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“A Constant Surveillance”: The New York State Police and the Student Peace Movement, 1965-1973

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“A Constant Surveillance”

The New York State Police and the Student Peace Movement, 1965-1973

A Thesis Presented

By

SETH KERSHNER

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

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May 2021

History

“A Constant Surveillance’
The New York State Police and the Student Peace Movement, 1965-1973”

A Thesis Presented
By
SETH KERSHNER

Approved as to style and content by:

Christian Appy, Chair

David Glassberg, Member

Brian Ogilvie, Chair

DEDICATION

To the memory of a dear friend and fellow historian, Christopher Niebuhr (1934-2018).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Several years' intermittent research and writing went into this thesis. Its evolution has flowed from my engagement with the remarkably rich collection of New York State Police Non-Criminal Investigation Files, held at the New York State Archives, and from comments and critiques from friends, colleagues, and advisors. First and foremost, I wish to acknowledge Prof. Christian Appy and Prof. David Glassberg, for their insightful comments on the text. Bits and pieces of the present study formed part of a paper for Prof. Appy's "Imperial America" seminar and I benefited greatly from his early critique of that work.

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Doing any kind of sustained research during a pandemic can be challenging. I am therefore fortunate to have received prompt and valuable assistance from the staff of the W.E.B.

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Finally, I want to express my thanks to Maynard Seider, Scott Harding, Chuck Howlett, and Donald and Marion Lathrop for fruitful conversations about and scholarship on the postwar U.S. peace movement; to Mary Lashway, for keeping me on track with deadlines; and to Gerry Zahavi, for helping me understand some of the finer points of the New York State Police spying operation.

ABSTRACT

“A CONSTANT SURVEILLANCE”: THE NEW YORK STATE POLICE AND THE STUDENT PEACE MOVEMENT, 1965-1973

MAY 2021

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Historians recognize that there was an increase in political repression in the United States during the Vietnam War era. While a number of accounts portray the Federal Bureau of Investigation as the primary driver of repression for many groups and individuals during the 1960s and 1970s, particularly those on the left, historians typically overlook the role played by local and state law enforcement in political intelligence-gathering. This thesis seeks to advance the study of one aspect of this much larger topic by looking at New York State Police surveillance of the Vietnam-era student peace movement. Drawing extensively on State Police spy files housed at the New York State Archives, the thesis makes several significant contributions to the existing historiography on this period. First, it demonstrates how state and local police contributed to the climate of political repression and surveillance during the Vietnam era. Second, while this thesis encompasses state police surveillance at all types of institutions, including elite private universities and second-tier state colleges, in doing so it provides the first-ever detailed look at how community college students organized against the war. Since a majority of community college students were from relatively low-income backgrounds, chronicling the history of protest on two-year campuses gives historians another angle from which to counter the persistent myth that antiwar activism failed to penetrate the most working-class sectors of U.S. society.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... iv

ABSTRACTvi

LIST OF TABLESviii

LIST OF FIGURESix

ABBREVIATIONSx

CHAPTER

1. INTRODUCTION 1

 A. Intelligence, Subversion, and the BCI4

 B. Implications and Literature Review11

 C. Organization16

2. THE ‘LITTLE FBI’ TAKES ON THE PEACE MOVEMENT, 1965-196918

 A. Emergence of Antiwar Protest 23

 B. Teach-ins25

 C. The Beginning of Active Resistance 27

 D. The Rise of Anti-Recruiting Protests 30

 E. March on Washington and Stop the Draft Week 34

 F. International Student Strike Day38

 G. Outside Agitators 43

 H. Vietnam Moratorium 47

3. STATE POLICE AND STUDENT PEACE ACTIVISTS IN THE 1970s 53

 A. May 1970 and Beyond54

 B. Antiwar Veterans63

 C. May 1972 and the Renewal of Antiwar Dissent67

4. CONCLUSION: THE LEGACY OF “POLICE STATE TACTICS”76

APPENDIX

 A. AGENCIES EXCHANGING POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE WITH
 NYSP BUREAU OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION, SPECIAL SERVICES 83

BIBLIOGRAPHY85

LIST OF TABLES

Table

1. Cases Reported to the BCI, 1961-1970.....page 19

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure

1. Figure 1 Frequently Mentioned Colleges and Universitiespage xi
2. Figure 2 NYSP Troop Mappage 6

ABBREVIATIONS

BCI	Bureau of Criminal Investigation
DCC	Dutchess Community College
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
NYSP	New York State Police
OCCC	Orange County Community College
ROTC	Reserve Officers Training Corps
SCCC	Sullivan County Community College
SDS	Students for a Democratic Society
SMC	Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam
SUNY	State University of New York
UCCC	Ulster County Community College
VVAW	Vietnam Veterans against the War

