.
[232] SAC, Dallas to Director, FBI, memorandum, 31 May 1968, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

information on coursework from an informant and determined that the courses were, "highly susceptible to the introduction of an anti-judicial and anti-law enforcement point of view."[233] Though the document does not provide details as to what these classes were, the FBI wanted to influence the kind of materials that were being taught on campus. The FBI also monitored and spoke out against college professors who encouraged the youth protest movements on their campuses.[234]

During this era, the FBI claimed it supported academic freedom. J. Edgar Hoover said, "No organization has a deeper sympathy or stronger regard for the freedom and integrity of America's educational institutions than the FBI. We meticulously avoid interfering in any matter with the legitimate thoughts, expressions and activities of any citizen, including members of the academic community."[235] Though this statement can be seen as an outright denial of FBI actions, the key word is "legitimate." The FBI supported academic freedom but only by those people whom they felt met their definition of legitimate. Because the FBI believed youth protestors, and the faculty who supported them, fell outside of these respectable boundaries, the FBI could claim to support academic freedom while still actively working against those students and faculty who advocated social change.

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[233] SAC, Cleveland to Director, FBI, memorandum, 31 July 1970, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.

[234] "Remarks of J. Edgar Hoover Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation Before the Supreme Council, 33 of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Right of Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction, USA in Washington, D.C.: 'The Faith of Free Men,' "Federal Bureau of Investigation, Press Release, 19 October 1965, Federal Bureau of Investigation 1964-1965 Folder 1 of 2, Subject Files, Records Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 1951-1975, United States National Archives Main Branch, Washington, D.C.

[235] FBI News Release, "Remarks of J. Edgar Hoover Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation Prepared for Delivery Before the Regional Conference on Crime Prevention of the Michigan State Bar At Rochester, Michigan June 8, 1967 : Faith, Freedom and Law," 8 July 1967, Federal Bureau of Investigation 1967, Subject Files, Records Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 1951-1975, United States National Archives Main Branch, Washington, D.C.

The FBI not only worked against students they felt were irresponsible, but actively sought to promote the viewpoints of students whom they considered more respectable. One COINTELPRO operation promoted the opinions of "straight" college students to the news media.[236] A less covert, but equally telling operation consisted of mailing out a copy of Hoover's, "fourteen points on how to establish the real character of an organization" which the FBI felt would help students realize the danger of participating in student protest groups. The FBI sent the mailer to the entire incoming freshman class at colleges and universities throughout Southern California.[237] With these actions, the FBI actively promoted its own definition of what a college student should be interested in.

SDS did view the university as a point of attack to address their concerns. A National Committee resolution geared toward building a radical youth movement stated that "we must view the university as a racist and imperialist institution which acts to oppress the working class and is the brain center of repression against liberation struggles at home and around the world."[238] The National Committee also proposed major changes to the university system that included readmitting students that had been forced out, changes in dress and behavior codes, changes in curriculum to expose the "racist capitalist society," mandatory admission of all "black and brown students," free tuition, and an end to military recruitment and training on campuses.[239] SDS did want to radically change the face of college campuses in the United States. However, the above

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[236] SAC, Cleveland to Director, FBI, memorandum, 31 July 1970, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[237] SAC, Los Angeles to Director, FBI, memorandum, 1 July 1969, Counterintelligence Programs Collection, The National Security Archive, Washington, D.C.
[238] "Toward a Revolutionary Youth Movement," *New Left Notes*, 8 January 1969, 3.
[239] "The Schools Must Serve the People," *New Left Notes*, 20 March 1969, 4-5.

statements, as inflammatory they might have seemed to the FBI and a percentage of the upper-and-middle-class population of the United States, did not actually constitute a criminal offense.

Clearly, FBI speeches, interviews, and covert tactics sought to stigmatize and disrupt student movements like SDS. However, as many of the above examples show, since youth protestors had their own set of values and beliefs, this rarely proved effective in changing their behavior. In fact, they may have had the opposite effect on the groups in question. For groups, like SDS, who advocated social and economic change, the FBI's identification of them as "irresponsible youth" reinforced their own beliefs and point-of-view. By using illegal and unethical methods to investigate the protestors the FBI reinforced the idea of a corrupt government held by many of those in the youth movements. As SDS member Terry Cannon said in an article in *New Left Notes*, "Law is the tool that politicians and businessmen use to keep down the people they oppress."[240] In addition, because of the youth movement's efforts to draw a distinction between themselves and the established government, being vilified by representatives from that government could only serve to reinforce those divisions.

However, these efforts to discredit SDS may have had a much larger impact on the way the larger American public perceived the group. Though speaking of the news media at the time, former SDS president Todd Gitlin wrote about how language was used to delegitimize the youth protest movements and other groups. In speaking of the way in which the media referred to the movements as a "civil disturbance," Gitlin writes, "The black and student opposition movements of the sixties, which would look different if they were called, say 'movements for peace and justice.' were reduced to nasty little things."

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[240] Terry Cannon, "Law and Order in America," *New Left Notes,* 20 May 1969, 1.

Gitlin goes on to describe the ways in which the media divided various protest movements into "legitimate main acts and illegitimate sideshows, so that these distinctions appear 'natural, matters of common sense.'"[241] SDS was one of those groups that the media, partially through the FBI, tended to brand as "illegitimate." Though Gitlin is talking about the news media and the 1960s as a whole, it is clear that FBI officials used similar language as a way to delegitimize youth movement groups, and may have interfered with SDS's efforts to effect social change.

Whether or not the FBI served as the chief cause of the eventual loss of attention and power enjoyed by SDS is unclear. Ironically, the event that arguably brought SDS into the media spotlight the most, the spring 1968 demonstrations at Columbia University, occurred just before a split that would fundamentally change the movement.[242] Though the FBI's actions may have exacerbated this split, internal differences over policy and tactics also played a significant role. By late 1968, a splinter began to form between those who believed violent action was the only solution and those who still believed in the efficacy of less radical methods, and in 1969, the group split into two different groups, the Progressive Labor Movement and the Weathermen.

There is some evidence to suggest that the FBI's parent agency the Justice Department began to realize that the FBI had gone too far in its tactics against college protestors and their interference with the campus environment. In 1970, the Justice Department sent representatives on a tour of 51 college and university campuses in order to help improve the image of the Justice Department, and by extension the FBI, to college students. A newspaper account of one of these visits indicates that while students

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[241] Todd Gitlin, *The Whole World is Watching: Mass Media in the Making and the Unmaking of the New Left* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003), 6.
[242] Sale, *SDS,* 440-441.

expressed interest in what the Justice Department had to say they remained highly distrustful of the Justice Department and the FBI.[243]

Perhaps the most telling failure of the COINTELPRO programs, even from the perspective of the FBI's motivations and goals, resulted from their failure to adequately stop and or respond to the threat posed by the Weathermen, the eventual violent faction of SDS. For all of the resources and energy thrown at investigating SDS, the Bureau ultimately proved unable to prevent actual acts of crime and terrorism. Though it is unrealistic to expect any enforcement agency to fully counter such efforts, this failure in the light of the intensive COINTELPRO programs bears examination. Because of the FBI's focus on personal expression in attitude, appearance, language and "immoral behavior," the Bureau often ended up persecuting the innocent. What is worse, by the FBI's own standards, this tunnel vision over respectability may have prevented the FBI from having adequate time and resources to pursue those involved in actual violent behavior, and it may also have served as a catalyst for that behavior by reinforcing ideals about corrupt government.

