PEOPLE IN COLD WAR

WHAT IS BEHIND THE SMEAR AGAINST FBI?

PUBLICITY VICTIM: HOOVER WITH GOOD FRIENDS WW & DIMAGGIO

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is the victim of its own publicity.

Until a few years ago, the FBI was almost sacrosanct. When Director J. Edgar Hoover made his annual visit to Capitol Hill to ask for money, **Congressmen treated him with awe verging on veneration.** He never had to face the angry challenges that Congress habitually snarls at other Government officials, nor suffer the anguish of watching his budget requests being cut. On the contrary, Congress usually voted him more than he wanted.

To the average American, the FBI agent—the G-man—was perfection personified. He was **handsome, manly, alert at all times, clean, courageous, and the possessor of uncanny mental and physical powers. He oozed integrity.** He never told a lie. And he was infallible. He always got his man.

Anyone who dared to suggest that he might have a few of the human frailties was considered a public enemy of some kind.

That's no longer true. The FBI still is a highly respected organization, but it's been coming in for increasing criticism. Only this spring, for example, radio-and-TV

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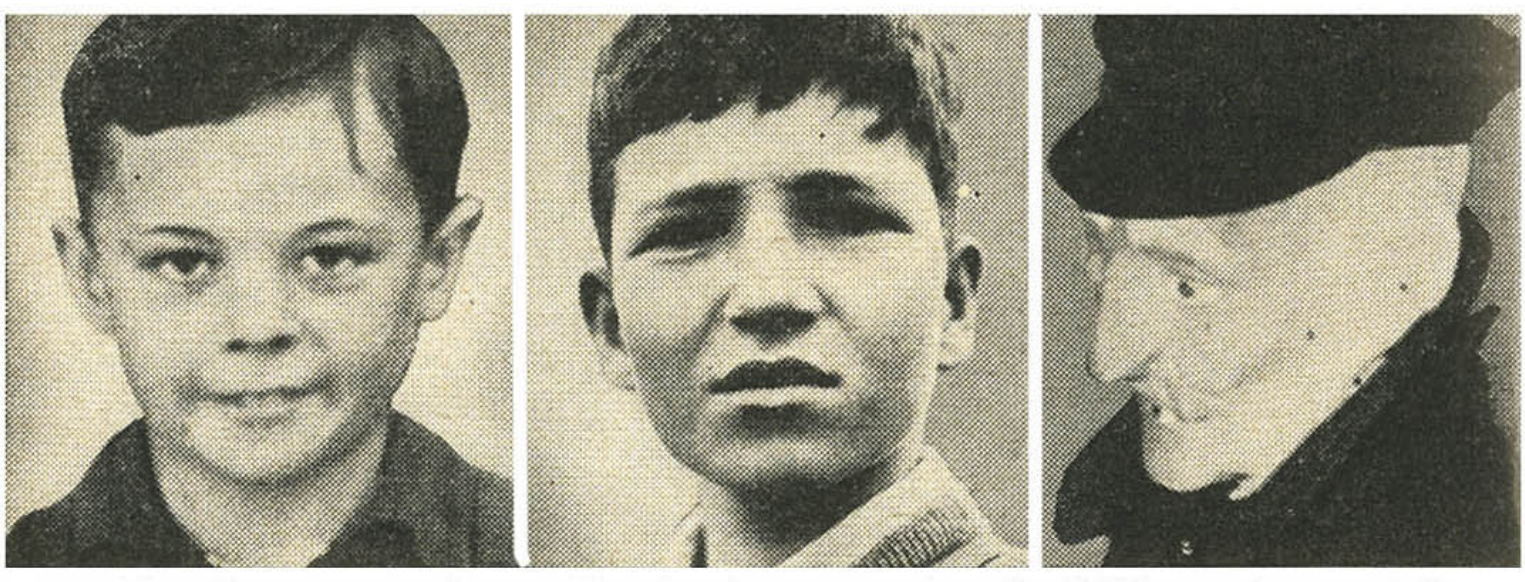
FBI prestige



Unsolved cases the FBI isn't proud of: kidnapings of Charley Mattson *(l.)*, Tacoma, Wash., in '36, and Peter Levine, *(c.)*, of New Rochelle, N. Y., in '38; and the "false-face" $1,000,000 Brinks robbery in Boston in '50.

columnist John Crosby, of the *N.Y. Herald Tribune*, blurted out during a TV show that any office boy could become a G-man and that during the war quite a few of them did—to dodge the draft.