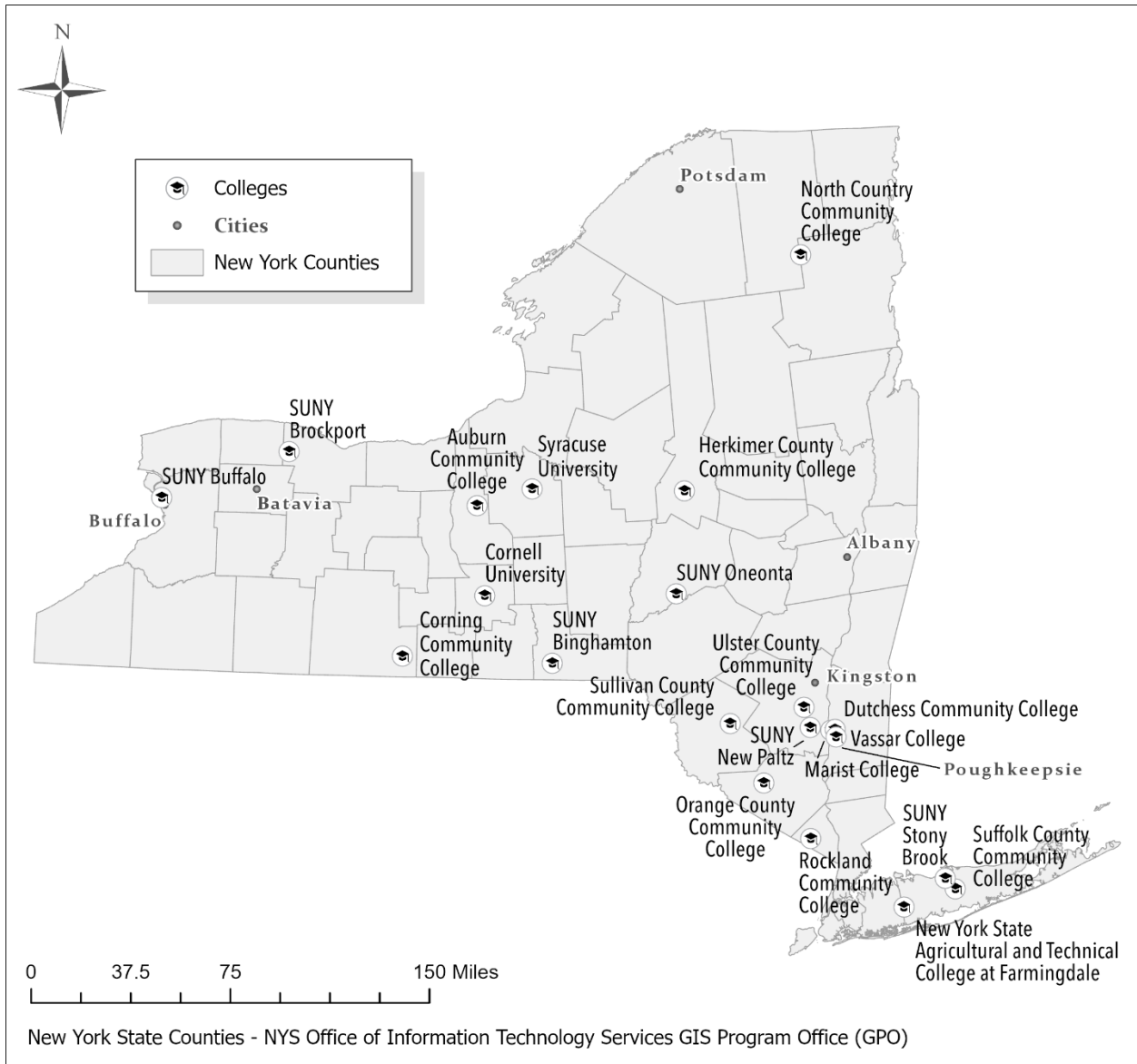


Figure 1 Frequently mentioned colleges and universities. Map courtesy of Claire McGlinchey.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

On April 23, 1969, a detective in the Hudson River city of Kingston informed colleagues at the New York State Police (NYSP) of a new peace group at Ulster County Community College. The detective was himself a part-time student at the college and had long served as a liaison between Kingston's police department and NYSP's countersubversive detail, formally known as Special Services. He was happy to provide a sampling of the group's antiwar flyers and pledged to assist State Police in monitoring the group's activities. Within days, Special Services investigators were on the phone with a dean to learn more about the college's Ad Hoc Committee to End the War in Vietnam. Finding the dean uncooperative, on April 25, Special Services sent one of its plainclothes investigators to cover the committee's first open meeting, held on the steps of the college library.