In 1973, when word about the COINTELPRO programs leaked out, the Justice Department issued a news release describing and justifying the program. After describing the number of bombings and campus injuries in the 1968-1969 school year and talking about street riots, Justice Department officials said:

> At this time of national crisis, the Government would have been derelict in its duty had it not taken measures to protect the fabric of our society. The FBI has the responsibility of investigating allegations of criminal violations and gathering intelligence regarding threats to the country's security. Because of the violent actions of the leadership of the New Left, FBI officials concluded that some

[243] Robert Reinhold, "Students Hostile to Justice Official," *New York Times*, 21 October 1970, 48.

> additional effort must be made to neutralize and disrupt this revolutionary movement.[244]

It must be pointed out that the Justice Department focused on 1968-1969, the year that the violent Weatherman faction emerged from what had been SDS. In a sense, the FBI retroactively justified its own actions, as its interest in SDS started at least as early as 1965, when SDS was largely a nonviolent movement. There is no doubt the FBI did try to "protect the fabric of [the] society" it viewed as respectable and legitimate - a society that did not include unkempt irresponsible youth.

[244] News Release, Department of Justice, 18 November 1974, Justice Department, 1974, Subject Files, Records Group 46, Records of the United States Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, 1951-1975, United States National Archives Main Branch, Washington, D.C.

CHAPTER 4

NOT JUST BLACK AND WHITE: THE AMERICAN INDIAN MOVEMENT AND THE CONTINUATION OF COUNTERINTELLIGENCE

At a February 1976 demonstration in Omaha, Nebraska a group calling itself the "Sioux United Nation" distributed a flyer that contained a letter addressed to FBI Director Clarence Kelly. After calling the Bureau "a finger of the invisible mind that dictates the law of this land," the letter chastised the Bureau for the imprisonment of American Indian Movement (AIM) leaders Dennis Banks and Leonard Crow Dog. The "Sioux United Nation" saw the Bureau as a part of an overarching power structure that established and enforced the law that native peoples lived with. These American Indian activists, like those in AIM, saw the FBI as the law enforcement agency most representative of their fight with the federal government and another example of the historical oppression of native peoples. The letter went on to declare that the FBI was "oppressing our people because of religious, moral and cultural beliefs."[245] There is ample evidence to suggest that the FBI did patrol and punish people based on cultural and moral views that clashed with what the FBI believed to be legitimate American ideals, and the investigation of the American Indian Movement continued that trend.

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[245] Tom LaBlanc to Clarence Kelley, Letter, 6 February 1976, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee,* University Publications of America.

This chapter looks at three specific aspects of the interaction between the FBI and AIM. First, it examines the complicated historical and jurisdictional relationship between the FBI and American Indians. This demonstrates the FBI's lack of cultural knowledge about American Indians and the Pine Ridge Reservation in particular, and the ways in which that ignorance, and rigid conceptions about legitimate authority, led them to ignore violence that they had a jurisdictional responsibility to investigate. Second, this chapter looks at the ways that the FBI's interaction with AIM demonstrated an ongoing preoccupation with notions of "respectability" and how American Indians specifically challenged the FBI's conception of what a true American was. Third, and perhaps most importantly, analyzing the FBI's interaction with AIM demonstrates how domestic counterintelligence worked in the years following the official end of the COINTELPRO programs and reveals that while the FBI made real changes to its policies and procedures, underlying attitudes about respectability still affected the way the FBI investigated social movement groups.

The historical and jurisdictional relationship between the Federal Bureau of Investigation and Native Americans, especially the Indians of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation and the American Indian Movement, is a complicated and often violent aspect of America's history. The fact that the FBI did have a specific responsibility to deal with major crimes occurring on Indian Reservations makes the FBI's involvement in the problems on the reservation somewhat different than its investigation of SDS and the Panthers. However, the FBI's actions toward AIM and the high-profile incidents on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation are important in understanding how counterintelligence operations operated in this period.

A group of urban Indians in Minneapolis, Minnesota founded AIM in 1968. The group originally focused on police and judicial injustices perpetrated on American Indian people. From that point, the group expanded its goals to include any injustice to Native Americans and eventually also encouraged its members to engage in traditional spiritual and cultural practices.[246] The group also focused on creating greater sovereignty for Indian tribes and greater respect for treaty rights. As AIM became a nationwide Indian protest movement, it also became the driving force behind a number of headline-grabbing events. These events included the occupation and destruction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs building in Washington, D.C., and numerous related protests elsewhere, which often resembled those of other protest groups such as SDS and the Black Panthers.

The pinnacle of these events came in 1973 when a group of AIM activists and a number of traditional Lakota occupied the small town of Wounded Knee, S.D. However, even before the standoff at the village of Wounded Knee, the amount of conflict on the reservation resulted in a heavy law enforcement presence there. In February of 1973, the Bureau circulated a memo reporting the number of law enforcement officers on the reservation in the weeks just before the Wounded Knee occupation. The memo gave a detailed listing of the federal law enforcement personnel on the reservation, including sixteen FBI Agents, forty-five Bureau of Indian Affairs Officers, and eighty United States Marshalls. In addition to these personnel, there were about 124 local and state police officers on the scene.[247] The number of law enforcement personnel would only increase

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[246] Vernon Bellecourt, "Birth of Aim," in *Native American Testimony,* ed. Peter Nabokov (New York: Penguin Books, 1991), 375.

[247] Minneapolis to Director, Letter, 14 February 1973, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee,* University Publications of America.

as the standoff between AIM and the government continued throughout the late winter and spring of 1973.

In understanding these interactions between the FBI and the American Indian Movement, it is important to analyze the unique relationship between the Bureau and crime on American Indian reservations. Starting with the passage of the Major Crimes Act of 1885, certain major crimes such as murder, rape, arson, and burglary, when committed on Indian reservations, fell under federal government jurisdiction, and thereby became the responsibility of the FBI. As historian Richard Gid Powers argues, "That was a historical anomaly that thrust [the FBI] into situations where it was resented by a local Indian population that nevertheless depended on it to preserve law and order when the local authorities proved unwilling or incompetent."[248] This uneasy relationship between the FBI and native peoples is clearly reflected in the FBI's interaction with the American Indian Movement.

At one point, AIM did seek out the FBI's help in dealing with some of the major problems they saw in Indian country. In 1972, before the standoff at Wounded Knee, AIM sent a letter to J. Edgar Hoover describing an incident in Gordon, Nebraska in which a group of white men abducted and murdered an Indian man. AIM argued that the FBI had a responsibility to pursue the case and arrest the men involved on federal charges.[249] Hoover responded that the Bureau was "following" the matter and would report their findings to the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department.[250] A note attached to the letter indicates that the FBI did have agents look into the situation, but the

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[248] Powers, *Broken,* 318.
[249] American Indian Movement to J. Edgar Hoover, Letter, undated, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee,* University Publications of America.
[250] J. Edgar Hoover to Vernon Bellacourt, Letter, 6 April 1972, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee,* University Publications of America.

Civil Rights Division had not requested that the Bureau take further action. This lack of action on a matter over which the FBI did have responsibility not only echoed the Bureau's early reluctance to involve itself in civil rights matters of any kind, but also served as an example of the ways in which the Federal Government failed to adequately deal with the real problems American Indian faced by failing to fully investigate and press for prosecution of Major Crimes violations on the reservation. In addition to their clearly legislated jurisdiction, the FBI's close relationship with local law enforcement suggests that should the FBI have made reservation violence a priority they may have been able to encourage better law enforcement practices in the surrounding communities such as Gordon.