The outcry that followed forced Crosby to make a public apology, but the significant thing is that **until recently no one would even have dreamed of saying in private what Crosby said in public.**

Similarly, during Judy Coplon's trial for espionage, U.S. District Judge Sylvester Ryan in open court accused the FBI of breaking the law and lying on the stand. And most of the nation's editorial writers agreed that he had good reason for his charges.

More and more, in private conversations, this is the kind of thing you hear about the G-men:

They're nothing but a bunch of Keystone Comedy cops with college educations. They're always stealing credit for cases that hick-town sheriffs, small-town patrolmen, or other Government agencies really solved. They can't arrest a man without staging a minor league war, and after the arrest the culprit is as likely as not to get away—look at Gerhart Eisler and the Communist Party leaders who jumped bail and are still free.

The FBI is called a "Gestapo." It's accused of attempting to suppress civil liberties and introduce thought control. **The average G-man, we're told, can't distinguish between a common**

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garden variety liberal and Joseph Stalin. The G-men are said to frame people and to third-degree them into confessing.

What has caused this change in attitude?

If you ask chief G-man Hoover he'll tell you in two words: "vicious propaganda." The gangsters, the reds, the pinks, the fascists, all have been screaming falsehoods about the FBI for so many years, he insists, that some people, not realizing the source, are beginning to believe them.

There's some truth in this but it is not the whole truth. The real reason the attack on the FBI has been so successful is that it was over-glorified and over-glamorized.

No organization, no group of men could ever have been as perfect as the FBI was depicted for years in the nation's newspapers and magazines, over the radio and on the screen. The FBI has about 10,000 men and women working for it, including nearly 5,000 special agents. **All of them could not conceivably be a cross between Sherlock Holmes and Superman.**

On any given day, the FBI is working on some 65,000 assignments; every year it handles 10,000 criminal cases alone. It couldn't help pulling an occasional blooper.

The trouble is that an

Since Hoover became Director of the FBI in '24, the organization has grown from a $2¼ million-a-year operation to $90 million in '52. But, Hoover reports, for the fiscal ending in June the FBI ending in June the FBI returned to taxpayers in fines, savings and recoveries a total of $61,918,535, an increase of $22 million over '51.

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organization with a reputation for infallibility can't afford ever to make a mistake. Once it does, the very people who have been praising it will be the first ones to jeer.

The most effective of all the indictments of the FBI is Max Lowenthal's book, *The Federal Bureau of Investigation.* It's the source of much of the criticism now being leveled against Hoover and his G-men. **It reads like a scholarly work.** A longtime friend of Harry S. Truman, Lowenthal is a noted lawyer. He documents everything he says. He quotes Congressional hearings by the page. And **yet he succeeds in giving a totally false picture of the FBI and its work.**

Discussing the way the FBI handles kidnaping cases, for example, he cites several in which the G-men batted considerably less than 1.000. One was a Florida case in which the sheriff picked up a suspect only to have the FBI derisively turn him loose. **Two days later, the G-men had to admit the sheriff was right and re-arrested the suspect.** Lowenthal also cites the notorious kidnap cases (and FBI snafus) of Peter Levine and Charley Mattson.

Now, the FBI isn't particularly proud of its work in any of these cases **but—and this is the crux of the matter—the fact remains that since passage of the Lindbergh law in '32 the G-men have solved all but two of the 350 kidnaping cases which came within their jurisdiction.**

The FBI does make mistakes. Early in 1940, it made a spectacle of itself by conducting a crack-of-dawn roundup in Milwaukee and Detroit of Spanish Loyalist sympathizers accused of helping to recruit soldiers for the Loyalist army some years before. The G-men tore the

