

David Cunningham

---

## Understanding State Responses to Left- versus Right-Wing Threats

### *The FBI's Repression of the New Left and the Ku Klux Klan*

*Between 1956 and 1971, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) operated five counterintelligence programs (COINTELPROs) designed to repress a range of threats to the status quo. This article examines more than twelve thousand pages of memos related to FBI programs against white hate groups (mostly the Ku Klux Klan) and the New Left in an effort to gain insight into the Bureau's repression of left- and right-wing targets. The article's goals are both general and historically specific: First, to introduce a two-dimensional typology to organize and categorize repressive acts generally and then to use this typology to examine the patterning of repressive acts across the COINTELPROs. This approach allows for the uncovering of distinct overarching strategies applied to left- versus right-wing targets. These strategies are emergent in the sense that they are not apparent from a textual analysis of Bureau memos or through a comparison of the outcomes of each COINTELPRO. Recognition of these emergent strategies provides insight into the complex, ambiguous relationship that the FBI had with both the civil rights movement and the Klan.*

The federal government's relationship to the civil rights-era Ku Klux Klan is complex and still largely unexplained. While much attention has been given to the state's ambivalent relationship to the civil rights movement itself, researchers have been considerably less concerned with its dealings with the defenders of the segregationist status quo in the South. Striking images of Freedom Riders and other civil rights workers being severely beaten while

agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) stood idly by taking notes—with FBI director J. Edgar Hoover later claiming that active interference was beyond the Bureau's purely investigative mission—commonly lead to an assumption that the Bureau's sympathies lay with the supporters of Jim Crow, including the Klan. Such a conclusion seems further warranted when viewed alongside the FBI's massive campaign to "neutralize" Martin Luther King Jr. as well as its counterintelligence program established against a wide range of (in the Bureau's parlance) "Black Nationalist/Hate Groups." Under this program, literally hundreds of black activists, from members of the NAACP to the Black Panther Party, were targeted for systematic harassment, with (in the case of the Panthers) sometimes fatal results.<sup>1</sup>

Beyond the civil rights movement, the FBI established counterintelligence programs (or COINTELPROs, as they were officially known within the Bureau) against the Communist Party-USA, the Socialist Workers Party, and the New Left, prompting many to interpret the programs as a massive assault on the American left (see Davis 1997; Churchill and VanderWall 1988, 1990; Blackstock 1975; Theoharis 1989: 94). However, a fifth COINTELPRO was initiated against what the FBI called "White Hate Groups." This program was directed at a number of right-wing organizations, though it focused mostly on the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>2</sup> Studies of the civil rights movement tend to ignore or minimize the existence of this program and instead view the FBI as unitarily seeking to prevent the civil rights movement from making significant inroads (see Carson 1981; Morris 1984; Garrow 1981; Marable 1991). Scholarly work on the FBI during this period has either completely ignored the Bureau's program against white hate groups (Churchill and VanderWall 1988, 1990) or has treated this COINTELPRO as a token program initiated by Hoover either for instrumental reasons (Keller 1989) or, at best, as a "side-show" to the Bureau's real concern with left-wing, nonwhite subversiveness (O'Reilly 1989, 1994).

Here, I use more than twelve thousand pages of FBI (1964–71) memoranda from its COINTELPROs against white hate groups and the New Left to evaluate the extent to which the FBI's counterintelligence activity against the Klan differed from its actions against left-wing threats.<sup>3</sup> My concerns here are both general, in a theoretical and methodological sense, and historically specific. Recent work on state repression has usefully focused on interactions between state agencies and dissidents, though there has been less

sensitivity to how state strategies are shaped by their orientation to protest targets or how covert forms of repression influence outcomes. I develop a general framework within which to categorize covert repressive activity and then apply this framework to a particular case—the FBI between 1964 and 1971—that allows us insight into the little-understood dynamic between the FBI and both left- and right-wing political activists during the COINTELPRO era.

### **The Emergence of FBI Counterintelligence: Targeting the Left and Right**

In 1956, the FBI initiated a formal counterintelligence program against the Communist Party-USA (CPUSA). The program, officially termed COINTELPRO, fell under the intelligence (rather than the investigative) division of the FBI. Thus, rather than investigating crimes and seeking convictions under federal statutes, COINTELPRO became an institutionalized complement to the massive surveillance and intelligence apparatus of the Bureau, which had long functioned to identify “subversive” threats to national security. COINTELPRO provided an institutional outlet for acting against these groups and individuals based on information obtained through intelligence efforts. Indeed, COINTELPRO’s sole purpose was to “expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities” of protest groups and individual “key activists” that, in their view, engaged in actions that threatened the security of the U.S. government (FBI memo from Brennan to Sullivan, 9 May 1968).<sup>4</sup>

COINTELPRO-CPUSA was followed by COINTELPROs against the Socialist Workers Party (in 1961), white hate groups (in 1964), black nationalist/hate groups (in 1967), and the New Left (in 1968).<sup>5</sup> In theory, these programs could be disbanded if their goals were met (i.e., if the targeted groups were completely neutralized). However, in practice none of these programs was ever discontinued, even at the request of field offices after targeted groups had become inactive for an extended period of time.<sup>6</sup> The disbanding of all formal COINTELPROs came only through the threat of public exposure; the key precipitating event was the 1971 break-in at the FBI resident agency in Media, Pennsylvania. Late in the night of 8 March 1971, a group of activists calling themselves the “Citizens’ Commission to Investigate the FBI” burglarized the Bureau’s files and gradually leaked them to various media

outlets in the succeeding weeks. Several hundred pages of files were taken by the group, and these files provided the first public disclosure of a range of Bureau activities against targets such as the Black Panther Party, the Venceremos Brigade, the Philadelphia Labor Committee, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), and college students with “revolutionary” leanings.

One puzzle that emerged from these newly disclosed counterintelligence programs was the fact that, between 1964 and 1971, the Bureau simultaneously sought to repress various factions of the civil rights movement and the Klan-related groups seeking to maintain the existing racial order in the South. While the FBI’s COINTELPRO against black nationalist/hate groups was consistent with the Bureau’s longstanding suspicion of black political leadership, its activities against the Klan had no similar sustained precedent.<sup>7</sup> One explanation for the FBI’s counterintelligence program against white hate groups is put forth by William Keller (1989), who argues that the FBI required consistent support from a liberal constituency in order to gain the degree of insularity and autonomy it desired for its programs. Counterintelligence activity against white hate groups was something that liberals embraced, since they could not depend on local or state police (or the FBI’s investigative divisions, for that matter) to prevent acts of violence against civil rights workers. As Keller (1989: 89) states, “it is likely that the liberal political community supported a hard-hitting FBI campaign to infiltrate the secret Klan orders because there was no other effective way to reach and prevent Klan violence.”

But, from the FBI’s perspective, the establishment of COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups also served the larger function of broadening the range of groups that could justifiably be thought of as “subversive” and therefore suitable targets for a counterintelligence program. No longer did a subversive group have to be controlled by or intimately tied to a hostile foreign power, as was the case with Communist organizations; hereafter, domestic targets engaging in “criminal conspiracy” and willing to undermine the Constitution warranted a disruptive response from the FBI. The larger significance of COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups is, therefore, according to Keller (1989), the fact that it served as a template for later COINTELPROs against domestic targets. While a liberal constituency embraced the FBI program that targeted the Klan, it would not have embraced later programs that targeted black nationalist/hate groups and the New Left. However, largely through the liberal support received for COINTELPRO-White Hate

Groups, Hoover and the FBI achieved sufficient insularity and autonomy to be able to establish subsequent counterintelligence programs against domestic targets without the approval of Congress or other actors outside the FBI.

While this perspective allows us to see how COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups enabled the FBI to escape accountability to outside actors for its later programs, two issues remain unclear. First, did the FBI's desire for autonomy sufficiently justify the initiation of an ambitious counterintelligence program against the Klan? And second, to what extent did the FBI's ambivalence toward racial matters in the South influence the patterning of repression within the program against white hate groups? Kenneth O'Reilly (1989: 198) argues that the FBI's COINTELPRO against the Klan was

ultimately a sideshow to the real war against the black struggle for racial justice. Hoover saw the Ku Klux Klan as another subversive threat to the peace and stability of middle America, but he also saw the Klan as a threat to the good name of the anti-civil rights movement. Klansmen were discrediting all forms of resistance, including the FBI's preferred forms, and for that, the director decided, they had to be stopped.

So, in this sense, the FBI could still be involved in a "war" against black Americans at the same time that it was engaging in counterintelligence activities against groups that vociferously opposed these same black Americans—since the Klan and other white hate groups did not battle civil rights workers through the proper channels, they were worthy targets of repression. Also, the demand for counterintelligence activity against the Klan emerged out of great exogenous pressures—from the press, various actors around the White House, and the civil rights movement itself—to curb violent activities by right-wing groups. The more significant long-term effect, however, was indirect: COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups provided a means for the FBI to escape accountability for expanding its counterintelligence activities to target any groups or individuals that the directorate deemed to be "subversive."

Not surprisingly, O'Reilly (1989: 224) sees the war against the Klan as "a limited war, a sideshow to the real war" against black America. Such a perspective, if true, would lead us to hypothesize that the patterning of repression against white hate groups was narrower in scope and significantly less severe than that exerted on targets in other COINTELPROs. This point is made more strongly by Ward Churchill and Jim VanderWall (1990: 1), who argue that the FBI's "*raison d'être* is and always has been

the implementation of [programs] . . . designed to ‘disrupt and destabilize,’ ‘cripple,’ ‘destroy,’ or otherwise ‘neutralize’ dissident individuals and political groupings in the United States.” They feel, however, that these dissident groupings are almost exclusively left wing and consequently totally exclude COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups from their thorough examination of each of the other formal COINTELPROs (and their analysis even includes a counterintelligence program begun against the American Indian movement after the disbanding of the formal COINTEL program in 1971). The conclusion we can draw is similar to that reached by O’Reilly: the COINTELPRO against white hate groups was, at most, a “sideshow” to the real battle against the radical left and quite possibly only an attempt to improve the FBI’s image during a time when public outcry (especially by those in the North) over segregationist violence was increasing. If true, we should be able to observe significant differences in outcomes between COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups and COINTELPRO-New Left.