Following the incidents at Gordon, AIM remained active in the area and attempted to draw attention to grievances on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. These grievances resulted in part from the heavy-handed actions of newly elected tribal chairman Dick Wilson. In his book *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse,* Peter Matthiessen argues that politics on the Pine Ridge reservation were divided into at least two factions. The first of these groups consisted of those who had more heavily assimilated into white culture and often held the few fairly lucrative jobs associated with the Tribal Council. The second group held more strongly to traditional Lakota ways and often lived in the outlying areas of the reservation more affected by violence and poverty. It was this second group who asked AIM to come to the reservation in order to help them deal with several instances of racial violence against tribal members.[251]

In response to this growing presence of protestors, Wilson organized a group of his followers into a private police force that came to be known as the GOONs (Guardians

[251] Matthiessen, *Spirit of Crazy Horse,* 28-32.

of the Oglala Nation). These supporters of Wilson used violence and intimidation to suppress any resistance to his tribal authority. When the FBI entered this complex picture, they lacked the knowledge needed to fully understand the situation and therefore backed Wilson and his GOONs. The Bureau did so because they viewed Wilson as the "legitimate" elected leader of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. This resulted in the deterioration of the Bureau's relationship with AIM and the more traditional faction at Pine Ridge who believed Wilson and his men were linked to instances of violence and death on the Pine Ridge Reservation following the Wounded Knee occupation.[252]

The FBI's dedication to the Wilson government resulted from several different factors. In the best case scenario, it stemmed from a complete lack of understanding by the U.S. government of the complexities of tribal politics. In the worst case scenario, this support was due to Wilson's willingness to sell tribal lands and resources. Undoubtedly, the backing of Wilson's government also stemmed from the FBI's conception of what constituted "legitimate" authority and leadership. Wilson, as an elected leader, however corrupt, would have been supported by the FBI as the authority figure on the reservation. As discussed in Chapter 1, the FBI expected all Americans worthy of citizenship to offer unwavering support to governmental authority and, in spite of whatever Wilson may have been involved in, would have viewed Wilson as an authority figure.

The Bureau's preoccupation with the importance of government authority is reflected in the Bureau's description of AIM:

> [AIM] was formed in 1968...as a civil rights organization. Its stated goals are to secure Indian self-determination and the right to be and think Indian; to eliminate the destructive tendencies of Christianity, white-oriented education and the Federal Government from Indian life, along with the yoke of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. All AIM chapters, leaders and members are not considered to be

[252] *Incident at Oglala,* Directed by Michael Apted, Miramax Films, 1992.

> violence-prone. Members of AIM, however, of the led by violence-prone leaders, participated in the takeover of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Building...and participated in confrontations with local authorities, resulting in violence....Since that time AIM leaders, members and supporters have been involved in numerous confrontations with local and federal authorities.[253]

In this description, though the FBI admits that AIM is a civil rights organization and that not all of its members and chapters are violent, it emphasizes the fact that AIM had directly confronted authorities. While it is understandable that an organization charged with ensuring the nation's internal security would investigate a group that participated in violent altercations, it also demonstrates that AIM's chief evil, according to the FBI, was not in loss of life or destruction of property (which the Bureau could have argued given their history with AIM), but the fact that they challenged the authority of local and federal law enforcement agencies. This is especially interesting given the fact that in another document one of the FBI's own informants "described AIM as primarily a spiritual organization organized for the purpose of reviving American Indian culture and uniting all of the American Indians."[254] Though there were a number of real injustices that AIM was combating, such as a number of racially motivated murders on Pine Ridge, the FBI, because of its focus on "legitimate" authority, sided with Tribal Chairmen Wilson, again making itself the object of suspicion for many native peoples.

The Wounded Knee standoff eventually ended peacefully after several rounds of negotiations between the AIM leadership and the Federal Government. The last of the activists surrendered to federal authorities on May 8, 1973. Following the occupation, the FBI made 532 arrests resulting in 185 indictments. Though two of AIM's main

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[253] Investigative Summary, Phoenix, Arizona, 2 October 1975, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee,* University Publications of America.
[254] Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, Unknown Document, 10 January 1973, The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee, University Publications of America.

leaders, Dennis Banks and Russell Means, ultimately saw all charges against them dismissed, the charges effectively tied up the leaders of AIM in lengthy court battles. In essence, the FBI used the apparatus of charge and arrest as a punitive measure, without being able to fully support the charges laid against the AIM leaders.

In 1975, another incident on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation also demonstrated the ways in which the FBI continued to both overreach in its authority and demonstrated that the Bureau's reaction to protest groups often lead to dangerous results for both the Bureau and the group being investigated. More importantly, it proved that the FBI did in fact have the resources to investigate crime on Pine Ridge, but only if the victims fell inside the boundaries of a "respectable" American.

On June 26 1975, two FBI Agents, Jack Coler and Ronald Williams, drove into a compound on the Pine Ridge Reservation where several members of AIM were living. A firefight ensued, leaving the two agents and one young Indian man, Joe Stuntz, dead. Evidence eventually led the FBI to conclude that someone fired the fatal shots at close range after the Agents had already been disabled. The FBI supposedly linked a shell casing found in the trunk of one of the agent's cars to a weapon Leonard Peltier had been carrying. This evidence became the key feature in the prosecution and conviction of Leonard Peltier in April 1977.[255]

Members of the American Indian Movement claimed that the incident at the Jumping Bull property was linked to major economic issues. "It was no accident," wrote Leonard Peltier, "that the day before...the head of the non-traditional tribal government was signing over to the federal government one-eighth of the Pine Ridge Indian

[255] This summary of events is combined from several sources: *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse* by Peter Mathiessen, *New York Times* coverage of the events, and the FBI's summary of the events found at http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/minn/peltier.htm.

Reservation."[256] By supporting the "traditional" people on the Pine Ridge Reservation, the American Indian Movement stood against the nontraditional tribal government and United States government, institutions viewed by many on the reservation as corrupt. Peltier and other AIM activists also argued that it was not AIM, but the government, that incited violent conflicts. "The federal government," wrote Peltier, "or, to be more accurate, certain elements within it – [sic] set out to destroy us in myriad subtle and not so subtle ways." If these claims by Peltier are correct, it demonstrates that the FBI put itself in the position to enforce the class-based priorities of a white, and in this case, Indian middle class who controlled the purse strings of the reservation and the ability of the federal government to make money off of Indian land, at the expense of individuals they felt fell outside of the American mainstream.

If the FBI did not actively foster the violence taking place on the Pine Ridge Reservation by supporting Wilson and his private guards, the FBI was at the very least ignoring it. No fewer than fifty-seven people linked to the "traditional" Indians or the American Indian Movement were murdered or died under suspicious circumstances in the time between Wounded Knee II and the shootout on June 26, 1975. The FBI did not publish any conclusive results of an investigation into these deaths until a report issued almost twenty-five years later. In essence, the Pine Ridge Reservation had been involved in a civil war with very real casualties, and the FBI, the law enforcement agency with jurisdictional authority over murder on the reservation did not make a true effort to even address these deaths until two decades later.

The Bureau also dismissed the possibility that the violent altercation on the Jumping Bull compound had anything to do with the Wounded Knee standoff, or that the

[256] Leonard Peltier, *Prison Writings: My Life is My Sun Dance*, (New York, St. Martin's Press 1999), 115.

FBI had any role or responsibility for what had happened. FBI statements on the matter refer only to violence between native peoples, and seem to indicate that the federal government had no direct role or responsibility for the heightened tension on the reservation. An official FBI account of the events stated, "The Indian factionalism that resulted from Wounded Knee possibly contributed to an atmosphere of tension."[257] By placing the blame for the violence on the reservation only on "Indian factionalism," the Bureau dismissed the events of June 26, 1975 as nothing more than an isolated act of criminal violence. In their version of this history, the FBI dodged accountability by stating that the sole cause of violence on the Pine Ridge Reservation resulted from the violent nature of the Indian activists.