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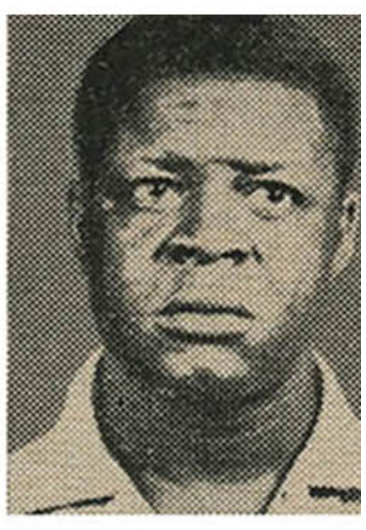
suspects from their beds, held them incommunicado until shortly before they were arraigned in the afternoon. **The Attorney General subsequently quashed the indictments and a Senate committee severely criticized the G-men.**

Critics of the FBI have been bleating about this ever since, **but all the incident really proves is that some G-men aren't Dick Tracy—or even Kerry Drake. Again, the crux of the matter is this: year in, year out, the FBI wins convictions in 97-98% of the arrests it makes.** Moreover, not only does the FBI usually hold off arresting a man until it has an airtight case against him, it actually will spend as much

G. GREEN

R. THOMPSON

G. HALL



H. WINSTON

Perhaps biggest blow to FBI prestige was escape of 4 convicted top CP leader (*above*), **and 4 indicted 2nd-stringers** (*below*), **in 1951. Only Gus Hall, Party organization chief, has been caught.**

S. STEINBERG

F. FINE

W. MARRON

J. JACKSON

A BIG ONE . . .

that got away, Gerhart Eisler fled the U. S. in '49 while out on bail on 2 convictions. He's now a propaganda expert in Soviet Germany.

time proving him innocent as proving him guilty. There is a long list of cases to support that statement.

The publicity depicting the G-men as supermen left the public unprepared for the revelation that, **like ordinary flatfeet, they rely to a great extent on paid informers, or stool pigeons. An illusion was shattered.**

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FBI prestige

Paid informers have always been considered a pretty dirty breed; certainly Ellery Queen would never use them. The public had always been led to believe the G-men also relied on their great powers of detection and deduction.

But Queen doesn't have to get a conviction in court. The G-men do. They have to put witnesses on the stand, and that means either witnesses who have turned state's evidence or are informers. The real question is: **How reliable are the FBI's informers?**

The Judy Coplon case disclosed that FBI data slips, found on Judy, bearing miscellaneous and unrelated tips from a host of informants, had been put into the record. Now a good case can be made against the FBI's practice of keeping such reports on file. On the other hand, **just such seemingly crackpot tips have helped the FBI uncover serious crimes.** Just two examples: at a dinner party during the war a film actress told Hoover she suspected a man living near her was a spy because he "looked like a spy." **It was the kind of reason only a woman can give, but she was right.** The man was operating a short-wave radio in his cellar.

The other case ended with the smashing of a 33-man spy ring in New York. One member was arrested as a result of **his landlady's feverish report that he stayed up until all hours of the morning, typing letters.**

The charge of being a "Gestapo," which has been levelled against the FBI, comes primarily from the fact that on March 22, 1947, Truman ordered G-men to check loyalty of all Government workers.

Loyalty is a pretty intangible thing. **How can you say that a man is disloyal unless**