### **State Repression and Protest Activity**

Apart from this particular historical case, a considerable body of empirical work on state repression of protest activity has emerged over the past 30 years. Many of these studies have taken seriously the interactive nature of protest and repression, seeking to understand the effect of repression on subsequent dissident activity (sometimes referred to as the “conflict-repression nexus”). Little consensus has emerged, however, and various analysts have suggested that the effect of repression on protest can be both positive and negative (see Rasler 1996: 133). More specifically, there is strong evidence that this effect varies according to the severity of repression, with studies capturing the relationship as U-shaped (Gurr 1971), inverted U-shaped (DeNardo 1985; Muller 1985; Muller and Weede 1990), lying S-shaped (Neidhardt 1989), and reverse lying S-shaped (Francisco 1995). Until recently, the most notable finding has been that seemingly all possible relationships have been supported by empirical work in this area (see Lichbach 1987: 293; Koopmans 1997). In an attempt to explain such wildly inconsistent findings, more recent work has sought either to incorporate various contextual factors (White 1989; Opp and Roehl 1990) or to disaggregate spatial and/or temporal dimensions of the analysis (White 1989; Khawaja 1993; Rasler 1996; Davenport 2002), though the overall confusion about how repression impacts protest remains.

Further disaggregation is clearly needed, as it is likely that the interplay between repression and dissent is conditioned by factors specific to the organization of the repressing agency (or agencies) and their protest target(s) as well as by the repertoire of actions employed by each. For instance, focusing on a single protest organization (the Provisional Irish Republican Army [IRA]), Robert W. White (1989) was able to show that the presence of state repression was a significant predictor of subsequent political violence, and that the initiators of violence were those individuals—the working class and students—most likely to be impacted by repression. However, the benefits of this sort of disaggregation have been limited by a predominant focus on protest groups, with rather less attention given to modeling how effects vary across repressing agencies and forms of social control. There also exists a strong tendency to deal with visible, easily measurable forms of repression (most commonly arrests and police presence at large demonstrations—see Rasler 1996; della Porta and Reiter 1998),<sup>8</sup> as well as to assume that the effectiveness of all forms of state repression can be adequately captured by a rise or fall in subsequent levels of dissent.<sup>9</sup>

Here, I focus on a single repressing agency and suggest that, based on their orientation to identified targets, repressing organizations develop strategies that guide their allocation of action. By comparatively examining the FBI's repression of two distinct classes of target, I propose a general method for identifying such strategies. This approach also suggests a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of state repression that takes seriously the relationship between repressor and dissident.

### **Understanding the Data: The Organization of the FBI**

During the COINTELPRO era, the FBI consisted of the National Headquarters in Washington, DC, and a set of 59 field offices throughout the country. Each field office was responsible for its surrounding territory, determined largely by the boundaries of federal court districts; every county in the United States therefore fell under the jurisdiction of a particular field office. The staffing of field offices ranged from a few dozen agents in the smallest offices to several hundred in the largest (the New York field office was by far the largest office, employing more than a thousand agents). Each field office dealt with a full range of federally prosecutable criminal acts; even at

the height of COINTELPRO, intelligence and counterintelligence activities against subversive targets made up only a small fraction of agents' activities. In a field office, each COINTELPRO was assigned to a special agent, who in turn reported directly to the special agent in charge (SAC) of each office (all 59 field offices eventually participated in at least one COINTELPRO). SACs served as direct links between field office activity and J. Edgar Hoover, the Bureau director throughout the entire COINTELPRO era.

Virtually all activity and transfer of information within COINTELPRO took the form of memos sent between the director's office at National Headquarters and each field office. These memos are accessible by the public through the Freedom of Information Act, and all of the memos that had been released as of 1977 (amounting to approximately 52,000 pages) have been collected on microfilm by Scholarly Resources, Inc.<sup>10</sup> Actions were carried out within COINTELPRO when SACs submitted specific proposals for neutralizing groups within their division. These proposals needed to be authorized by the Bureau before the initiation of any action, and it was not unusual for a SAC to submit several iterations of a proposal prior to its approval. I have coded the presence and content of each of the 916 actions initiated by the Bureau and contained within the thousands of memos related to the COINTELPROs against white hate groups and the New Left.

## **A Two-Dimensional Typology of Actions**

In reality, of course, each of these actions constitutes a separate story about repressive activity, with each action (whether or not it was later defined as a "success") having some unique effect on its target(s). However, an analytical framework that takes the evolution of particular classes of action seriously must find some way to get beyond the particularities of individual actions—we must be able to find recognizable similarities between actions that became salient to actors within the FBI. That is, at certain points, it is clear that agents in the Bureau felt that a proposed action was a replication of an earlier action, while also perceiving other actions to be innovations, or somehow different from what had been done before.

Constructing a typology true to the Bureau's perceptions of what constitutes a distinct category of activity requires an inductive process where each action is first seen as discrete and then grouped with other actions that Bureau agents (usually SACs who were proposing these actions) perceive as

replications of earlier activities. Innovative actions (those that were not replications) are recognizable when SAC proposals include: (1) a detailed clarification of how the action differed from what had been done previously, and (2) a need to speculate about the intended effect of the action, rather than citing observed results of an earlier incarnation of the action.

This endogenous recognition becomes the basis for defining an action as a distinct category of repressive activity. However, it is also important to differentiate between two independent dimensions of each action: form and function. The most comprehensive previous attempt to catalog COINTELPRO actions was made by Churchill and VanderWall (1988; cf. Carley 1997), who list 10 “methods” utilized within these programs. Each of these methods (e.g., fabrication of evidence, utilizing infiltrators and agents provocateurs, harassment arrests) represents the *form* that particular actions take. However, the *function* of each action can vary, even within a single form. For example, infiltrators can be used to break down target groups’ internal organization, to create dissension between target groups, or to create a negative public image surrounding the group. I extend Churchill and VanderWall’s typology by treating form and function as independent dimensions. Thus, a set of distinct action types (forms) can all be utilized to realize the same goal (perform the same function). Using the inductive strategy discussed above, I constructed a two-dimensional typology, incorporating both the form and function of each action. The extent to which forms are distributed across functions, and how this distribution shifts both over time and across programs, provides insight into the organization of repression within COINTELPRO.

While actors within the FBI do not explicitly use the terms *form* and *function* when proposing actions, these dimensions are recognized by the FBI as distinct. Often, proposals would require revisions before being authorized by the director and carried out by particular field offices. While there was a wide range of explanations for requesting revisions, we can observe an implicit recognition of the distinction between form and function in much of the negotiation surrounding the implementation of proposed actions. To illustrate: a primary concern of the Bureau with COINTELPRO generally was to preserve the insularity of the program—no one outside of the Bureau should ever be informed of the existence of this specific program. There was a parallel concern about who (business leaders, university administrators, media sources, etc.) qualified as an “established source” or contact, that

is, who had demonstrated sufficient support for Bureau (and, presumably, American) goals and objectives to be trusted with public source information disseminated from FBI personnel directly. Criteria for becoming an established source was vague, but it was clear that *any* known activity that threatened Bureau interests (through either negative comments toward the Bureau itself or support of any individual or group targeted within COINTELPRO as “subversive”) eliminated an individual from ever being considered as a source. Many proposals by SACs were revised by the director since they provided information to sources who were not “established”; the common solution to this problem was to change the *form* of an action from the supply of information to officials directly to the inclusion of this information either within an anonymous letter or in some form of communication falsely credited to a source unrelated to the Bureau.<sup>11</sup>

Less often, the form of an action was approved, but its *function* became a subject of negotiation between SACs and the director. On 20 December 1966, the SAC of COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups from the Savannah Field Office proposed to send an anonymous letter to the wife of a leader of the National States Rights Party (NSRP) accusing this leader of having an affair. Three weeks later, the director authorized the sending of this letter but requested that it be sent on United Klans of America (UKA) stationery “in order to create friction between these groups” (FBI memo from director to Savannah, 9 January 1967). Hence, while the form of this action was unchanged, its function shifted from an attempt to hinder the ability of an individual target to act to the generation of dissension between target groups. A similar shift occurred when the Miami office proposed to publicly discredit the UKA by providing information to officials regarding the local building codes violated by the group’s new meeting place. The directorate authorized this course of action but felt that the action’s ideal function should not be to publicly embarrass the UKA but instead to “permit [municipal authorities] to take appropriate measures to prevent the use of this building as a meeting place by the Klan” (FBI memo from director to Miami, 12 December 1969). From these sorts of examples, we see that the construction of a typology of COINTELPRO actions that recognizes two independent dimensions (form and function) of each action remains true to the implicit recognition of these dimensions by actors within the FBI.

**Table 1** Typology of COINTELPRO actions against the New Left

---

<b>Function</b>	
1	Create a negative public image
2	Break down internal organization
3	Create dissension among groups
4	Restrict access to group-level resources
5	Restrict ability to protest
6	Hinder the ability of individual targets to participate in group activities
7	Displace conflict
8	Gather information (intelligence)
<b>Form</b>	
A	Send anonymous letter
B	Send fake (signed) letter
C	Send articles or "public source documents"
D	Supply information to officials
E	Plant evidence
F	Utilize informants
G	Utilize media source
H	Disseminate Bureau-generated information about targets
I	Interview targets
J	Supply misinformation
K	Make fake phone call
L	Actively harass targets
M*	Supply resources to anti-New Left groups
P	Send ridicule-type information

---

Note: Asterisks denote forms/functions not used against white hate groups.

### COINTELPRO-New Left

For the New Left, I have identified 8 functions and 14 forms, which are listed in Table 1. Table 2 shows how each of the 461 actions initiated within COINTELPRO-New Left is distributed across forms and functions. Note that of the 112 possible form-function pairs, only 35 were actually initiated. Of these 35 actions, 16 were utilized in fewer than four instances.

### COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups

For white hate groups, I have identified 9 functions and 19 forms, presented in Table 3. Table 4 shows how each of the 455 actions initiated within COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups is distributed across forms and func-

**Table 2** Distribution of actions in COINTEI,PRO-New Left

		Form													Total	
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	P	Total
F	1	6	0	0	1	-	4	41	16	-	-	-	-	2	0	70
u	2	7	11	0	0	1	24	0	10	3	0	0	1	0	5	62
n	3	2	20	0	0	0	10	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	42
c	4	1	0	0	27	-	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	29
t	5	13	0	36	39	-	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	93
i	6	41	0	0	111	0	0	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	157
o	7	0	0	0	1	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
n	8	-	-	-	0	-	4	-	-	3	-	-	-	0	-	7
	<b>Total</b>	70	31	36	179	1	43	46	27	8	3	1	1	2	13	461

**Table 3** Typology of COINTELPRO actions against white hate groups

---

<b>Function</b>	
1	Create a negative public image
2	Break down internal organization
3	Create dissension among groups
4	Restrict access to group-level resources
5	Restrict ability to protest
6	Hinder the ability of individual targets to participate in group activities
7	Displace conflict
8	Gather information (intelligence)
9*	Control target group actions
<b>Form</b>	
A	Send anonymous letter
B	Send fake (signed) letter
C	Send articles or "public source documents"
D	Supply information to officials
E	Plant evidence
F	Utilize informants
G	Utilize media source
H	Disseminate Bureau-generated information about targets
I	Interview targets
J	Supply misinformation
K	Make fake phone call
L	Actively harass targets
N*	Destroy target's resources
P	Send ridicule-type information
Q*	Start chain letter
S*	Anonymously send evidence of protest activity
T*	Utilize fake target credentials
U*	Place fake order for periodical
V*	Make anonymous phone call

---

Note: Asterisks denote forms/functions not used against the New Left.

tions.<sup>12</sup> Note that of the 171 possible form-function pairs, only 55 were actually initiated.

The remaining 116 pairs that were not used by the FBI (as well as the 77 unused pairs in COINTELPRO-New Left) can be divided into three categories: (1) action types that were never conceived as viable by anyone in the Bureau, (2) action types that the Bureau chose not to exploit, and (3) action types that were logically impossible. This last category emerges when forms

**Table 4** Distribution of actions in COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups

		Form																	Total	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	N	P	Q	S	T	U	V	Total
F	1	9	0	0	2	—	2	63	0	—	—	—	—	0	0	0	0	0	5	81
u	2	30	13	1	1	1	30	3	5	41	0	2	0	11	1	0	1	1	3	144
n	3	7	2	0	0	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	16
c	4	14	2	0	23	—	0	3	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	50
t	5	8	4	2	41	—	0	9	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	71
i	6	18	1	1	47	0	6	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	77
o	7	1	0	0	—	—	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
n	8	—	—	4	—	—	0	—	0	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	4
	9	0	0	0	1	0	8	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>455</b>

cannot serve specific functions, or when functions can be met only through a limited set of forms. The nature of this typology (where form and function are generally independent dimensions) ensures that there is not a high number of structurally precluded actions. However, a small number of these structural (rather than actual) “zeros” are visible in Tables 2 and 4. For example, the majority of forms represent particular methods of transmitting information. This information can have an audience that is endogenous to a protest group (e.g., when spreading misinformation about a particular member’s activities), or one that is broader than the group itself (e.g., when creating a negative public perception of a target’s activities). Function No. 1 involves creating a negative public image surrounding a target and, by definition, must involve the spread of information to sources external to the target itself. Therefore, forms that limit information flow to those within a targeted group—E (plant evidence), I (interview targets), J (supply misinformation to targets), K (make fake phone call to targets), L (actively harass targets), and N (destroy target’s resources)—are not forms that can possibly be used to achieve function No. 1. In other words, action types 1E, 1I, 1J, 1K, 1L, and 1N are structurally precluded from occurring. These “structural zeros” are analytically distinct from actions that are logically possible but not utilized by the Bureau. We see that other cases of structural zeros are associated with function 8 (gather information)<sup>13</sup> and form E (plant evidence).

### **Repressing the Left versus the Right: The Emergence of Elimination and Control Strategies**

Examining the range and distribution of actions in COINTELPRO-New Left and COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups provides a unique opportunity to examine how the Bureau dealt with threats posed by left- versus right-wing targets. Since various Klan groups were the central targets of COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups, we can compare the Bureau’s treatment of a threat based on violent acts (e.g., targets’ means rather than their ends) to its treatment of New Left targets whose actions and very ideas threatened the status quo. In this section, I look at the frequency and range of actions initiated against both New Left and white hate targets and focus on how these actions were patterned within each program.

The number of actions carried out in each program was almost equiva-

lent: 484 actions against the New Left as compared to 480 against white hate groups. However, two key elements differed significantly: the length of time each program was actually in existence and the number of field offices participating in each program. COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups was established in September 1964 and operated for almost seven years, ending only after all COINTELPROs were disbanded in April 1971. COINTELPRO-New Left was not initiated until May 1968 and thus existed for only three years, meaning that the number of actions carried out per year was considerably greater in this program than in COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups. However, the scope of COINTELPRO-New Left was much broader. Fifty-nine field offices eventually participated in the program, while COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups generally involved only the Bureau's southern offices. By 1971, 26 field offices had initiated actions under the White Hate program. If we take into account the longer life span of COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups, as well as the broader scope of COINTELPRO-New Left, we find that both programs engaged in similar levels of activity. Amazingly, both averaged 2.7 actions per year per participating field office.

There was considerable overlap between the types of actions initiated within each COINTELPRO as well. Each of the eight functions the FBI sought to accomplish against the New Left were also found in COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups, with a single additional function (controlling the actions of target groups) included in the White Hate program. The addition of this function provides some insight into the FBI's conception of white hate groups, specifically the Klan. While central actors within the FBI viewed the mere existence of individuals and groups espousing the antiestablishment ideology associated with the New Left as subversive, this was not true with the Ku Klux Klan. The presence of most white hate groups, in itself, would not have been sufficient to warrant the initiation of repressive activity. Groups with similar anti-integrationist goals, such as White Citizens' Councils, were not targeted within COINTELPRO. The Bureau portrayed these Klan-related and other "hate organizations" as subversive because they were actively engaged in violent acts against blacks and civil rights workers, and this behavior threatened the legitimacy of established authority structures. Subject to increasing criticism from a liberal constituency, the FBI was being pressured to do something to eliminate this threat, and they chose to initiate a covert program that would not compro-

mise their working relationship with local police departments, many of whom supported the Klan's goals. Thus, while the directorate continually sought to delegitimize and eliminate New Left organizations, a successful counter-intelligence program needed not to eliminate the Klan as much as to control the group's actions and minimize its potential for violence. This desire led to two phenomena not seen in COINTELPRO-New Left: a campaign to steer members of white hate groups to "acceptable" targeted groups (e.g., groups not actively engaged in violence) and an increased emphasis on infiltrating white hate groups at a level sufficient to exert some control over the groups' decision-making apparatus. Both of these attempts to control a target group's activities sometimes involved actually strengthening acceptable white hate alternatives rather than attempting to eliminate these groups altogether.

We see examples of the former strategy at the outset of COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups, when it became apparent the directorate was not concerned with the ideology of members of targeted groups. While these targets were thought to be ignorant and uneducated, their patriotic political sensibilities were far from the "subversiveness" displayed by New Left adherents. The memo initiating the COINTELPRO stressed that special attention needed to be given to "Action Groups," which were described as the "relatively few individuals in each organization who use strong-arm tactics and violent actions to achieve their ends. Often these groups act without the approval of the Klan organization" (FBI memo from director to 17 SACs, 2 September 1964). The rank-and-file members were thus considered subversive only through their participation in an organization that could not sufficiently regulate particular extreme members from using "strong-arm tactics" to achieve goals that otherwise were acceptable.

By the beginning of 1966, the directorate had established the National Committee for Domestic Tranquility (NCDT), the fictive organization designed to, as its motto stated, convince targets to "quit the Klan, and back our boys in Vietnam." The Savannah field office initiated a similar attempt to steer Klansmen toward acceptable alternatives, when, by the end of 1964, the SAC argued that "the existence of the Association of South Carolina Klans [ASCK] in the vicinity of Columbia, SC, has served as a deterrent to the formation of a klavern [local chapter] of the UKA. It is felt that this is beneficial to the Bureau as it is believed that the latter organization is more likely to have an active group, whereas the ASCK has no action group at Columbia, SC" (FBI memo from Savannah to director, 30 December 1964). The SAC's sub-

sequent recommendation was not to initiate any counterintelligence activity against the ASCK. The group remained active in South Carolina, but the Savannah office never initiated any activity against its members. In June 1965, the Savannah SAC even suggested that the leader of ASCK not be considered as a counterintelligence target, since he did not seem to favor "unlawful" or violent acts, and he instead "look[ed] upon ASCK as a fraternal group rather than any type of hate group" (FBI memo from Savannah to director, 21 June 1965). Thus, the desire to reduce the potentially violent actions of the Klan, rather than eliminate them altogether, led to an attempt to find and sustain "acceptable" alternatives to active Klan groups.

The second strategy employed to control Klan groups generally involved placing as many informants as possible within targeted groups. Once informant coverage was sufficient to exert considerable influence over the group's actions, the question then became whether or not creating conflict within a group would actually decrease the level of overall white hate activity (since members forming splinter groups may actually become more militant and therefore more active in violence). The New Orleans office was especially active during 1966 and succeeded in breaking down the membership of the UKA during this time. The directorate then sent a memo to the New Orleans SAC requesting that he reevaluate the office's overall strategy: "at one time the merger of the Original Knights of the Ku Klux Klan [OKKKK] with the United Klans of America [UKA] may have been beneficial to existing informant coverage. Since your Klan investigations and counterintelligence activity have significantly hurt the UKA, you should now reevaluate the merger in question" (FBI memo from director to New Orleans, 21 December 1966). Note the overall goal of maximizing control of both the OKKKK and the UKA (through informant placement) rather than eliminating them altogether. Four months later, the New Orleans SAC reported that the UKA was in "a state of chaos" and that the most sensible action at this point was not to attempt to eliminate the group entirely (and risk the formation of a more active Klan splinter group) but instead to use informants to ensure that the Louisiana UKA remained affiliated with the National UKA. "It is the opinion of this office that greater control can be exercised over the membership if they remain with the national organization rather than attempting to cover various splinter organizations and groups" (FBI memo from New Orleans to director, 10 April 1967).