Mingling among approximately 60 students at the meeting, the undercover agent recorded the names those who appeared to be most heavily involved in antiwar work. Of particular interest to the investigator was the committee's faculty advisor, a UCCC economics professor who addressed students on the need to bring "pressure to bear on the administration to stop the war in Vietnam" and to "bring the boys home." A student newspaper article on the professor's political advocacy was subsequently clipped and added to the intelligence files at the NYSP's Troop F headquarters 40 miles away in Middletown.¹

For two hours, as the investigator took notes and wrote the names of students who volunteered for various subcommittees, he apparently made little attempt to conceal his work. But as the meeting ended, the surveillance shifted into a more cloak-and-dagger mode. Suddenly

¹ Prior to administrative reorganization in 1969, Troop C had responsibility for monitoring dissent at UCCC, SUNY-New Paltz, and other Ulster County colleges. Thereafter, Troop F Special Services branch assumed the role.

anxious to conceal his identity, the investigator dashed into a nearby building, pulled out a Minox miniature spy camera, and snapped several photographs of students as they wandered off to class. To aid in identifying individuals captured in the photos, State Police later relied on the knowledge of both their own student informant and another UCCC campus mole who regularly supplied Kingston police with information on campus leftists. Finally, an informant procured a UCCC Campus Directory which allowed investigators to match names with addresses. Within days of receiving their initial tip, the NYSP had completed an impressive intelligence profile of UCCC's fledgling antiwar movement. And all it took was one meeting.²

Later that summer, on August 14, 1969, investigators assigned to Troop A's Special Services detail learned valuable intelligence on a local radical group. After months of working to provide publicity and legal support for two young draft resisters and seven of their allies, the Buffalo Nine Defense Committee was running short of funds. One of Troop A's student informants at the State University of New York at Buffalo provided investigators with the committee's one-page mimeographed flyer, titled "An Urgent Plea for Help," which asked for financial contributions "of any size" to "prevent the frame-ups of the anti-war activists going to trial." The flyer also advertised a benefit party, to be held at a local hall on the first anniversary of the police raid that led to the arrest of the nine local militants.³ Billed as the "Big Unbirthday of the Buffalo Nine Bust," the party would feature live music, antiwar "rap sessions" and poetry.

² Case 238-880-1, n.d. [prob. Jul. 1969], Box 89, New York State Police Bureau of Criminal Investigation Reports, Non-Criminal Investigations Files, New York State Troopers Files, New York State Archives, Albany, New York (hereafter New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files).

³ On August 19, 1968, dozens of city and state police, federal marshals and agents from the FBI violently broke up a nearly two-week-long encampment by two draft resisters in a Buffalo Unitarian Church. After release on bail, the city's vibrant New Left community—centered around the State University of New York at Buffalo—quickly organized to support the resisters, along with seven of their supporters who were also arrested. Over the ensuing months, news of their legal travails dominated headlines of the student press and became a *cause célèbre* of

After receiving this tip, Special Services personnel quickly sprang into action. Investigators notified their colleagues at the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI); gained permission from the hall's owner to install a covert tape recorder so police could listen in on the proceedings; and induced a local dentist to allow his office—conveniently located across the street from the hall—to be used as a surveillance location.

Stakeouts can be mind-numbing affairs when hours go by with little to observe. In this case, there were not even crimes being committed—only young people expressing their solidarity with the Buffalo Nine, enjoying psychedelic music by a group called Pharmacy Jones, Inc., and hearing speeches by New Left professors. But the time probably passed more quickly because Special Services personnel could enjoy the company of their friends in the close-knit fraternity of fellow red-hunters. Joining them in the dentist's office for the August 19 surveillance operation were FBI agents and members of the Buffalo police department's local red squad. They manned their post from 9 a.m. until 10:30 p.m. From the time the benefit began at 1 p.m. until dusk, "photographs were taken of all persons entering or leaving the hall."