In the years following the trial, the FBI opposition against Leonard Peltier never diminished. In 2001, when President Bill Clinton considered granting clemency to Peltier, the FBI strongly protested, through both official and unofficial channels. FBI Director Louis Freeh urged President Clinton not to grant clemency to Peltier, as did Kathleen L. McChesney, the Special Agent in Charge of the Chicago Field Office. [258]

Groups of agents held their own protests at the White House in order to voice their opinions on Peltier's request for clemency. During one protest, FBI Agent Association president John Sennett called Peltier "a violent thug," and said he did not understand how people could want him released from prison. Other agents also spoke out against Peltier. "I don't know about the politics," said David Price, former partner of Agent Williams. "All I know is what happened on that day, and Leonard Peltier is not an

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[257] Minnesota Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice. *Leonard Peltier Case,* accessed 16 April 2002, http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fo/minn/peltier.htm.

[258] Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Department of Justice, "SAC McChesney Opposes Clemency for Peltier," 8 December 2000, accessed 16 April 2002, http://www.fbi.gov/contact/fbi/fo/chgo/pressrel/2000/dec-08b.htm

innocent man."[259] In spite of the fact that the FBI originally listed sixteen people as wanted in connection with the murders, and that four people were indicted, the Federal Bureau of Investigation seemed determined to convict Peltier. Since 1976, they have continued to assert that he is the only man who murdered the two agents, and John Sennett's labeling of Peltier as a "violent thug" suggests that the strategy of branding the perceived enemies as violent and criminal with loaded language was a tradition that remained alive and well in the Bureau.

It would not be until the year 2000 that the FBI would attempt to address fully many of the suspicious deaths and unsolved murders on the Pine Ridge Reservation. In a report titled *Accounting for Native American Deaths, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation South Dakota,* the Minneapolis Division of the FBI addressed fifty-seven specific cases raised by a 1999 forum of the South Dakota Advisory Committee of the United States Commission on Civil Rights. In the report, the FBI claimed, "We reviewed our records of these deaths and found that most had been solved either through conviction or finding that the death had not been a murder according to the law. The remaining unresolved murders were known to the FBI and remain under investigation."[260] In the report, the FBI admits to no wrongdoing or misconduct in any of the fifty-seven cases, again supporting the argument that the FBI used its manpower and resources to stop violence only when members of their own organization had been killed, and even when they had a jurisdictional responsibility to do so.

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[259] Ibid.
[260] Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Accounting for Native American Deaths, Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, South Dakota: report of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Minneapolis Division,* United States Department of Justice, (2000), Forward page.

In some of the cases labeled “unsolved” by the Human Rights Commission, the FBI stated that the individuals who were responsible had been convicted of the crimes. Also, some of the deaths listed did fall outside the jurisdiction of the Bureau. In spite of these cases, the fact that the report lists ten “accidental” deaths is staggering, especially considering that all ten victims were members of the American Indian Movement. Even more interesting is the fact that the FBI lists thirteen deaths in the report for which they could not gather enough evidence to charge or convict those involved. The report makes no comment about the overall pattern of violence represented by the deaths, nor does it address larger concerns of the FBI’s total cooperation with BIA officials and Dick Wilson’s arguably corrupt tribal government.

Considering the two agents were, in fact, murdered on the reservation the FBI's view of AIM as violent and not "respectable" is perhaps understandable. However, there were groups from outside the reservation that backed up the assertion that the FBI's behavior on the Pine Ridge Reservation constituted a large part of the problems there. For example, in March 1975, the Mountain States Regional Office of the United States Commission on Civil Rights wrote a memo to its commissioners regarding the problems on the Pine Ridge Reservation. “MSRO staff,” the memo said, “feel that there is sufficient credibility in reports reaching this office to cast doubt on the propriety of the actions by the FBI.” The memo specifically cited the difference between the FBI’s casual treatment of the murders of Native Americans on the reservation and the 300 agents who went to the reservation to investigate the murders of the two FBI Agents.

"The sentiment prevails," said the memo, "that life is cheap on the Pine Ridge Reservation." [261]

The FBI clearly felt that AIM's lack of "respectability" not only put them outside the legitimate political spectrum but also made their very lives less valuable than those of their own agents. On one hand, the FBI's dedication and loyalty to its own employees is understandable; however, the FBI's disregard, willful or otherwise, of the violence and death on the reservation further demonstrates that the FBI viewed AIM and the Pine Ridge Reservation as outside their area of concern.

The second important aspect of the FBI's counterintelligence programs illustrated by the FBI's interaction with the American Indian Movement is the FBI's complex and problematic construction of American respectability. American Indians were at once the most essentially American and most truly foreign culture that the FBI dealt with, domestically, in this era. Not only did many native people have different religious and cultural values, the internal politics of Native American tribes and their ideas about power and consensus worked very differently than the FBI customarily dealt with. As such, the FBI interaction with AIM and the people of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation provides a window for understanding the ways in which the FBI could be driven by their own middle-class, white ideals to make large errors in judgment and risk the freedom of innocent American citizens. Analyzing the key interactions between the FBI and AIM and how these interactions demonstrate a consistent effort by the FBI to enforce their idea of "order" serves as a way to analyze the continuing difficulty the FBI faced as it

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[261] Mountain States Regional Office, United States Commission on Civil Rights, *Events Surrounding Recent Murders on the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota*. Memo to the Commissioners, 31 March 1975.

attempted to reconcile its narrow definition of respectability with the realities of a diverse nation.

For the FBI, American Indians, and especially American Indian activists, fell squarely outside the FBI definition of what it meant to be legitimately "American" and yet, as indigenous peoples, their place in American history and culture could not be as easily dismissed as the members of SDS or the Black Panthers. The ambivalence of white Americans, especially white American men, to native peoples is not a phenomenon unique to the FBI's encounters with the American Indian Movement. In his book *Playing Indian*, Philip J. Deloria speaks of complex attitudes towards natives which have existed from the very founding of the United States. He writes, "Savage Indians served Americans as oppositional figures against whom one might imagine a civilized national Self. Coded as freedom, however, wild Indianess proved equally attractive, setting up a 'have-the-cake-and-eat-it-too' dialectic of simultaneous desire and repulsion."[262] To further complicate this dynamic, Deloria explores another phenomenon which is particularly relevant to the era in question, that of the counterculture's appropriation of Native American ideas and imagery as a way of rejecting dominant white middle-class values. White-hippie culture appropriated many stereotypical signs of "Indian-ness" such as long-hair, beads, and headbands and therefore, the FBI come to associate these forms of expression with individuals who were not worthy of a legitimate place in American society, yet those same symbols, when it came to native people, were also a symbol of something that was essentially American.

John Sanchez and Mary E. Stuckey further argue that the federal government used particular language to control the challenges that AIM presented to them. Sanchez and

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[262] Philip J. Deloria, *Playing Indian,* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press), 1998, 3.

Stuckey refer to this phenomenon as "rhetorical exclusion." They argue that this tactic "justifies whatever tactics those in power deem necessary to control challenges to its legitimacy, especially constant vigilance against any challengers, constant surveillance of them."[263] By using rhetoric to turn American Indian Movement members into villains, the federal government could justify their overreaching actions against U.S. citizens.

As a result of their altercations with AIM, FBI agents and officials frequently voiced their unease about dealing with American Indian activists, particularly on the reservation. Clarence M. Kelley, who was director of the FBI at the time, wrote about the nature of the conflict in his book, "The complexity and scope of the Wounded Knee drama nearly exceeded our resources, placing demands upon us in ways more serious than Watergate…During the occupation our men were placed in a military combat situation, a role they were never trained for."[264] Though Kelley does not admit that the FBI did anything wrong in its involvement at Wounded Knee, this statement makes it clear that FBI agents felt what happened during the standoff at Wounded Knee went far beyond the scope of their normal duties.