Concern over the successful placement of informants often reduced the

level of overall activity in COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups. Early in 1965, the Birmingham SAC opted not to participate in the Bureau action that would anonymously send cartoons ridiculing Klansmen to UKA members. In explaining this decision, the SAC did not cite any feeling that the action would be ineffective in reducing the actions of the UKA in Alabama. Instead, the fear was that “such a mailing would probably . . . have a very adverse effect upon the success of the Informant Development Program of the Birmingham office” (FBI memo from Birmingham to director, 20 April 1965). The Atlanta office, in a progress report to the directorate, echoed these sentiments: “It has been the experience of agents handling Klan matters that many disruptive tactics applied to the Klan immediately commences a hunt for informants and a tightening up of Klan security matters which causes extreme difficulty in inserting new informants within Klan ranks” (FBI memo from Atlanta to director, 7 January 1965). And in Florida, the Tampa SAC had proposed 13 actions against the United Florida Ku Klux Klan (UFKKK) between September 1964 and March 1966. All were eventually authorized by the directorate, and these actions were so successful that the UFKKK was in danger of disappearing altogether. This, of course, was not the primary goal, since the informant coverage within the group provided the FBI with advance information about any planned activities. The SAC consequently decided that “counterintelligence should now be held to a minimum concerning UFKKK for the following set forth reasons; it being felt that some units may drop everything altogether and then we would not know any of the plans or activities” (FBI memo from Tampa to director, 25 March 1966).

Perhaps the most obvious attempt to control, rather than eliminate, Klan activity was the Charlotte office’s creation of an informant-led Klan organization to take members away from the active UKA units operating in North Carolina. From the outset of COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups, the Charlotte office stressed its ability to control Klan groups rather than eliminate them altogether. The Charlotte SAC’s initial recommendations made clear the desire to not disrupt Klan groups that were “small, inactive, and peaceful,” since this “would likely have the effect of stirring [them] up.” The SAC also felt that the Bureau should not disrupt klaverns that did not already have “well established informant coverage,” not because these actions would fail in themselves, but because they would lead to a tightening of security, resulting in difficulties placing informants thereafter (see FBI memo from Charlotte to director & Birmingham, 12 October 1964). Much of the infor-

mation about Charlotte's campaign to create a Klan group is censored, but we do know that on 12 September 1967, the Charlotte office reported the presence of a unit of the Christian Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (CKKKK), which comprised those Klansmen who had recently broken away from the UKA. The Christian Knights had existed (independent of Bureau influence) in several areas of the South for some time; indeed, they were listed as one of the original 17 Klan targets at the outset of COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups. However, this particular CKKKK unit was obviously controlled by informants and designed to be an "acceptable" alternative to the historically violent North Carolina UKA. During the following year, the Charlotte office began a campaign to systematically discredit the UKA and foster discontent within the organization. The hope was that the disgruntled members would shift their allegiance to the CKKKK—in April 1968, the Bureau even sent letters to various UKA members urging them not to renounce the Klan entirely but instead to leave the UKA for the CKKKK. At this time, the UKA was reported to be "in dire financial straits and the membership is declining rapidly . . . [North Carolina leader J. Robert] Jones and the national office are at odds. Newspapers are constantly critical of the klan, Jones is harassed and is no longer receiving sufficient funds to operate the klan as in the past and there is no reason to believe that this trend will not continue" (FBI memo from Charlotte to director, 26 June 1968). By the beginning of 1969, the CKKKK had ballooned to 197 members, while the UKA was so decimated that the Charlotte SAC requested that the program against the group be phased out to conserve agents' time. The CKKKK had accomplished its intended results—"the idea was to siphon off members of UKA, thereby diminishing the power of UKA." However, this did not mean that those who left the UKA were no longer active Klan members. The Charlotte SAC recognized that "there are many members [currently in CKKKK] who will join any Klan organization in existence. If the CKKKK ceases to function as an organization, these members undoubtedly will return to UKA. This is not desirable" (FBI memo from Charlotte to director, 30 January 1969). Thus, the strategy was not to channel these members away from the Klan in general, but toward acceptable Klan alternatives controlled by the Bureau itself.

Any attempt to control rather than eliminate target groups rested on the ability of informants to infiltrate the group and obtain positions of power. The number of Klan infiltrators employed by the FBI is difficult to deter-

mine or even to estimate. One figure (likely conservative) that came out of the 1975 Church Committee congressional hearings on FBI activities estimates that Klan informants made up approximately 6% of the total Klan membership during the height of COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups. In 1966, the Bureau itself had identified almost 5,500 active Klansmen,<sup>14</sup> and the number of sympathizers and sporadically active members was considerably higher than this figure. At a minimum, then, the FBI had more than 300 Klan informants in place in 1966.<sup>15</sup> But regardless of the extent to which informants successfully infiltrated the Klan, it is clear that the FBI relied heavily on these informants to monitor and control Klan activities. Nowhere was this more apparent than when UKA national leader Robert Shelton threatened to weed out informants through, of all things, the use of polygraph tests and sodium pentothal (or “truth serum”) at a UKA national gathering. In response to Shelton’s threat (which the Bureau defined as “serious”), the directorate immediately sent a memo to field offices with active UKA units, requesting proposals to stop Shelton from putting this plan into place. The directorate argued that Shelton’s plan could “seriously affect our informant coverage” (FBI memo from directorate to four SACs, 7 March 1968), and this request generated a flurry of proposals to foil Shelton. These proposals ranged from publicizing Shelton’s plan to discredit him publicly to having an official from the state medical office denounce Shelton’s plan as unethical to sending a fake letter from a rival Klan leader criticizing Shelton’s lack of trust and his willingness to endanger the health of UKA members.<sup>16</sup> Shortly thereafter, the threat of Shelton following through with his plan seemed to diminish. The larger point, however, is that, while the widespread use of lie detector tests would have drained the Klan of valuable resources, it was not desired by the Bureau, since the uncovering of informants within the Klan would have been incredibly damaging to the FBI’s strategy of controlling Klan activities. The Bureau’s focus on controlling and guiding rather than eliminating Klan activity meant that informant coverage was the key counter-intelligence resource in COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups.

### **The Patterning of Actions against Left- versus Right-Wing Targets**

The allocation of other action types reinforces the overall approach to controlling the Klan’s activities as opposed to eliminating the New Left’s ability

Table 5 Total distribution of COINTELPRO actions

		Form																			Total	
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	P	Q	S	T	U	V	Total	
F	1	15	0	0	3	-	6	104	-	-	-	-	2	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	151
u	2		24	1	1	2	54	3	15	0	2	1	0	0	16	1	0	1	1	3	206	
n	3	9		0	0	0	15	2	1	0	0	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	1	58	
c	4		2	0	50	-	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	79	
t	5	21	4	80	-	0		1	1	3	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	3	164	
i	6		1	1		0	3	1	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	234	
o	7	1	0	0	1	-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	
n	8	-	-	4	-		-	-	3	-	-	-	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	
	9	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	
Total	157	53	40	298	2	94	124	40	53	5	3	2	2	1	24	1	1	1	2	13	916	

Note: Darker shading indicates action used significantly more in white hate program; lighter shading, more in New Left program.

to act and spread its ideas. Table 5 pools the actions in both COINTELPROs and shows how they are distributed over forms and functions. The overall number of classifiable actions in each program was almost equivalent (461 actions against the New Left versus 455 actions against white hate groups), but in certain cases particular action types were utilized significantly more often in one program than in the other. In Table 5, lightly shaded cells represent action types used significantly more often in COINTELPRO–New Left, while more heavily shaded cells represent those used significantly more frequently in COINTELPRO–White Hate Groups. Just as the FBI’s attempts to influence actions and create acceptable alternatives in particular Klan groups reflected the Bureau’s overall strategy of controlling the Klan’s behavior, the differential use of certain action types hints at the Bureau’s fundamentally different approach to repressing the New Left and white hate threats. Below I identify five of these distinctions and discuss how each reflects the overall strategy that emerged within these two programs.

#### Action Type 1H: Creating a Negative Public Image through Dissemination of Bureau-Generated Information about Targets

This action type was employed against New Left targets in 16 different instances but was not used at all in COINTELPRO–White Hate Groups. This disparity reflects the Bureau’s ongoing battle against the ideas and lifestyle of New Left adherents rather than a focus on violent or subversive protest activities alone. While Klan-related groups emerged as worthy white hate targets only when they demonstrated a propensity toward violence, the New Left was considered subversive purely because of its rejection of the values of mainstream America. To wage this war of ideas and values, the FBI frequently sought to exploit opportunities to sway public opinion against the New Left. Creating a negative public opinion of the Klan was a common goal within COINTELPRO–White Hate Groups as well (81 separate actions had this function), but in almost every instance such activities were in response to particular Klan groups’ involvement in violent activity. Generally, media sources were informed of Klan activities to create and reinforce an image of lawlessness surrounding Klan “action groups.” COINTELPRO–New Left frequently employed media sources as well to stigmatize New Left actions but needed to find a means to attack New Left ideas and lifestyles in the

absence of newsworthy protest activity. To accomplish this more ambitious goal, the Bureau created its own anti-New Left propaganda material (always ostensibly published by fictive moderate or conservative organizations) to distribute in a wide range of contexts.

This type of activity took on various guises. In February 1969, the Chicago field office proposed to distribute "Into the streets: A handbook for revolting kids," a pamphlet created by Bureau agents. The intended audience was "responsible, moderate student groups," whom the Bureau feared would be swayed by SDS ideology. The pamphlet was thus intended to be a corrective to the insidious logic of the New Left and took pains to present SDS in a negative light, portraying them "as a group of spoiled infants" (FBI memo from Chicago to director, 7 February 1969). The directorate approved this action the following month, agreeing with the Chicago SAC that the pamphlet "may be effective in pointing out the absurd activities often resorted to by SDS" (FBI memo from director to Chicago, 17 March 1969). The Los Angeles office initiated a similar action that summer, compiling information to be included in a pamphlet distributed to incoming freshmen at Occidental College, Pasadena City College, and the University of Southern California. This information was designed to make these students "aware of the danger from SDS and other New Left organizations" (FBI memo from Los Angeles to director, 1 July 1969).