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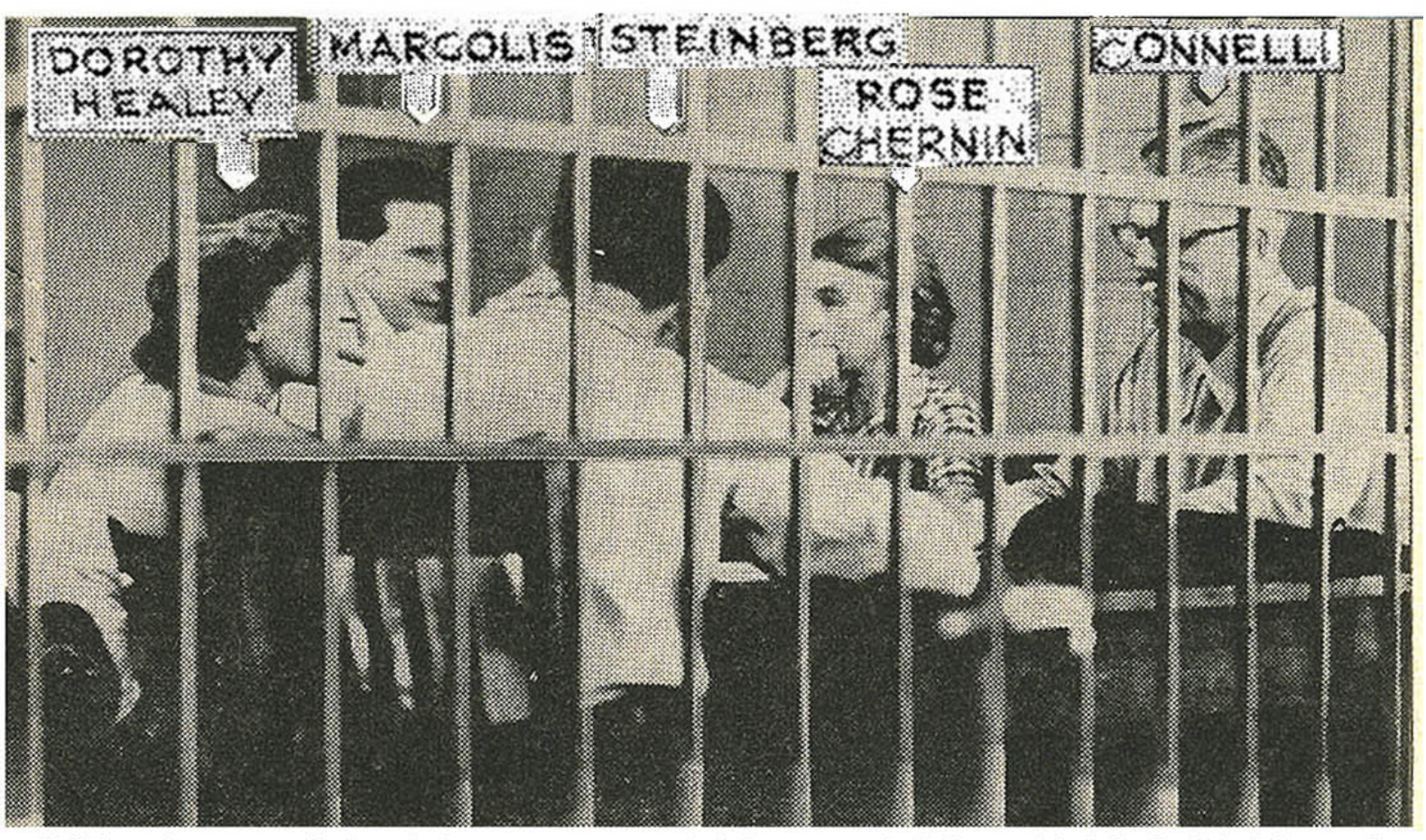
FBI prestige

SAN FRANCISCO TOP RED ERNEST FOX *(c.)* IS NABBED BY FBI



FBI RED ROUNDUP BEHIND BARS. MARGOLIS IS IS THEIR ATTORNEY

he's committed some overt act like joining the Communist Party or turning over Government secrets to a Soviet agent? You can only make an intelligent guess, on the basis of the political attitudes he expresses, the people he associates with, the publications he subscribes to, the books he reads, the meetings that he attends.

Since 1947, the FBI has made about **4,000,000 loyalty investigations.** It has simply gathered information. The evaluations have been made by others.

The G-men aren't as politically sophisticated as some of the people they've had to interview. And perhaps some did, in the course of their questions, reveal an intolerance of liberalism, and Communism, as the FBI critics have claimed. Perhaps.

This must be considered, however: in about 99½% of the loyalty investigations that are conducted by the FBI, it gives the Government workers involved a clean bill of health, simply after a check of its own files. And in the remaining small number of cases, the FBI does not make recommendations it merely states the facts.