Although State Police did most of the heavy lifting, arranging to have special tape recording and photography equipment on hand, their partners in the FBI and in the Buffalo police played key roles, helping to analyze and identify 23 individuals photographed entering or leaving the hall. Those attendees were identified by name and organizational affiliation. As a report later noted:

All of these peopel [*sic*] have been previously listed as having been involved in marches, demonstrations or disturbances, and are under various Special Services Case Numbers in the Troop 'A' Special Services Files. All of the above are New Left Activists and Leaders [*sic*] from both the State University of New York at Buffalo and State University College at Buffalo campuses and represent leadership and membership of most of the Left organizations in the Buffalo area.

Buffalo's resistance movement. See Kenneth Heineman, *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era* (New York: NYU Press, 1992), 210-211.

A State Police investigator subsequently forwarded all this information to his supervisors at Troop A's control center, in Batavia, and to Division Headquarters in Albany for review, analysis, and placement in the appropriate intelligence files. On October 21, when a jury convicted two of the Buffalo Nine on their respective charges and student protests erupted on the university campus, Special Services personnel were there, too, just as they would be present to monitor virtually every public demonstration in the state during the 1960s and 1970s.⁴

A. Intelligence, Subversion, and the BCI

Such sophisticated surveillance of nonviolent protesters was a major focus of the NYSP during the turbulent 1960s. Bearing primary responsibility for carrying out these activities was the NYSP's detective arm, the Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI). In contrast to the uniformed troopers who responded to the scene of a crime, BCI agents were plainclothesmen who often worked undercover. Although the BCI spent much of their time investigating criminal activity like burglaries and homicides, their personnel also took on thousands of "non-criminal investigations" each year. The BCI's Special Services detail handled all noncriminal cases pertaining to "subversive activities" in the state, ranging from investigating the backgrounds of State Police applicants to snooping on peace activists.

The New York State Police had been involved in political surveillance since its founding in 1917, when troopers aided U.S. Army Intelligence during World War I. In the 1920s, State Police personnel often visited areas of labor unrest to covertly gather intelligence before strike deployments. The BCI dates its origins to 1935, around the time the NYSP began a decades-

⁴ Case 238-1559-1, Jan. 1, 1971, Box 90, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

long systematic surveillance of the state's Communists, many of whom were involved with labor unions in industrial centers like Buffalo.⁵ With passage of the 1948 Feinberg Law and subsequent state legislation mandating loyalty oaths for teachers, professors, and others employed by the state, the NYSP filled a growing need for a "counter-subversive gatekeeper to New York public employment." The BCI's Criminal and Subversives Section, as the Special Services detail was then known, carried out this responsibility by investigating the political sympathies of state employees who were suspected of having ties to Communist or other subversive groups.⁶

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the BCI expanded its remit to include coverage of public protest activities. As BCI agents later told members of a New York State Assembly Task Force, plainclothes personnel attended protests undercover and recorded the names of protest leaders because they feared potential violence. As part of what they saw as their "duty to maintain order and insure the normal flow of public life," Special Services personnel employed a range of techniques—including what agents called "a constant surveillance" at virtually every public demonstration, maintenance of a sophisticated filing system to keep track of subversives, mail covers and the use of paid and unpaid informants.⁷ Although the BCI's counter-subversion work during the 1960s largely matched the FBI's in terms of technique, BCI agents apparently enjoyed far more latitude than their federal partners when it came to target selection.⁸ During the period examined in this thesis, the NYSP apparently provided no published guidelines to its BCI investigators on how to carry out Special Services work. As a New York State Assembly Task

⁵ See Gerald Zehavi, "Communists," in Peter Eisenstadt, ed., *The Encyclopedia of New York State* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2005), 376-378.

⁶ Gerda Ray, "Science and Surveillance: Masculinity and the New York State Police," in D.G. Barrie and S. Broomhall, eds., *A History of Police and Masculinities* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 226 and *passim*.

⁷ *Report of the Special Task Force on State Police Non-Criminal Files* (Albany, NY: New York State Assembly, 1977), 12-13. Hereafter cited as *NYS Report*.

⁸ Gerda Ray, "Sixty-Five Boxes: New York State Police Surveillance Files," *OAH Newsletter* (Aug. 1990), 4.

Force later learned, BCI supervisors encouraged agents in the field to “investigate and file reports on *any information they came across* concerning political activities.”⁹ While lax oversight from New York State legislators created ideal conditions for unregulated police spying to flourish, the BCI’s operational freedom was also largely due to the dispersed, capillary-like organization of the State Police.