In addition, during a series of questions from the Senate Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs regarding the incidents at the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Wounded Knee, the FBI was asked what kind of training its agents had for handling "civil disorders." The Bureau responded by saying, "Special Agents of the FBI receive extensive training in techniques and mechanics of arrest and raid procedures; however, as a group they have not been trained in, and have had no experience with, handling civil

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[263] John Sanchez and Mary E. Stuckey, "Rhetorical Exclusion: the Government's Case Against American Indian Activists, AIM, and Leonard Peltier." *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* 23, no. 2, (1999), 28.
[264] Kelley and Kirkpatrick, 227.

disorders of the unruly crowd or riot types."[265] Though the FBI had in fact been investigating "civil disorders" for years, it is interesting that once they began working with AIM and the traditional factions of the Pine Ridge Reservation, officials often expressed a sense of being ill equipped to handle the situation, a phenomenon that did not seem to occur in FBI interactions with other protest groups. The exact reasons for this are not entirely clear.

This appears to be an example of the "simultaneous desire and repulsion" towards native peoples that Deloria discusses, in that FBI Agents experienced some degree of interest and sympathy for native culture while at the same time being repulsed by the activist members of AIM. In addition, it may also represent the fact that FBI agents found reservation culture and the intricacies of intratribal politics much more complex and confusing than what they encountered with other protest groups, like the Black Panthers and SDS, whom they thought they understood. In addition, because the FBI had a jurisdictional responsibility for major crime on the reservation they felt obligated to try and deal with the situation, even though they were clearly unprepared to deal with a culturally complex situation.

Some agents and informants also embraced racial stereotypes. Ironically, the Bureau often suggested that these stereotypes meant that the person in question was not capable or likely to pose a serious threat. For example, one FBI document reported that an official of the Flathead Agency stated that an Indian person under investigation "is a total and complete alcoholic and while under the influence of alcohol makes many rash and radical statements but he has never known him to have participated in any radical

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[265] Acting Director, FBI to Deputy Attorney General Unknown Document type, 2 April 1973, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee,* University Publications of America.

Indian activity. In view of the above, no further investigation was conducted."[266] In another example, an FBI informant stated that the individual of interest was part of a group that "wants to abide by the terms of the Sioux Treaty of 1868." However, the informant stated that the individual and the other members of this group were, "members of a dying race since they hold to old traditions." The informant went on to dismiss this individual because of his "advanced age."[267] For the individuals involved, the FBI's ignorance spared them from investigation and could therefore be positive; however, it also reveals an undercurrent which suggests that the FBI thought these individuals incapable of logical thinking and political action by invoking the stereotypes of the drunken Indian or an old member of a "dying race." In this way, the FBI negatively categorized even those native individuals whom they found to be innocent, and perpetuated negative images of American Indian people.

The third and potentially most important aspect of the FBI's programs illustrated by the Bureau's interaction with AIM was the nature of domestic counterintelligence after the end of the official COINTELPRO programs. The above mentioned Sioux United Nation demonstration in Omaha took place in 1976, three years after the FBI claimed that its COINTELPRO programs had been shut down. Were these activists simply reacting to the FBI's past actions, or were they responding to an ongoing effort by the FBI to police and enforce their version of the ideal American society even after COINTELPRO's demise? New FBI leadership and an increase of political and public pressure did lead to significant changes in how the FBI dealt with counterintelligence

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[266] SAC,Butte to Director, FBI, Memorandum, 6 October 1975, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee,* University Publications of America.
[267] Minneapolis, Minnesota, Report, 31 May 1973, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee,* University Publications of America.

work. However, in spite of these changes, the underlying cultural battles over what it meant to be American still significantly impacted the FBI's actions and its purported mission to effectively and impartially serve the American people.

In the early 1970s, the FBI faced two potentially game-changing events, the March 1971 theft and subsequent publication of a large number of FBI documents from the Media, Pennsylvania office of the FBI and the May 1972 death of Director J. Edgar Hoover. The Media, PA break-in revealed the extent and illegality of the FBI's counterintelligence activities and led to the official discontinuation of the COINTELPRO programs and to a greater level of congressional and public scrutiny of the FBI's programs. This scrutiny culminated in the 1976 investigations of the Senate Select Committee to Study Government Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities led by Idaho Senator Frank Church. As discussed in the introduction, the report of this committee laid bare the FBI's wrongdoing in the COINTELPRO programs and declared that the only logic behind the Bureau's actions came from a need "to combat perceived threatens to the existing social and political order."[268] This led to tighter congressional scrutiny of the Bureau and eventually to stronger rules governing the conduct of the FBI.

The second significant factor was that Hoover's death finally led to a change in leadership. Hoover had led the Bureau as its director for half a century, and his death naturally created the opportunity for new thinking in the Bureau. Though the FBI briefly floundered under short-term appointees caught up in the drama of the Watergate scandal, it found a new director in Clarence M. Kelley in 1973. Though Kelley repeatedly defended the COINTELPRO programs that had existed in the previous administrations,

[268] Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities, United States Senate, 94th Congress, 2nd Session, April 23 1976, Book III: Supplementary Detailed Staff Reports on Intelligence Activities and the Rights of Americans, 3.

he also made commitments that the abuses of that era would not continue. In a sense, Kelley was both right and wrong in his assertion that the COINTELPRO programs would not continue.

FBI documents do reveal a new cautiousness and focus when it came to the investigation of AIM after 1973. The FBI still surveilled and recorded constitutionally protected behavior, but by all appearances the FBI limited its investigations to prevent or punish actual crime. One of the most interesting examples of is a November 1972 document that demonstrates that at least one FBI official sought approval for "the implementation of an intensified effort to identify violence prone individuals or organizations within the American Indian Movement" following AIM's occupation of the Bureau of Indian Affairs office. The official wanted this effort to track the numbers of individuals involved in AIM and the plans of the organization, whether they were violent or nonviolent. As part of this plan, the FBI would begin a "informant development program" within the American Indian Movement. A hand written note on the bottom of the memo, says "No. See my notes," with an unclear signature. The referred to notes state, "We are all OUTRAGED by the conduct of these Indians." However, the official then goes on to outline the specific legal course that would need to be taken in order to investigate AIM, including "definitive guidelines from the DJ [Department of Justice] supported by legal authority." The notes also state that if the Department of Justice did give such orders, "Then tone down the rhetoric in our teletype to set forth a straight set of orders to do a job." Though it is unclear who these directions came from, an additional attached page contains a similar opinion with a note written in bold capital letters, "I am not sure we should go this far." The handwriting and placement of this note in the

documents indicate that it may have come from W. Mark Felt, who was the Associate Director at the time and would later go on to be the informer "Deep Throat."[269] This document reveals that as early as November of 1972, FBI officials strove to ensure that their operations fell within the bounds of the law and that even if a group "outraged" them, they still needed to go through proper channels in order to prosecute the individuals.

A later document from Felt seems to reflect both the Justice Department's need to investigate the possibility of violence and the more level-headed FBI official's need to be more cautious in the rhetoric and authority of their investigations. The document orders the Albany field office (and presumably other field offices as well) to conduct a "survey" of their division that includes the number of Indians and reservations in their division, the tribal affiliation of those reservations, and the extremist individuals or organizations in the Indian community. The document then goes on to give the specific regulations under which the investigation should take place and states that all investigations should be "discreet."[270] Though it should be noted that in this case the Bureau still targeted individuals just for being Indian, this does reflect an attempt by the Bureau to ensure that the collection of the data was targeted and conducted within specific guidelines. While this appears to be a minor change, it is significant in that it demonstrates that the Bureau's new leadership, unlike Hoover, was painfully aware of the need to make sure their actions could stand up to later scrutiny.