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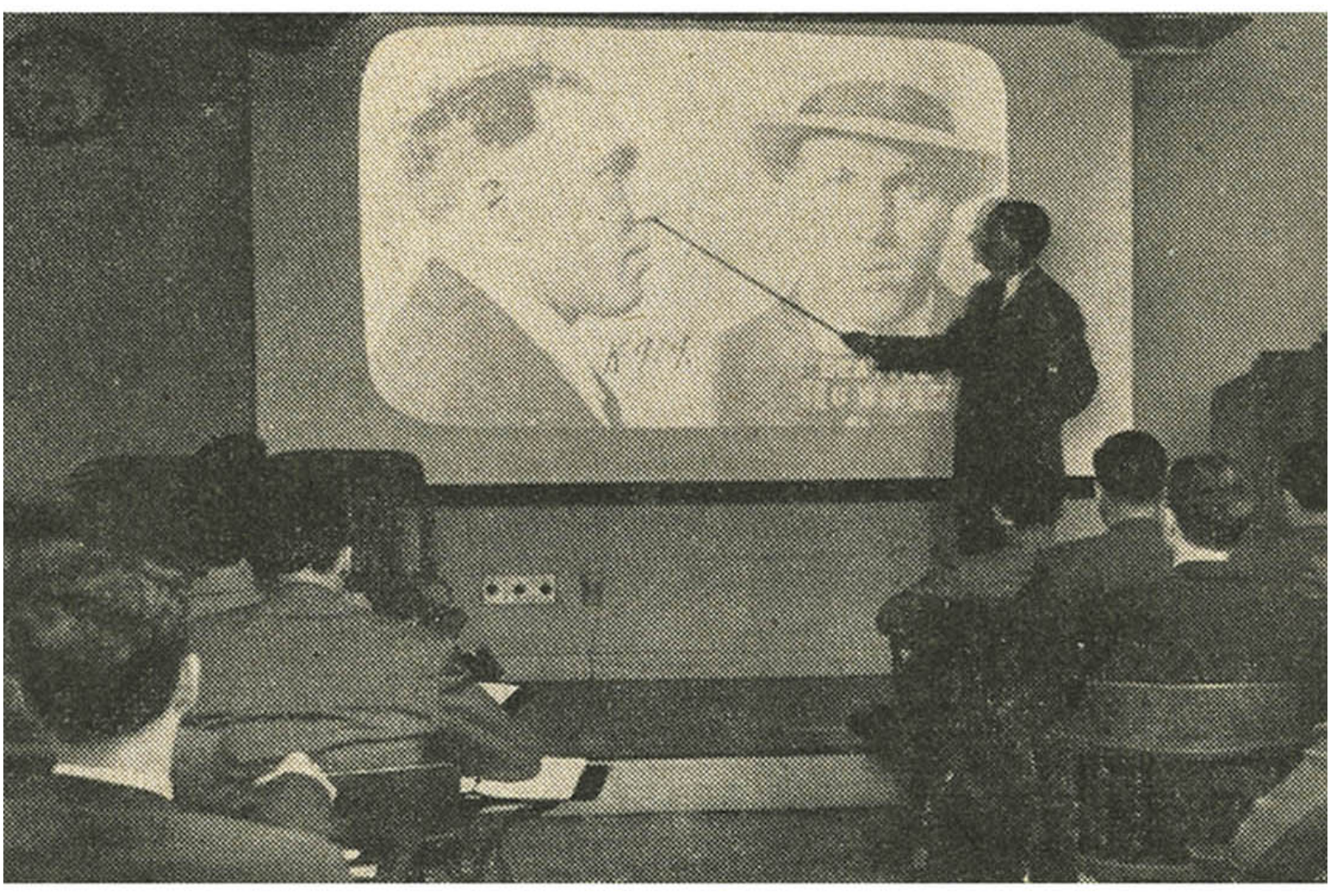
These figures alone should indicate that the FBI men are not hysterics who think that anyone favoring the civil-rights bill, for example, is a Communist Party member.

Moreover, it should be remembered that many of the very people who today are screaming the loudest that FBI men can't tell a liberal from a Communist, not so very long ago were the ones who were just as loudly defending Alger Hiss, and on precisely the same grounds. **The FBI proved right.**



FBI TRAINS SPECIAL AGENTS HERE IN FACIAL IDENTIFICATION

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