

Conservatives Justify FBI Surveillance, Accuse Phoenix Editorial Policy of Bias

by William Greider and James Taylor

In the recent outrage pertaining to the information revealed in the stolen FBI files, one point has been conspicuously de-emphasized, namely that the purpose behind FBI surveillance of Ben Barnett is directly related to the Bureau's efforts to locate and apprehend two individuals who are fugitives under various federal charges. This is made clear by the text of the alleged FBI documents as reprinted in this journal. The FBI, being empowered to enforce federal law, has a responsibility to follow any lead, however tenuous, toward the possible apprehension of wanted criminals. The information provided by the "Boston informant" is apparently such a lead, and it would be deficient of the Bureau not to follow it. It seems somewhat odd that three

members of the College community who allegedly aided the federal authorities in this matter should now be viewed as if they were the criminals in the case. Even President Greer's memo of March 29 is clearly intended to discourage College personnel from cooperating with federal authorities on matters pertaining to persons connected with the College. The possible implications of this are rather amusing. For example, is it expected that College personnel will help to obstruct the enforcement of federal law? Is the College to be regarded as a sanctuary from federal authority? Must College employees renounce their autonomy as private citizens to follow their consciences in such matters? Is the College administration to hold the use of financial aid at the risk of anyone who contradicts President Greer's implied directive?

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The current bias of the College, and especially of Phi Kappa, has been manifestly evident in recent overnight and peremptory of a double standard. In the first place, the Board/Board community has accepted the alleged FBI documents as true. The Bureau has never validated these particular documents, but has only acknowledged the theft of important files. These documents may be completely true; they may be completely false; they may be only half true. Along with the documents they may have taken, the burglar who broke into the office may also have stolen official forms and necessary, as with any group such as this, their main intention is to obstruct the FBI and other governmental institutions in the eyes of the public. If they did not find such evidence, they could very easily have fabricated it so. Finding very weak evidence, could easily

have expanded it. This is a possibility which to me seems to have considered.

In the second place, this journal in two conservative editorials has taken two opposing positions on "the American legal rights of innocent until proven guilty." In the case of Ben Lutz and Rosenzweig and of Mrs. Feig. In the case of the alleged drug abusers. The Phoenix has lamented and rightly so, the lapse of due process. In Mrs. Feig's case, however, this journal has had the audacity to recommend that she "voluntarily" give up her relationship with the FBI is clearly defiant!

On the more general topic of FBI surveillance of New Left and their militant individuals and groups, it is important to remember that many of these groups and individuals, through their official publications and speeches, have openly advocated the forcible overthrow of the United States government. The question arises, of

times, however, and represents a mobilization of dangerous moral energies (the three responsible I mentioned at the University of Wisconsin and the Capitol) at the heart of intellectual crackpots. The one way to determine for sure is to conduct an investigation, and such investigations involve surveillance.

No one denies that surveillance by the FBI or anyone, for that matter, constitutes an invasion of the privacy of those being investigated. It also be remembered, however, that some of the rights guaranteed by the Constitution are of an absolute nature. In volume of October 2, 1976, William Buckley, Jr. suggests that it is sometimes necessary, unfortunately, give up a lesser right or freedom, order to insure and protect a greater one. The security of the United States from internal subversion is in the interest of every citizen who value liberty and justice. The privacy of few affords his own convenience should circumstances require it; it would prove to pay for this security.