A more ambitious extended campaign was introduced by the Indianapolis field office, which proposed to print and distribute no less than 25,000 copies of a newsletter entitled *Armageddon News*, designed to "expose the conspiracy of the New Left and to counteract the impression that SDS and minority groups speak for the majority of students at Indiana University" (FBI memo from Indianapolis to director, 24 July 1968). And finally, a crude illustration of the Bureau's attempts to present New Left adherents in a negative light emerged out of the Newark field office in 1968. The Newark SAC proposed to construct and distribute a photo montage of the "cuckoo" element attracted to SDS and the New Left in general. This montage was to emphasize the "strange collection of hippies, drop-outs, and plain nuts" in the New Left, and its target audience was, predictably, the mainstream student body at local colleges (FBI memo from Newark to director, 28 May 1968). The montage was authorized by the directorate and ultimately mailed to various fraternity and sorority houses in the northern New Jersey area. The overall purpose of such tactics was clear: the overriding fear of the

Bureau was that the New Left's ideas would seduce masses of impressionable young people on college campuses. Since the FBI felt that only a small number of deviants were naturally attracted to the New Left's political ideology, groups like SDS could gain a large following only through deceit and trickery. Bureau-generated materials thus served as a corrective to the New Left's recruiting efforts and exposed the "true nature" of these political extremists. The fact that comparable tactics were not used against white hate groups illustrates the fundamentally different conceptions of New Left versus white hate threats. The subversive nature of the New Left's ideas required a propaganda campaign to prevent not only the spread of violent activity but also the proliferation of ideas that opposed the status quo.

### Action Type 2I: Disrupting Internal Organization by Interviewing Targets

This action type was used 41 times against white hate targets, compared with only 3 times against the New Left. The reasons for this disparity are clear. Within COINTELPRO-New Left, interviewing generally served an intelligence function. Adherents of New Left groups—the vast majority young, white, and from economically privileged backgrounds—were viewed by Bureau agents as "deviant" and "spoiled," since their political beliefs outwardly rejected the very system that made possible their comfortable upbringings. The motivations of radical students seemed a considerable mystery to those in the FBI. Their fashions, ideas, likes and dislikes appeared worlds away from those of agents in the Bureau. The Philadelphia SAC's attempt to characterize the culture of the New Left illustrates this gap between the FBI and the New Left:

The emergence of the New Left on the American Scene has produced a new phenomenon—a yen for magic. Some leaders of the New Left, its followers, the Hippies and the Yippies, wear beads and amulets. New Left youth involved in anti-Vietnam activity have adopted the Greek letter "Omega" as their symbol. Self-proclaimed yogis have established a following in the New Left movement. Their incantations are a reminder of the chant of the witch doctor. Publicity has been given to the yogis and their mutterings. The news media has referred to it as a "mystical renaissance" and has attributed its growth to the increasing use of LSD

and similar drugs. (FBI memo from Philadelphia to director, 21 November 1968)

Even more interesting was the SAC's attempt to apply this characterization to counterintelligence activity. The way the SAC saw it, the above insights provided an "opportunity to attack an apparent weakness of some of [the New Left's] leaders" through receipt of "a series of anonymous messages with a mystical connotation." The Philadelphia office enclosed an example of such a message, a small sheet of paper containing a drawing of a beetle with the caption, "Beware! The Siberian Beetle," explaining that this symbol

could be followed by a series of messages with the same sketch bearing captions such as "The Siberian Beetle is Black" or "The Siberian Beetle Can Talk." The recipient is left to make his own interpretation as to the significance of the symbol and the message and as to the identity of the sender. The symbol utilized does not have to have any real significance but must be subject to interpretation as having a mystical, sinister meaning. The mathematical symbol for "infinity" with an appropriate message would certainly qualify as having a mystical, sinister meaning.

The intended effect of this action was of course to

cause concern and mental anguish on the part of a "hand-picked" recipient or recipients. Suspicion, distrust, and disruption could follow. The proposed action . . . is basically a harassment technique. Its ultimate aim is to cause disruption of the New Left by attacking an apparent weakness of some of its leaders. It is felt there is a reasonable chance for success. (Ibid.)

This proposal was promptly authorized by the directorate (see FBI memo from director to Philadelphia, 4 December 1968), but needless to say, no positive results were ever associated with this action. The Philadelphia SAC's attempt to initiate an action that resonated with the "true" culture and lifestyle of the New Left could hardly have been expected to be taken seriously by its intended targets.

Given this limited understanding of New Left culture, the possibility of an effective dialogue between representatives of the FBI and members of New Left groups was remote. The nature of New Left ideology required a healthy distrust of any policing agency during the late 1960s, and this natu-

ral distrust reasonably led Bureau agents to conclude that interviews would not effectively persuade New Leftists to refute their radical political ideals. More important, however, the overall goal of COINTELPRO–New Left was not consistent with the use of interview techniques. Actions against the New Left did not attempt only to reduce their activity; the overriding goal was to eliminate targets and their subversive ideas altogether. Interviews that sought to modify or reduce a targeted individual’s actions rarely were suitable for the type of outcome required of actions in COINTELPRO–New Left. Instead, interviews were generally intended to facilitate other types of repressive activity, as intelligence information obtained about the New Left was often later applied to more ambitious activities.

The Bureau’s approach to the Klan was altogether different. Agents saw Klansmen, unlike student protestors, as basically patriotic and sympathetic to many mainstream American political ideals. Many Klansmen were active participants in their local communities and almost all supported the war in Vietnam. Even the Klan’s strong pro-segregationist views did not draw the attention of the FBI. Rather, the violent means through which their political ideals gained expression made such groups targets of COINTELPRO. From the Bureau’s perspective, many Klansmen were drawn to the group because of their own ignorance—Klan ideology was seductive to those with “rural upbringing” and little education. Therefore, Klansmen could, in many cases, potentially be persuaded to express their political views without engaging in the violence and illegal activities commonly perpetrated by the Klan itself. Since Klan members often did not share the New Left’s natural distrust of the FBI, agents could reasonably expect to use interviews to influence Klansmen’s attitudes and actions. Just as Bureau agents saw Klansmen to be uneducated and ignorant, they assumed that these targets’ views were also easily manipulable by those in the Bureau.

Early in COINTELPRO–White Hate Groups, many field offices established “intensive interview programs” against the Klan. These programs served mainly to create mistrust or dull enthusiasm for violent action within local Klan organizations. In many cases, interviews that sought only to “bring to the attention of [Klansmen] an awareness of the FBI’s interest in any illegal activities of the Klan” (FBI memo from Baltimore to director, 3 June 1966) in fact had an enormous impact on the ability of local Klan organizations to maintain a stable membership and initiate actions. Such COINTELPRO actions led in some instances to the total collapse of targeted groups (see,

for example, FBI memos from Richmond to director, 11 December 1967, 13 November 1968; Tampa to director, 6 June 1967, 24 January 1968, 11 July 1969; Memphis to director, 1 July 1966; Knoxville to director, 6 January 1966). Generally, however, interviewing targets became a viable strategy when the Bureau's ultimate goal was to control targets' actions. These interviews did not pressure individuals to fundamentally alter or in any way refute their ideas or beliefs; they only prompted these individuals to express these ideas in less violent ways. Unlike New Leftists, many Klansmen were attracted to ideals held within the Bureau. Agents, then, could appeal to values such as patriotism and respect for the law when attempting to persuade Klansmen to alter the manner in which they acted on their beliefs.

#### Action Type 5C: Hindering Ability of Targeted Groups to Protest through Dissemination of Articles or Public Source Information

This action type was found almost exclusively in COINTELPRO-New Left, where it was initiated 36 times compared to only twice in COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups. This disparity had two causes. First, the nature of campus-based protest was such that the very existence of recognized student organizations was dependent on college or university administration approval. The constitutional right to freedom of assembly did not hold when students required university funding, resources, and meeting spaces in order to viably gain a following on many campuses. The Bureau's strategy was often to convince campus administrators that New Left-related organizations were subversive and a danger to the mission of their school. The most ambitious attempt to keep New Left groups off of campuses involved the mailing of a 1968 *Barron's* article entitled "Campus or battleground?" to large numbers of "educators and administrators." This article specifically dealt with the SDS-led student revolt at Columbia and more generally reflected the pervasive fear that violence and destruction of university property was a central aim of SDS chapters everywhere. During the fall of 1968, 35 field offices mailed copies of this article to administrators who were "established sources" (e.g., clearly supportive of the Bureau's anti-New Left position) as well as those "who have shown a reluctance to take decisive action against the New Left" (see FBI memos from director to 15 SACs, 29 July 1968; to 10 SACs, 2 August 1968; to 10 SACs, 12 August 1968).

Second, and more important, this strategy reflected the overall difference in the FBI's approach to repressing the New Left and white hate groups. Hindering the Klan's ability to protest was a concern of the FBI (and 71 actions were carried out to this end between 1964 and 1971), but the goal of COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups was to control the Klan's actions to ensure that they did not become violent or confrontational. It was not necessary, therefore, for the Bureau to distribute literature evidencing the Klan's conspiratorial subversion. The danger posed by the Klan was always on the surface, visible in high-profile acts, such as cross-burnings, mass meetings, and threats (or acts) of violence. These sorts of activities were often public, and their visibility generally required no action beyond contacting a media source to ensure that coverage of the Klan's activities was given the proper negative slant (the Bureau utilized established media sources 78 times in COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups).

The New Left, in contrast, presented a fundamentally different problem for the Bureau. Since their subversive ideas as well as their engagement in disruptive actions posed a danger to the status quo, the "conspiracy" behind a group like SDS needed to be made public. Media coverage of New Left disruption was useful, but the key was to expose the subversive threat posed by SDS even in the absence of disruptive activity. From the FBI's perspective, SDS's attempts to gain acceptance as a conventional student group on many campuses were calculated to attract moderate students who were unaware of the group's hidden revolutionary agenda. Only a small number of deviants were "truly" attracted by SDS's radical goals; a broadening of the group's membership required the deceitful seduction of well-meaning students that shared SDS's concern with specific issues, such as the Vietnam War. University administrators, to the extent that they were ignorant of the true danger posed by SDS, might be reluctant to prohibit them from existing on campus or using school resources and facilities. Articles and public source documents provided a means through which the FBI could expose the motives of organizations such as SDS to campus officials and legislators with authority over the funding of public institutions of higher learning. Disseminating these documents thus not only hindered the New Left's ability to engage in specific acts of protest but also generated resistance to the very existence of particular groups on campuses across America. Whether or not these groups had been actively disruptive, their mere presence constituted a threat to mainstream American values.