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[269] G.C. Moore to E.S. Miller, Memorandum, FBI, 27 November 1972, *American Indian Movement*, Reproduced on Microfilm by University Publications of America. Emphasis in original.
[270] W. Mark Felt to SAC, Albany, Airtel, 15 December 1972, *American Indian Movement*, Reproduced on Microfilm by University Publications of America.

The Bureau also, finally, expressed some concern about the persecution of innocent individuals. A memo from the FBI director to the Special Agent in Charge of the Minneapolis office ordered that people who merely attended AIM gatherings should not be targets of investigation. The memo read:

> Review of pending communications concerning investigations of individuals who are affiliated with supporters of AIM by FBIHQ in many instances reveals the activities of these individuals have not proven to be militant, nor have they involved themselves in activities of a violent nature or in possible violations of Federal statutes. As a result, it has been necessary for FBIHQ to direct letters to the field instructing that investigation be discontinued.[271]

Though it is obvious that the undercover operations did not cease after J. Edgar Hoover's death, the new leadership at least indicates a growing concern in the Bureau to reduce the scrutiny placed on members of the American Indian Movement individuals not guilty of a crime.

In another document, the Acting Director's office wrote to the Albany office that even if they were investigating an "extremist" AIM chapter, they should be careful about the individuals they reported on: "if investigation indicates a particular member is not an activist or does not have a propensity for violence, nothing need be submitted to the Bureau regarding the individual."[272] This specifically indicates that the Bureau not only ordered the agents not to harass or punish nonviolent members of AIM, but that they should not even record their identity or movements. This represents a distinct change in FBI policy, and perhaps the first indication that, after Hoover, FBI officials finally began to realize that the very act of surveilling and recording the movements of innocent individuals stepped over the line of ethics and legality. However, it should be noted that

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[271] Director, FBI to SAC, Minneapolis, Memorandum, FBI, January 1975 (exact date illegible*), The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee*, University Publications of America.
[272] Acting Director, FBI to SAC, Albany, Airtel, 13 June 1973, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee,* University Publications of America.

in spite of this change, the FBI still focused on specific individuals just because of their membership in AIM.

Another possible sign of change was the fact that in the early 1970s, two particular types of "form letter" also appear in FBI documents regarding many of the individuals being investigated. The first form indicates that person investigated falls under an agreement between the FBI and the Secret Service to handle issues "concerning Presidential protection." It then gives a series of check boxes to indicate how the person falls under that category. Most of these documents that apply to members of AIM are checked "Subversives, ultrarightists, racists and fascist" who have been arrested or convicted of "prior acts" or who make statements "indicating a propensity for violence and antipathy toward good order and government."[273] A second form letter, which generally appears later, indicates that the individual being investigated is "Potentially dangerous because of background, emotional instability or activity in groups engaged in activities inimical to U.S." and a second page indicates that the person is engaged in a violation of Title 18, U.S. Code Section 2383 or 2384.[274] Again, these examples demonstrate that the FBI made sincere efforts to adhere to legal guidelines for investigations, and suggests that the changes in leadership, and perhaps more importantly, the sudden public scrutiny of their actions, did in fact cause the Bureau to become more cautious in their dealings with social movement groups.

However, while these changes were real and significant, they reflect more a change in procedure and discretion than in the culture of the FBI, and as other events

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[273] J. Edgar Hoover to U.S. Secret Service, Albuquerque, Form, 31 August 1970, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee*, University Publications of America.
[274] Clarence M. Kelley to Director, Unites States Secret Service, Form, 2 October 1975, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee*, University Publications of America.

with the American Indian Movement illustrate, while the letter of the law may have changed in counterintelligence, the spirit of the law remained the same. In fact, even as the Bureau committed itself to not investigating innocent people, it still felt no compunction against investigating anyone who got involved with AIM's public protests, even if they had not been convicted of a crime. For example, after two protests in South Dakota the Acting Director instructed that "extremist cases should be opened" on anyone who was "involved in and arrested."[275] The FBI did not investigate only those convicted of crimes in conjunction with the demonstration but those who were "arrested." Since AIM was already protesting against what they felt were the racist leanings of local officials, the fact that the FBI opened a case file on anyone "arrested" allows for the possibility that innocent people again may have been targeted, and again shows the Bureau's predisposition to support anyone they saw as a legitimate authority at the expense of the civil rights of American citizens. In another example, the FBI conducted surveillance of the Amerind Group at University of Arizona, and even though there existed "no connection between the Amerind Club and any national or militant organization," the FBI still documented the club and reported on its activities.[276] Here the FBI recorded the activities of an official, university affiliated group, simply because it expressed interest in the issues facing Indian people.

Similar to the concerns about an alliance between SDS and the Panthers, mentioned in Chapter 2, the FBI expressed concerns about the fact that AIM became involved with other protest groups, and some FBI documents clearly try to categorize

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[275] SAC, Kansas City to Acting Director, FBI, Memorandum, 7 June 1973, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee,* University Publications of America.
[276] Phoenix to Acting Director, unknown document type, 27 December 1972, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee,* University Publications of America.

AIM as a danger by playing up its connections to those groups. For example, the description of AIM in one FBI document states that AIM members "strongly relate their movement to the, what they consider, successful Black and Chicano movements currently in progress in the United States." The description then goes on to declare that AIM members "strongly believe and advocate violent confrontation with the 'pigs' as a means of bringing notoriety to the Indian movement."[277] Here the FBI focuses not on the stated goals of AIM itself but seeks to lump them in with other protest groups, and then goes a step farther to attribute the most infamous law-enforcement slur associated with groups like the Panthers to the American Indian Movement. Though AIM would in fact have probably labeled the FBI in this way, the fact that the FBI invokes it suggests that they wanted to paint AIM as the same kind of threat to the safety of law enforcement officers as the Panthers.

In addition, the FBI subjected a group of Indian activists in San Francisco to scrutiny not because of the goals of the group themselves but because they "allowed non-Indians from more militant groups to 'dominate' and participate in their demonstrations."[278] One document explicitly states that the FBI remained extremely concerned about AIM and other Indian activist groups meeting with members of other protest groups. A document discussing the investigation of the 1973 AIM convention stated, "Indications of support by white revolutionaries or black extremists is of particular significance and must be promptly reported."[279] Clearly, as in the case of the Panthers

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[277] MP 157-1509, Unknown Document Identified only by number, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee,* University Publications of America.
[278] SAC, San Francisco to Acting Director, FBI, Memorandum, 28 June 1973, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee,* University Publications of America.
[279] SAC, Oklahoma to Director, FBI, Teletype, 23 July 1973, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee,* University Publications of America.

and SDS, the FBI felt concerned about the connections AIM might make with other protest groups.