During the Vietnam Era the NYSP was organized into ten Troops, overseen by Division Headquarters in Albany. Each Troop covered a particular geographic area, providing patrol and criminal investigation services to local communities in its jurisdiction (see Figure 1).¹⁰ By 1969, there were one or two BCI investigators at each Troop whose primary assignment was in Special Services. These investigators maintained lists of subversive individuals and organizations active

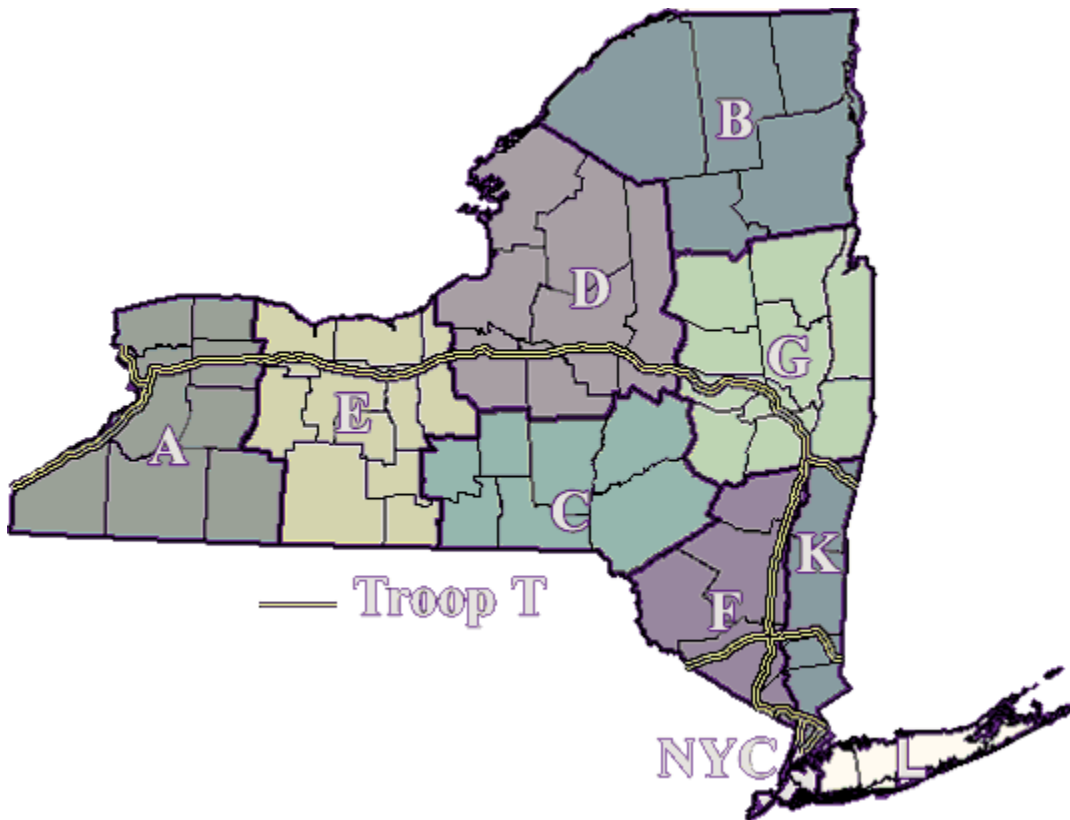


Figure 2 NYSP Troop Map, used with permission of the New York State Police Public Information Office.

⁹ *NYS Report*, 32, emphasis added.

¹⁰ The exception being Troop T, which covered the New York State Thruway.

in their respective Troop areas, worked closely with FBI field offices and local red squads, and maintained contact with dozens of informants on college campuses—students, faculty, and administrators—along with an untold number of community members like the Buffalo dentist who could be relied upon to assist investigations.¹¹ Available evidence also indicates that the BCI worked closely with “plant security” personnel at General Electric and other large firms, sharing intelligence on workers’ political views that might have led to the loss of their jobs.¹² This thesis explores how the NYSP viewed such spycraft as a vital part of its role, despite a stated mission to “ensure highway safety, to prevent crime and [to] enforce the law ...”¹³ The chapters that follow explore how the NYSP routinely violated civil liberties as it turned its vast intelligence apparatus against the student peace movement.