### Function 3: Creating Dissension among Targeted Groups

This function was primarily associated with COINTELPRO-New Left, which initiated 42 actions to this end. COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups did utilize this type of action but much less frequently (in 16 instances). Not really a result of the FBI's differing approach to New Left and white hate targets, this disparity instead emerged mainly from the greater degree of opportunity to initiate this type of activity within COINTELPRO-New Left. Creating conflict between targeted groups was always an efficient repressive strategy, since it impaired the ability of both targets to engage in protest activity. On the one hand, the ideology of White Hate groups precluded them from forging alliances with other types of subversive organizations. As right-wing groups, their ideas and goals were the polar opposite of groups targeted within other COINTELPROs. The New Left, on the other hand, shared many goals with the black nationalist/hate groups and Communist-type organizations subjected to FBI counterintelligence activity prior to the initiation of COINTELPRO-New Left. Of the 42 attempts to create external conflict between targets, 22 involved an alliance between a New Left target and a group targeted under COINTELPRO-Black Nationalist/Hate Groups and another 5 included both New Left and Communist Party-affiliated groups. Thus, almost two-thirds of such actions were designed to prevent the New Left from pursuing actions in conjunction with groups targeted by the FBI under separate COINTELPROs. Of course, the pairing that concerned the Bureau by far the most was the tenuous alliance between SDS and the Black Panther Party (BPP) in 1969. The BPP was a central target of COINTELPRO-Black Nationalist/Hate Groups, and its work in conjunction with SDS led the directorate to request proposals from 16 SACs to "exacerbate the emerging split" between these targets in September 1969 (FBI memo from director to 16 field offices, 8 September 1969). During the fall of 1969, 17 actions resulted from this request.<sup>17</sup> By the end of 1969, the alliance between these groups had indeed collapsed.

In the absence of any association with other organizations targeted by the FBI COINTELPROs, white hate groups, such as the Klan, provided relatively few opportunities to create external conflict between groups. On occasion, disarray in one Klan organization would lead to the formation of a new Klan-related group, and for a period any subsequent rivalry could be

exploited. In other instances, conflict based on political ideology could be exploited between the Klan and organizations such as the American Nazi Party (ANP) and National States Rights Party (NSRP). These latter groups were viewed by many Klansmen as unpatriotic (and, in the case of the ANP, effeminate), and the Klan was sometimes seen by other white supremacist organizations as lacking sophistication. The Bureau could periodically act on such tensions, though it was relatively rare that these organizations were located in the same territories. Since the Klan was often the only racially motivated right-wing group targeted by the FBI in the South, direct contact between Klan groups and other white supremacists occurred only when organizations such as UKA took root in northern cities. Indeed, the only proposals attempting to create dissension between the Klan and other right-wing groups emerged out of the Chicago, Los Angeles, and Miami field offices. The areas of greatest concern to the Bureau, namely the Klan strongholds in the deep South, were never subject to direct competition with other white supremacist groups.

#### Function 6 and Form F: Hindering Ability of Targets to Participate in Group Activities; Utilizing Informants

Because merely controlling the activities of targeted organizations did not effectively eliminate the subversive threat posed by the New Left, the Bureau frequently acted to completely frustrate individuals' participation in New Left-related activities. Actions to this end were initiated 157 times in COINTELPRO-New Left, more than twice as often as in COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups. Since the majority of New Left targets were students, many of these actions took the form of anonymous letters to targets' (presumably disapproving) parents. These letters, of course, went to great lengths to present student activists in a bad light. In one case, the Houston field office sent parents copies of an "obscene" SDS pamphlet and included a cover letter outlining their children's involvement, while describing SDS leaders as "for the most part filthy, bearded, long-haired individuals whose reputations leave much to be desired and who obviously are utilizing current problems in the United States for their own demented activities and in the process are carrying a lot of well meaning and reputable students along with them" (FBI memo from Houston to director, 16 October 1968). The intended effect of this

action was to encourage parents to “take their children out of SDS” and to reduce the group’s membership until SDS could no longer operate. In a similar case, the San Diego SAC sent a letter to the parents of four identified key activists in the San Diego State College SDS chapter. The letter included the standard negative overview of SDS in general (“it draws its supporters from a motley variety including beatniks, hippies, disenchanting intellectuals”; “the movement is held together by bitter hatred of what is called ‘the establishment’”; “the SDS is a highly militant group and has even been described as a group that ‘we have going for us’ by GUS HALL, the General Secretary of the Communist Party, USA”), enclosed a copy of a “pornographic” New Left publication, and concluded by imploring: “I cannot believe that you, as a parent, can condone this type of influence over your children in a state supported school. . . . I sincerely hope that you will feel inclined toward . . . having a ‘heart to heart’ talk with your son (daughter) as I also have done” (FBI memo from San Diego to director, 31 October 1968).

Another action initiated by the Detroit office involved mailing a letter from a “concerned friend” to the parents of an unknown female SDS member. This letter included detailed information about the woman’s behavior, documenting her SDS involvement and also including mention of her recently contracted case of gonorrhoea (see FBI memo from Detroit to director, 29 October 1969). Often, using typical Bureau logic, such personal maladies were presented as connected to, or somehow caused by, membership in New Left organizations.

Other actions served the same function but were directed toward other authorities. One SDS member targeted by the Houston office was denied a teaching position in Los Angeles when the Houston SAC sent a letter from a fictive individual recommending that the SDSer not be employed because of her participation in political demonstrations. The letter also noted that Houston school authorities had reprimanded the woman for wearing “mini-mini skirts” (FBI memo from Houston to director, 25 June 1968). On other occasions, actions of this type led to the incarceration of targets when agents provided information to local police. This information often involved New Left individuals’ possession of drugs (see, e.g., FBI memo from Little Rock to director, 20 August 1968; Jacksonville to director, 20 July 1968), but the overall concern was not with decreasing such criminal behavior. Instead, the overriding interest in targets’ drug use lay in its strategic value in eliminating the political activities of New Left participants.

Similar actions were initiated within COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups, but much less frequently since the main focus of that program was to control the behavior of targets to minimize violent activity. There existed fewer opportunities to achieve desired results through this type of action (i.e., hindering the ability of individuals to participate in target group activities) since only those Klansmen and others who were likely participants in violent acts were targeted in ways that lead to their elimination from the movement altogether. Unlike the New Left, where any participation in the movement was by definition subversive, the Klan was acceptable as long as it remained nonviolent. Given this focus on controlling white hate targets, it makes sense that the only form of function 6 used predominantly against white hate groups rather than against the New Left was the utilization of informants. In general, white hate informants sought to eliminate members who encouraged disruptive and potentially violent actions, while otherwise attempting to influence the group's organization to reduce its level of activity. When the use of informants became the means through which individual targets were prevented from participating in group activities, the individuals targeted were always those willing to initiate violence.

One typical case involved the Tampa office, which in September 1967 learned that members of a local UKA klavern (already involved in a beating and shooting incident two months before) were planning another violent action. The SAC instructed informants in the klavern to gather information about this planned activity that could be furnished to the local police. The informants succeeded, and the police ultimately were able to arrest the UKA ringleaders. The key tangible result reported by the Tampa SAC, however, was not that the group's membership was reduced, but instead that the arrests effectively "avoided potential racial violence" (see FBI memo from Tampa to director, 27 September 1967). Similarly, when an informant of the Richmond office discovered that certain UKA members were planning a cross burning to terrorize local black residents, the SAC provided advance notice to the police, and five Klansmen were arrested for this activity (see FBI memo from Richmond to director, 3 January 1967). Again, the key result was not that Klansmen in general were prevented from engaging in UKA activities. More important, *particular* members—those who promoted violence and terroristic activity and could thus not be effectively neutralized—were eliminated from participation in the UKA.

More commonly, informants attempted to influence the actions of Klan

groups to ensure that they remained nonviolent. One extended campaign by the Birmingham field office involved a talented informant developing the trust of those in UKA national headquarters to eventually become UKA leader Robert Shelton's speech writer. From this position, the informant influenced Shelton's position on a variety of UKA policy issues, leading to what the Birmingham SAC reported as Shelton's "softened position—less racist, critical of violence, more strongly anticommunist" (FBI memo from Birmingham to director, 28 May 1970). In another case, the New Orleans office supplied information from UKA infiltrators to local police. The immediate goal was to eliminate UKA members through arrests, but the more general purpose was to "neutralize" a particular "disruptive" leader (name deleted from memo) so that Bureau informants could take over the group's leadership positions and "keep violence to a minimum" (FBI memo from New Orleans to director, 2 January 1968).

The intersection of actions that hindered the ability of individual targets to participate in group activities (function 6) and that utilized informants (form F) therefore provides insight into the different overall strategies employed within COINTELPRO-New Left and COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups. Since the ultimate goal of New Left repression was to eliminate the threat of subversion that emerged from participants' actions and ideas, the Bureau sought to eliminate any individual's ability to participate in New Left activities. Hindering individual participation thus became the most commonly used type of action in COINTELPRO-New Left. When dealing with white hate targets, the Bureau's overall strategy of controlling behavior created significantly fewer opportunities to eliminate targets' ability to participate. Only those individuals who advocated or actively engaged in violence became targets for elimination. The use of informants, alongside the sending of anonymous letters and providing information to officials, became typical forms through which the elimination of individual white hate targets occurred. However, unlike similar actions in the New Left that sought to eliminate potential participants and thereby reduce the threat of subversion, the overriding purpose of such actions was to reduce the possibility of violent or terroristic activity.

The fundamentally different goals sought by the Bureau in its battles with white hate groups and with the New Left—a desire for control versus elimination—characterized each of the five distinctions in the patterning of action types examined here. Action types that expressly advanced one of

these goals (either control or elimination) were recognizable through significant differences in their frequency of usage against white hate groups and the New Left. When action types were not closely associated with either goal—for example, actions that utilized a media source to create a negative public image surrounding particular targets or supplied information to officials to either reduce a target group’s resources or hinder the group’s overall ability to protest—we observe similar patterns of usage within both programs.