In addition, the Bureau often used the excuses of the COINTELPRO era when they botched investigations in Indian country. In the case of the murder of AIM activist Anna Mae Aquash, evidence suggested that the FBI at the very least mishandled a highly sensitive murder investigation. The original autopsy of the body listed exposure as the cause of death and the coroner, in a particularly grisly detail, cut the hands off the body. According to the FBI, the coroner did this in order to preserve the hands for fingerprint identification, but this weak explanation, and the incident in general, further enraged Aquash's family and friends. Only after the Wounded Knee Legal Defense Offense Committee requested an independent autopsy and the body was exhumed did they discover that she had actually died from a gunshot wound to the head.[280]

If the FBI deliberately overlooked the autopsy details, then they were guilty of criminal conduct and at the very least, this behavior demonstrated an attitude of gross negligence toward an especially important homicide case. However, when asked about the case in an article in *The Washington Star,* Director Clarence Kelley trotted out an old J. Edgar Hoover line. The article stated, "Kelley said the FBI investigates violations of 13 specific major crimes on Indian reservations, but these investigations are started 'only after the fact' and he emphasized that the FBI 'is not a policing or protective organization.'"[281] While the FBI's official counterintelligence practices may have changed in regard to civil rights groups, clearly the excuses they gave for failure had not. As

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[280] There are a number of different and contradictory accounts of these events. However, the events as related here come from both AIM related sources and those given in Kelley and Kirkpatrick, 240-244.
[281] Jerry Oppenheimer, "Kelley Issues Chronology of AIM Case," 27 May 1976, *The Washington Star*, A-3 and A-6.

before, Kelley hid behind the excuse that the FBI did not have a responsibility to protect individuals on Indian reservations. However, in light of the FBI's jurisdictional responsibility over crimes on Pine Ridge, this excuse was flimsier than ever and revealed the FBI's continuing disregard for responsibilities when it came to people it saw as being outside mainstream America.

The final point that demonstrates FBI culture remained concerned about ideas of respectability is the fact that the FBI worried that "legitimate" leaders would begin to work with AIM. In the course of one investigation, the FBI reported on a Chippewa Tribal Council meeting held in Duluth, Minnesota. The FBI reported that "influential" leaders from urban and reservation Indian communities attended, and that these leaders included a group from an organization created by then Vice President Spiro Agnew. The report stated that, "AIM is a recognized faction, having some degree of influence on the urban Indian community . . .[and it] may use the meeting for propaganda purposes and attempt to gain support for their movement." The document goes on to express concern over the fact that some of the leaders involved in the meeting were sympathetic to AIM.[282] Here, even the FBI's own sources call AIM a "recognized faction" with "influence" and yet the FBI still worried about AIM spreading it's message to "influential" leaders. Again, this concern stems from the fact that if respected people began to listen to and support AIM's goals, AIM could then become part of "respectable" America, an idea which surely seemed impossible to the FBI, especially as it continued to defend its particularly narrow definition of what constituted a respectable American.

[282] Minneapolis to Director, FBI et. al., Teletype, 5 January 1973, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee,* University Publications of America.

The FBI's policing of who and what was legitimately American had powerful effects on the social movements and individuals it targeted. On February 18, 1977, several groups held a "panel discussion on the FBI and government harassment." One of the speakers was AIM leader Dennis Banks who, according to a report in *The Militant,* "detailed the long history of repression suffered by Native Americans. He said the constant harassment, imprisonment, and killing of AIM members make it difficult for the eight-year-old organization to function."[283] AIM did not simply discuss the matter they also tried to take "legitimate" legal action. AIM, along with five other organizations, filed an ACLU class action suit against a number of government organizations, including the FBI. The suit asked for monetary punitive damages, but also requested that all the documents collected by the government organizations be released to the groups in question. An AIM press release stated that they believed the documents would demonstrate, "a long sequence of immoral and criminal acts directed by United States governmental agencies against AIM and its membership."[284] AIM was certainly right about what FBI documents about COINTELPRO reveal, not only do they demonstrate "immoral and criminal acts," but they also demonstrate that the FBI policed people based on their own definition of it what meant to be American.

It is clear that while the official end of the COINTELPRO programs did make the FBI more cautious in its investigations of social movement groups and more determined to carry out these investigations in a legal fashion, its investigations of AIM still largely reflected the white, middle-class, male culture of Hoover's FBI and what that culture viewed as rightfully American. The notion of who and what constitutes an American and

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[283] Sandy Porter, "Oakland Forum Hits FBI Crimes," *The Militant*, 18 March 1977, 28.
[284] American Indian Movement, Press Release, 28 October 1975, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee,* University Publications of America.

is worthy of the protections of American citizenship is such a truly power laden concept that even the leadership of AIM, in spite of their conflicts with the federal government, sought to claim it.

In the Anchorage *Daily Times*, Ramon Robideaux an AIM attorney and member of the Redbud Sioux tribe told a group of Alaska natives at a workshop that, "When white men call the warriors at Wounded Knee hooligans and renegades the white men are forgetting their own history. Two hundred years ago it was Americans who were called hooligans and renegades for doing the same things we did at Wounded Knee to protest the insensitivity and irresponsiveness of the English government."[285] Here Robideaux not only questions the idea that members of AIM are "hooligans" for defending their political and cultural beliefs, but states that they are firmly inside an American tradition of fighting against overreaching government authority.

[285] Anchorage, Alaska, Report, 23 July 1973, *The FBI Files on the American Indian Movement and Wounded Knee*, University Publications of America.

CONCLUSION

In 2004, FBI Special Agent Bassem Youssef, a high ranking Arab-American counterterrorist specialist, filed a discrimination suit against the federal government. In this suit Youssef claimed that he had been passed over for promotion and faced job discrimination within the Bureau. He argued that this discrimination resulted from two factors, first that he was an Egyptian-born U.S. citizen and secondly because of critical statements he had made to the Director of the FBI and to Congress about the Bureau's counterterrorism programs.

In Youssef's opinion, the FBI's counterterrorism efforts were significantly hampered by its view that "cultural understanding of the Middle East and radical Islamic groups, as well as the Arabic language, was unnecessary."[286] Youssef also suggested in a radio interview that this failure to understand Muslim culture and Arab languages led the FBI to conduct investigations of innocent people.[287] As of July 2012, Youssef's discrimination case against the Bureau remained in litigation.[288] If Youssef's allegations were correct, the FBI remained not only unable to fully grasp cultural differences key to understanding major terrorist groups, but they also censured someone they felt did not

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[286] "FBI Whistleblower Answers Questions in Philadelphia." American Library Association. http://www.ala.org/ala/alonline/currentnews/newsarchive/2008/january2008/bassemyoussef.cfm. Posted January 13, 2008.

[287] "FBI Counterterrorism Official Bassem Youssef Says Inexperience and Lack of Arab Language Skills Hampering the War on Terror and Causing Civil Liberties Violations," Transcript, *All Things Considered*, National Public Radio, 11 January 2008, http://www.npr.org/about/press/2008/011108.youssef.html.

[288] Mike Scarcella, "D.C. Circuit Revives FBI Agent's Discrimination Claim Against Bureau," *The Blog of Legal Times*. 20 July 2012.

live up to the FBI's ideal American in both his ethnic background and his willingness to speak out against the agency. This is in spite of the fact that Youssef was one of their own agents.

Youssef's accusations suggest that while the official COINTELPRO programs officially came to end three decades ago, many of the underlying issues and problems remain. The example of Bassem Youssef suggests that the FBI still investigates people based on race and also on the basis of constitutionally protected behavior, in the case of current counterterrorism, the free expression of religion. In addition, the FBI's unwillingness to understand complicated cultural tensions may be preventing the agency from adequately fulfilling its own mission to protect American citizens and investigate those individuals who participate in acts of domestic terror. Though the rhetoric may have changed from fighting "subversives" to fighting "terrorists," Youssef's accusations suggest that the FBI still dedicates its resources to surveilling people based on criteria other than participation in actual criminal activity.

The initial question this project examined was why, beyond politics and race, the FBI targeted some social movement groups over others, but it quickly evolved into an examination of why and how the FBI became so obsessed over noncriminal factors such as race, appearance, speech, and behavior. Examining the culture of the FBI revealed that the FBI held particular views of what constituted an American citizen and that FBI agents themselves had to live up to the exacting narrowness of FBI culture. These views led the FBI to shape a view of a world in which anyone who challenged white, middle-class values could be seen as criminal, regardless of whether or not those actions broke the law.