## Discussion

I have examined the patterning of actions within the FBI’s COINTELPROs against white hate groups and the New Left as a vehicle to disentangle the complex relationship between the Bureau and right- and left-wing political activity between 1964 and 1971. During this time, the FBI—given its massive campaigns to discredit the leadership of the civil rights movement and its active harassment of any organization or individual deemed sympathetic to the Communist Party—was commonly seen as hostile to the goals of the civil rights movement in particular and the American left generally. I reach similar conclusions here, but for different, and largely unexpected, reasons. The FBI did indeed oppose the emergence of a strong civil rights movement, and Director J. Edgar Hoover had a great fear that a “black messiah” would rise to threaten the very fabric of American life (FBI memo from director to 41 field offices, 4 March 1968). However, the Bureau’s reluctance to protect civil rights workers in the South and its enthusiastic harassment of black activists did not prevent the initiation of a counterintelligence program against the very white hate groups that shared its fear and dislike of the civil rights movement.

Contrary to expectations, COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups, in terms of its scope or seriousness of purpose, was not a token program existing to create an illusory sense of concern about the violent actions of the Ku Klux Klan against civil rights workers and African Americans in general. Instead, when looking at its range and frequency of actions, the Bureau’s repression of the Klan was overwhelmingly similar to that employed in COINTELPRO-New Left, which constituted the most fully developed program of repression against the American left. Through the use of a two-dimensional typology to categorize COINTELPRO activities, I have found that the forms, func-

tions, and frequency of activities against white hate groups were essentially equivalent to the set of actions utilized in COINTELPRO-New Left. Recognizing this equivalence is not in any way a refutation of Hoover's much-publicized disdain (at the least) for Martin Luther King Jr., Stokely Carmichael, and other civil rights and black power leaders—his attitudes toward them, as toward various leaders of the New Left, were clearly and unambiguously negative. However, it does significantly challenge the view that the Bureau's opposition to civil rights-related political change extended to the active support of, or even a *laissez-faire* attitude toward, the Klan. Reading through thousands of pages of COINTELPRO-White Hate Group documents, one is struck by the Bureau's dogged efforts to hinder Klan attempts to violently act to protect the status quo. In *Cunningham 2000* (ch. 3), I argue that there is an organizational explanation for this—that similar organizational structures (across COINTELPROs) will lead to similar outputs that are sometimes insensitive to the preferences of individuals within the organization in question. But a deeper examination of the Bureau's actions allows for the uncovering of small differences in the patterning of actions across COINTELPROs that hint at differing overall strategies against their targets.

These findings suggest a general framework for measuring the effectiveness of state repression. Much of the recent work on the “conflict-repression nexus” has sought to reconcile the lack of consistent findings regarding the relationship between repression and subsequent protest, mainly through disaggregating various dimensions of analysis (including time, space, regime type, and form of protest/repression—see Khawaja 1993; Francisco 1996; Rasler 1996; Davenport 2000, 2002). To understand the impact of covert repression, I follow this general strategy, dealing specifically with the interaction between a single repressive agency and its targets. Taking the interplay between repressor and target seriously, I suggest that the effectiveness of repression is a product of the vulnerability of protest targets to particular repressive forms. Vulnerability has five key dimensions: (1) the ideological overlap between the repressing organization and protest target, (2) the target's ability to perceive a repressive threat, (3) the target's visibility, (4) the target's (and its constituent members') access to resources, and (5) the target's homogeneity (both geographically and ideologically). Vulnerability, then, is ultimately a characteristic of protest targets, though a particular target's susceptibility to neutralization is a product of the interplay between its

own organizational and ideological makeup and that of the repressor. Discerning the overall orientation of a repressing organization to its targets is an important step in understanding this interplay, and the form-function action typology introduced here provides a way to measure repression in this manner.

The effectiveness of the FBI's COINTELPROs against white hate groups and the New Left was closely tied to the overall strategies adopted within each program. Though Bureau efforts were directed toward controlling Klan behavior, its own estimates show a significant decline in Klan membership after 1968. The Columbia, SC, field office's measure of shrinking membership rolls is representative: the Columbia territory included approximately 600 known active Klansmen in April 1968,<sup>18</sup> but this number had been cut in half by June 1969. Membership continued to decrease thereafter, and by March 1970, there were only 246 Klansmen active in South Carolina. Entire klaverns were forced to fold with this precipitous drop in membership; at one point, the Columbia office reported that 13 (out of 43) UKA klaverns had ceased activity over a year-long period. This local story was representative of the fortunes of the Klan nationally. The FBI estimated overall Klan membership at over 14,000 in 1964, but only 4,300 active Klansmen remained by 1971 (Sullivan 1979: 126, 134). Similarly, Robert Shelton, perhaps the most visible and prominent Klan leader of the era, later acknowledged that "the FBI's counterintelligence program hit us in membership and weakened us for about ten years" (UKA 1978). The Bureau's relationship to the Klan facilitated the success of counterintelligence efforts in several ways. The patriotic tendencies of the Klan created an ideological common ground that could be exploited by Bureau agents, while simultaneously generating a deep ambivalence among Klan members regarding the FBI's activities. As Klan leaders had no viable antiestablishment critique (short of a global Communist-Jew conspiracy) to frame the Bureau's actions as oppositional, their organizations were not able to effectively mobilize against COINTELPRO activities until it was much too late. Also, the structure of Klan organizations maximized their vulnerability to counterintelligence actions. As a set of "secret fraternal organizations," the Klan remained visible on the group level, while attempting to protect the identities of individual members. This semi-covert organizational structure allowed the Bureau to greatly increase the costs of participation through threat of exposure. And since the Klan's mobilization base was primarily working class,

agents were additionally able to frequently exploit economic hardships. These *specific forms of vulnerability*, in turn, lent themselves to counterintelligence strategies that were easily implemented on a consistent basis, allowing Bureau SACs to realize tangible results in the absence of innovative strategies. Finally, and maybe most important, the Klan's homogeneity and geographical concentration meant that a small number of field offices engaging in a limited set of activities could consistently succeed. In short, the above factors ensured that COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups had a direct effect on the decline of the Klan.

The impact of COINTELPRO-New Left was quite different. By 1971, major New Left targets had either disappeared or ceased to hold any real promise for mass appeal. SDS, the central target of COINTELPRO-New Left, was close to 100,000 strong in 1969 (Sale 1973: 664) but had been reduced to a set of bitterly militant factions separated by an inability to agree on arcane points of leftist revolutionary ideology.<sup>19</sup> COINTELPRO, however, was not highly successful in directly contributing to this decline. Agents lacked the ideological overlap they exploited so effectively with the Klan—fundamentally, they had little understanding of the New Left's ideology or why privileged upper-middle-class white students would be attracted to it. This ideological gulf was compounded by the heterogeneity of the New Left itself; it was difficult to reduce the variety of cultural and political challenges to a coherent "threat" to be targeted. In contrast, SDSers possessed well-developed antiestablishment theories that facilitated their understanding of the threat posed by FBI repression. While they had no specific knowledge of COINTELPRO per se, most New Left targets were not surprised by counterintelligence tactics. Furthermore, the overt nature of New Left protest activities, unlike those of the Klan, as well as the privileged status of New Left targets, minimized their vulnerability to easily carried-out counterintelligence activities. The FBI instead was forced to engage in a strategy to eliminate the New Left largely through discrediting its adherents within the general public, which had little short-term impact on protest activity. Even these tactics were of little use by the late 1960s, when Weathermen, the most prominent faction of a splintered SDS, went underground and consistently foiled the Bureau's attempts at infiltration. In contrast to COINTELPRO's effect on the Klan, the FBI's repression of SDS enjoyed few short-term tangible results,<sup>20</sup> instead contributing to the decline of the New Left less directly. The serious costs of New Left participation

were borne by overt repression, most significantly police violence and judicial actions, and COINTELPRO-New Left was effective in this context—as a supplement to the overt repressive apparatus, it contributed to the creation of an overall repressive climate that pushed organizations like SDS away from viable mass political dissent.

## Notes

The author would like to thank Peter Bearman, Christian Smith, Charles Kurzman, Rachel Rosenfeld, Sidney Tarrow, Doug McAdam, Christian Davenport, Gary Marx, Sarah Boocock, Chip Berlet, and the participants in the 2001 ASA Roundtable on State Repression as well as two anonymous reviewers for help in shaping the final version of this article.

- 1 For a detailed description of the Bureau's dealings with King, see O'Reilly 1989 and Garrow 1981. Churchill and VanderWall 1988 includes a comprehensive account of the state-sponsored harassment of the Black Panther Party.
- 2 FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover officially initiated COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups in a memo dated 2 September 1964. The memo identifies 17 Klan-related groups and 9 other "hate organizations" as targets that "should be considered for counterintelligence action."
- 3 As the fifth and final formal counterintelligence program initiated by the FBI, COINTELPRO-New Left provides an ideal case for examining the Bureau's fully developed strategy to neutralize left-wing targets. Throughout the program, Bureau agents often made references to past actions developed against the Communist Party and various civil rights organizations (though never white hate groups), and it is clear that their dealings with the New Left resulted from the knowledge cumulated through activities developed within previous COINTELPROs.
- 4 It is important to note that the FBI's activities constituted only one source of the repression facing protest groups during this time. Many of the individuals targeted under COINTELPRO-New Left were also monitored and harassed by agents from other federal agencies (including the Central Intelligence Agency, the Secret Service, the National Security Agency, and the Office of Naval Intelligence) as well as by local police departments. In addition to these considerable intelligence and counterintelligence efforts, police violence became increasingly likely at antiwar events, and arrests were often followed by court cases that, regardless of their outcome, sapped movement participants' time and financial resources. Many of the targets of COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups were spared these comprehensive neutralization efforts, though the same federal forces that pushed the FBI to act against the Klan in 1964 sparked a major investigation by the House Un-American Activities Committee a year later (see U.S. House of Representatives 1966). Between July 1965 and February 1966, more than 200 Klan members were called before the committee.