In addition, by examining the ways the FBI used race and class in investigating and punishing social movements, it becomes clear that though race remained a factor in determining whether a person could be seen as "legitimate," to the FBI, class status also served as an indicator of respectability. This becomes especially clear in the comparison between the FBI's similar tactics against the Black Panther and the Ku Klux Klan.

Third, in examining the FBI's actions against youth-oriented movements like SDS, the FBI saw individuals as troublemakers and punished them, based on their age and forms of expression, including the way a person dressed or spoke. This suggests that the Bureau used constitutionally protected behavior as a criterion for punishment, and also may have prevented the Bureau from focusing on individuals involved in actual crime.

Finally, understanding the FBI's actions against AIM demonstrates the problems with the FBI's narrow definition of "American" and the way that definition was particularly challenged when the Bureau became involved in conflict with native activists. In addition, that chapter demonstrated that while the FBI made significant changes to procedure and protocol, the underlying attitudes of the COINTELPRO era remained in play long after the FBI officially ended these programs - an argument that supports Youssef's accusations about the current problems at the FBI.

With this analysis of the FBI's very specific and narrow definition of what constituted a legitimate citizen, many of the seemingly strange and contradictory behaviors of the FBI come into focus. This helps to explain why the FBI would investigate both the Klan and African-American civil rights groups at the same time, why they would seek to get a young woman fired from her future job for wearing a long skirt,

and why Agent Williams could be disgusted with SNCC while respecting a member of the NAACP, even when both were working toward the same kinds of social change in Mississippi.

These arguments support the overall conclusion that a number of factors beyond political affiliation and actual criminal behavior determined who the FBI surveilled and punished in counterintelligence efforts during the late 1960s and 1970s. Further, as a result of the FBI's distinctions regarding criminality, the Bureau subverted the constitutionally protected rights of individuals and organizations that, for social and cultural reasons, they deemed undesirable. In essence, the FBI was patrolling not crime, but American society and culture to ensure that it lived up to the white, male, middle-class standards of the FBI leadership, and to some extent, the federal government itself.

When the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence began investigating federal intelligence agencies in 1975, its committee chair Senator Frank Church stated:

> We are not seeking to undermine these [intelligence] organizations, we are seeking to understand what's been going on. Our ultimate objective is not to wreck them, but, if necessary, to reform them. In a free society, nothing is more crucial than to maintain intelligence activities and police activities in accordance with a very high standard... A free society depends upon maintaining a delicate balance between preserving individual freedom, on the one hand, and maintaining a good order on the other, and if that equilibrium ever tips too far in one direction, it results in tyranny. If it tips too far in the other, it results in anarchy. So ours is a very delicate mission to determine how we must maintain that balance.[289]

In Church's eyes, the committee he chaired was trying to find a way to curb programs like COINTELPRO, while still allowing federal law enforcement agencies, like the FBI, to do their job. In addition, the Church Committee and the oversight legislation that

[289] Frank Church, Transcript, *Face the Nation*, 2 February 1975, Series 2.6 Select Committee on Intelligence Activities, Frank Church Archives, Boise State University Albertsons Library.

resulted from the committee's findings clarified the role of intelligence agencies, like the FBI, and sought to ensure their actions fell squarely with the bounds of the law.

However, not everyone agreed that the FBI needed to be investigated and reformed. Not surprisingly, a former FBI Agent named M.E. Steffen wrote to the Senator and stated that someone he knew had suggested that Senator Church and his committee be tried "for treason," as they had "given more aid and comfort to the enemies of this country (within and without) than any one he knows of in the history of this great nation."[290] Senator Church received many similar letters that suggested that, even in light of the obvious abuses committed by the FBI, the simple act of investigating the intelligence agencies and suggesting guidelines to prevent such abuses threatened the Bureau's ability to protect America. This illustrates that the FBI's narrow vision of America did have support of at least a portion of the American people.

This is not to say that the FBI took this as carte blanche to ignore the suggestions made by the Senate Select Committee. As the FBI moved away from the reign of Director J. Edgar Hoover, the organization did continue to make changes. On March 10, 1976, Attorney General Edward H. Levi issued guidelines that would help limit the scope of the FBI's intelligence activities. Two years later, in 1978, William Webster was appointed director and would serve until 1987. Webster had been a federal judge with the U.S. Court of Appeals and would go on to actively recruit women and minorities into the FBI.[291] This inclusion of minorities in the Bureau helped soften, slightly, the "us against them" mentality of the civil rights era.

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[290] M.E. Steffen to Frank Church, Letter, 14 May 1976, Series 2.6 Select Committee on Intelligence Activities, Frank Church Archives, Boise State University Albertsons Library.

[291] For a very readable history of the changes made by William Webster see Ronald Kessler, *The FBI*: *Inside the World's Most Powerful Law Enforcement Agency,* (New York: Pocket Books 1993).

However, while the official counterintelligence programs officially came to an end, and the FBI did make actual changes to its policy and congress did impose a system of greater oversight legislation, the underlying attitudes continued to play a large role in American society, and particularly in the tide of American conservative politics. In the election of 1980, a large segment of the American people voted Ronald Reagan President of the United States. Reagan not only served to represent the legitimacy of conservative ideas in American politics in the late 20th century, but many of his speeches seemed like echoes of J. Edgar Hoover himself. In speaking about the need for "law and order" Reagan said, "Charges of brutality are being raised by a small but disruptive segment of society, which is constantly challenging the authority of the law… for all our justified pride in intellectual accomplishments, the jungle is waiting to take over. The man with the badge helps to hold it back."[292] Just as Hoover did, Reagan paints the image of a law enforcement officer, "the man" barely protecting legitimate Americans from the "disruptive jungle" of those who would question law enforcement and government authority. This suggests that those middle-class largely white social standards so championed by the FBI, remained important enough in American society that the President of the United States was invoking them long after J. Edgar Hoover and the counterintelligence programs were dead.

The FBI's focus on white middle-class standards, and the resulting problems in the surveillance and punishment of innocent citizens, is not purely a historical phenomenon. The Federal Bureau of Investigation continues to serve as one of the primary law enforcement branches of the Federal government, and as such receives

[292] McGirr, *Suburban Warriors,* 204.

billions of dollars of government funding each year.[293] Clearly, this project demonstrates that in the past, those resources have served to benefit certain American citizens while causing harm to others. The FBI, as a governmental law enforcement agency, is supposed to serve in a just and constitutionally appropriate manner. As billions of dollars continue to be funneled through the FBI for purposes of internal security, it becomes vital to understand who and what this money serves, in order to ensure that national security policies serve the best interests of American citizens.

In light of Youssef's accusations and the FBI's high profile domestic terrorism mishaps at Ruby Ridge and Waco, and in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks, it is vital to question how the FBI's current domestic intelligence program operates and to understand to what extent to FBI perceptions about race, class, and personal expression effect current investigations. This issue becomes especially important as race and religious belief are key factors in understanding the current global political climate.

The FBI's justification for the COINTELPRO operations reflects an excuse used by the federal government since the early years of the United States. Throughout American history, the federal government has often justified unconstitutional actions by claiming that they protected American citizens. However, the FBI's view of who could claim "citizenship" was extremely narrow, and in point of fact their actions actually served to harm, in very direct ways, a great number of the citizens they claimed to protect. In addition, by so tarnishing their own reputation, and by extension that of the federal government, they actually served to undermine the very trust, respect, and stability they sought to protect. These actions by the Bureau created world in which, to

[293] According to the Federal Bureau of Investigations website, http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/quick-facts, the FBI budget for fiscal year 2010 was 7.9 billion dollars.

many Americans, the officials and agents of the FBI, not the people they investigated, became criminals.

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