- 5 These groups were categorized in this manner by the FBI. In addition, two other COINTELPRO-type programs were initiated, on a much smaller scale, in the 1960s. The first program targeted Puerto Rican Nationalists (begun in 1962) and the second sought to create a conflict between the Communist Party-USA and organized crime elements (this program, instituted in 1964, was known as "Operation Hoodwink").
- 6 An FBI memo purportedly discontinued the program against the Socialist Workers Party in October 1969. However, the April 1971 memo ending all COINTELPROs also mentioned the SWP, leading to speculation that the program had never ended (see Jayko 1988: 65-66).
- 7 The Bureau's longstanding suspicion of black political leaders is perhaps most clearly illustrated by Hoover's stated aim to prevent the rise of a new "black messiah." (See FBI memo from director to 41 field offices, 4 March 1968.) While no parallel vendetta existed against the KKK, see Powers 1987: 140 for an account of Hoover's successful prosecution of a Klan leader under the Mann Act in 1924.
- 8 For an exception to the literature's focus on overt forms of repression, see Davenport 2002.
- 9 This assumption implicitly colors the longstanding "conflict-repression nexus" debate, though little attention has been given to how the impact of repression might vary across protest targets.
- 10 While it is impossible to determine the proportion of memos that have not been released by the FBI, James Kirkpatrick Davis (1997: 18) describes the documents released in 1977 as "virtually the entire file," though he does not explain how we might be able to verify this estimate. More encouraging is the fact that, when read together, the files compose a coherent narrative. Since there is a considerable amount of cross-referencing of proposals and actions, the extent to which this narrative emerges in an understandable manner provides a fairly good sense of the overall completeness of the available files.
- 11 See FBI memos from director to Mobile, 31 December 1970; director to Birmingham, 28 March 1968; and director to Chicago, 4 November 1969, for a sampling of specific instances of this shift in the form of proposed actions.
- 12 In actuality, the FBI initiated 480 actions within COINTELPRO-White Hate Groups, though the forms and/or functions of 25 of these actions are unknown due to censoring within memos. Likewise, COINTELPRO-New Left included 484 actions, with 23 of these containing unknown forms and/or functions.
- 13 Function 8 differs from the others because it represents an intelligence, rather than counterintelligence, action. Regarding the distinction between these types of activity, Gary Marx (1988) states that the goal of *intelligence* is to gather information about a target or suspect. Thus, the agent's role is passive. Intelligence can be gathered on events that have already occurred (postliminary intelligence) or in contexts where the police agency believes wrongdoing is likely to occur (anticipatory intelligence). The former strategy often has the goal of procuring confessions or other evidence of wrongdoing, while the latter often involves the infiltration of groups suspected of ongoing criminal activity. In contrast, the goal of *counterintelligence* is to restrict a tar-

- get's ability to go through with planned actions (prevention) or to encourage acts of wrongdoing (facilitation). Encouragement in this sense can take the form of resources that lower the costs of criminal acts (at least in the short term) or the introduction of ideas or motives into a targeted group.
- 14 This figure comes from the compiled responses of 22 field offices to the directorate's 7 March 1966 request for "an estimate of the total number of individuals identified as Klansmen" within each office's territory (FBI memo from director to 22 field offices, 7 March 1966).
  - 15 A broader interpretation of "informant," which included any source in southern communities who provided information about Klan activities, would increase this estimate to over 2,000 by this time (see FBI memo from director to the attorney general, 2 September 1965).
  - 16 Assistant Director William Sullivan, who headed the Bureau's Domestic Intelligence Division, tells a drastically different story in his 1979 memoirs. He claims that the FBI had an informant suggest the use of lie detector tests to weed out infiltrators. "Our informant said that if anybody opposed the test he would be a suspect. Because of the expense and effort involved, a lot of them back down on submitting to a lie detector test, and the more they backpedaled, the more our informant would raise hell. They all ended up suspecting each other" (Sullivan 1979: 130–1). Within the COINTELPRO files, I could find no evidence of SACs recognizing that this plan was generated by FBI informants, and the concern exhibited by these SACs seemed to be shared by the Bureau's directorate, of which Sullivan was a part.
  - 17 In addition, at least four actions exacerbating the split between SDS and the BPP were implemented through COINTELPRO–Black Nationalist/Hate Groups (see, for example, FBI COINTELPRO–BNHG memos from director to Boston, 9 July 1969, and from Chicago to director, 1 May 1969).
  - 18 The number 600 was presumably a peak, since the Columbia SAC had identified 450 known Klansmen in 1966.
  - 19 It is true that the decline of SDS did not signal an immediate end to overall campus-based protest. In fact, activity on college and university campuses peaked during the 1969–70 school year, with an estimated 9,408 protest incidents nationwide. However, because these protests lacked a connection to a national organizational framework, it was difficult to coordinate actions or to mount sustained campaigns. As Kirkpatrick Sale (1973: 617) argues: "The lack of a single strong student group, even one as loose and at times as divided as SDS, meant that any sustained national action—a march or an antidraft campaign—would be much more difficult to mount, and the tendency for each local group to pick and choose among the various causes would be accelerated. There would generally be no pamphlets or literature tables, no newspapers to proselytize with, no buttons to sell, there would be no regional travelers giving advice, no Movement veterans dropping by, no national meetings for recurrent contacts and inspiration. There would be no outside sources of sustenance and direction, leaving individual groups to their own devices for strategy and targets, to their own resources for money and energy. There would be no national identity for the press to

focus on, nothing to give the chapters that mediaized sense of being part of a single nation-wide force, nothing that the incoming freshmen would know and anticipate, even pick their college because of.”

- 20 According to Bureau files, agents reported almost twice as many “tangible results” of actions against white hate groups as against the New Left.

## References

- Blackstock, Nelson (1975) *COINTELPRO: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom*. New York: Random House.
- Carley, Michael (1997) “Defining forms of successful state repression of social movement organizations: A case study of the FBI's COINTELPRO and the American Indian Movement.” *Research in Social Movements, Conflicts, and Change* 20: 151–76.
- Carson, Clayborne (1981) *In Struggle: SNCC and the Black Awakening of the 1960s*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Chalmers, David M. (1981) *Hooded Americanism: The History of the Ku Klux Klan*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Churchill, Ward, and Jim VanderWall (1988) *Agents of Repression: The FBI's Secret Wars against the Black Panther Party and the American Indian Movement*. Boston: South End.
- (1990) *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret War against Dissent in the United States*. Boston: South End.
- Cunningham, David (2000) “Organized repression and movement collapse in a modern democratic state.” Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- Davenport, Christian, ed. (2000) *Paths to State Repression: Human Rights Violations and Contentious Politics*. Boulder, CO: Rowman & Littlefield.
- (2002) “Understanding covert repressive activity: The case of an American anti-Red squad.” Unpublished manuscript.
- Davis, James Kirkpatrick (1997) *Assault on the Left: The FBI and the Sixties Antiwar Movement*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- della Porta, Donatella, and Herbert Reiter, eds. (1998) *Policing Protest: The Control of Mass Demonstrations in Western Democracies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- DeNardo, James (1985) *Power in Numbers: The Political Strategy of Protest and Rebellion*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) (various, 1964–71). Memoranda. Obtained from Scholarly Resources, Inc., Wilmington, DE, and FBI National Headquarters Reading Room, Washington, DC.
- Francisco, Ronald A. (1995) “The relationship between coercion and protest: An empirical evaluation in three coercive states.” *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 39: 263–82.
- (1996) “Coercion and protest: An empirical test in two democratic states.” *American Journal of Political Science* 40: 1179–1204.

- Garrow, David J. (1981) *The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr.: From "Solo" to Memphis*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Gurr, Ted R. (1971) *Why Men Rebel*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Jayko, Margaret, ed. (1988) *FBI on Trial*. New York: Pathfinder.
- Keller, William W. (1989) *The Liberals and J. Edgar Hoover: Rise and Fall of a Domestic Intelligence State*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Khawaja, Marwan (1993) "Repression and popular collective action: Evidence from the West Bank." *Sociological Forum* 8: 47–71.
- Koopmans, Ruud (1997) "Dynamics of repression and mobilization: The German extreme Right in the 1990's." *Mobilization* 2 (2): 149–65.
- Lichbach, Mark (1987) "Deterrence or escalation? The puzzle of aggregate studies of repression and dissent." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 31: 266–97.
- Marable, Manning (1991) *Race, Reform, and Rebellion: The Second Reconstruction in Black America, 1945–1990*. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi.
- Marx, Gary (1988) *Undercover: Police Surveillance in America*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Morris, Aldon (1984) *The Origins of the Civil Rights Movement: Black Communities Organizing for Change*. New York: Free Press.
- Muller, Edward N. (1985) "Income inequality, regime repressiveness, and political violence." *American Sociological Review* 50: 47–61.
- Muller, Edward N., and Erich Weede (1990) "Cross-national variation in political violence: A rational action approach." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 34: 624–51.
- Neidhardt, Friedhelm (1989) "Gewalt und gegengewalt: Steigt die bereitschaft zu gewaltaktionen mit zunehmender staatlicher controlle und repression?" in Wilhelm Heitmeyer, Kurt Möller, and Heinz Sücker (eds.) *Jugend, Staat, Gewalt: Politische Sozialisation von Jugendlichen, Jugendpolitik und politische Bildung*. Weinheim: Juventa.
- Opp, Karl-Dieter, and Wolfgang Roehl (1990) "Repression, micromobilization, and political protest." *Social Forces* 69: 521–47.
- O'Reilly, Kenneth (1989) "Race Matters": *The FBI's Secret File on Black America, 1960–1972*. New York: Free Press.
- (1994) *Black Americans: The FBI Files*. New York: Carroll & Graf.
- Powers, Richard Gid (1987) *Secrecy and Power: The Life of J. Edgar Hoover*. New York: Free Press.
- Rasler, Karen (1996) "Concessions, repression, and political protest in the Iranian Revolution." *American Sociological Review* 61 (February): 132–52.
- Sale, Kirkpatrick (1973) *SDS*. New York: Vintage.
- Sullivan, William C., with Bill Brown (1979) *The Bureau: My Thirty Years in Hoover's FBI*. New York: Norton.
- Theoharis, Athan (1989) "The FBI and dissent in the United States," in C. E. S. Franks (ed.) *Dissent and the State*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Ungar, Sanford J. (1975) *FBI*. Boston: Little, Brown.
- United Klans of America, Inc. (UKA) (1978) *Fiery Cross Magazine*, no. 13.

- U.S. House of Representatives, Committee on Un-American Activities (1966) *Activities of Ku Klux Klan Organizations in the United States, 89th Cong., 1st sess.*
- Wade, Wyn Craig (1987) *The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- White, Robert W. (1989) "From peaceful protest to guerrilla war: Micromobilization of the Provisional Irish Republican Army." *American Journal of Sociology* 94: 1277-1302.