In contrast to the FBI’s far more invasive *counter-intelligence* work during the 1960s, the activities of the BCI’s Special Services detail fell under the more benign-sounding category of *intelligence*. In intelligence work, law enforcement personnel gather information about a target or suspect through physical surveillance (commonly known as *stakeouts*), photography, undercover informants, and open-source intelligence like flyers and newsletters produced by targets. Moreover, the NYSP’s countersubversive operations could be further defined as *political intelligence* since these methods were typically used to gather political information (beliefs, organizational affiliations) about a subject. Although Special Services sometimes

¹¹ Much of the NYSP’s work was centered on small towns and rural communities; since personnel needed special permission to operate within the boundaries of New York City, the BCI gathered only a limited amount of intelligence on Big Apple radicals.

¹² For more on GE’s partnership with the NYSP, see Gerald Zahavi, “Uncivil War: An Oral History of Labor, Communism, and Community in Schenectady, New York, 1944-54,” in Robert W. Cherny, Bill Issel, and Kerry Taylor, eds., *American Labor and the Cold War: Grassroots Politics, and Postwar Political Culture* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2004), esp. 33-4.

¹³ “State Police, Division of,” *FY 2020 Executive Budget*, Jan. 15, 2019, <https://on.ny.gov/2Nqb8cc>.

employed invasion and deception—stealing sign-up sheets, posing as reporters to gain the trust of subjects, entering a target’s domicile when they were not home—it appears that they ever actively attempted to disrupt organizing efforts. And while the FBI used its informants as *agents provocateurs* to create division within New Left organizations, there is no evidence that BCI men engaged in similar kinds of dirty tricks.¹⁴

Yet even passive intelligence gathering can hamper free speech.¹⁵ The sociologist Gary Marx, in an influential 1974 article, compellingly argued that intelligence work can never be completely passive.¹⁶ For example, the infiltration of a group by informants will always have some psychological effect on the targets. As Zachariah Chafee, the noted First Amendment scholar, once noted, “The spy often passes over an almost imperceptible boundary into the agent provocateur.”¹⁷ Similarly, it is difficult to assess a passive police presence at public demonstrations as wholly innocuous. Frank Donner, author of the preeminent work on red squads, has written of the chilling effect that overt police surveillance can have on public protest.¹⁸ Even when policing agents attended such events in plainclothes, their demeanor and formal way of dressing broadcast their identities as undercover policemen.¹⁹ Such overt means of conducting surveillance was but one way the Special Services detail chilled free speech. Routine investigative work of interviewing neighbors, employers, or teachers about a subject’s

¹⁴ *NYS Report*, 47.

¹⁵ My discussion of the effects of intelligence-gathering draws from David Cunningham, *There’s Something Happening Here: The New Left, the Klan, and FBI Counterintelligence* (Univ. of California Press, 2004), 285, n. 3.

¹⁶ Gary Marx, “Thoughts on a Neglected Category of Social Movement Participant: The Agent Provocateur and the Informant,” *American Journal of Sociology* 80, no. 2 (1974): 402-442.

¹⁷ Qtd. in Frank Donner, “The Theory and Practice of American Political Intelligence,” *New York Rev. of Books*, Apr. 22, 1971.

¹⁸ Frank Donner, *Protectors of Privilege: Red Squads and Police Repression in Urban America* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1992), 67-9.

¹⁹ Although BCI agents sometimes went to great lengths to conceal their surveillance, more often they made no such attempt. Activists at a demonstration could not have missed the presence of dapper “BCI men” snapping their pictures and jotting notes.

possible “subversive” ties clearly had the potential to damage the personal or professional reputation of individuals.²⁰

The question of what impact political intelligence gathering had on its victims is beyond the scope of this study. This thesis focuses on the BCI’s surveillance of student peace activists between 1965 and 1973, when anti-Vietnam War organizing occurred on campuses across New York State. This timeline allows for a more manageable thesis project but should not be taken to suggest that this is the only period in which the BCI targeted subversives nor that the student peace movement was the only victim of its repressive activities. Instead, as I discuss in Chapter I, the BCI’s Special Services detail targeted a range of social movement actors, nearly all of whom were on the left.²¹

The BCI’s surveillance operations shed light on one of the great untold stories of the Vietnam Era, illustrating how local and state police intelligence units targeted leftist individuals and organizations, often but not always in collaboration with the FBI. The period examined here was a time of social and political upheaval in the U.S. Along with the largest antiwar movement in the nation’s history, the 1960s and 1970s also saw the emergence of Black Power, Gay Liberation, second wave feminism, and the prisoners’ rights movement. In response to the unprecedented upsurge in political and social movements—known collectively as the New Left—preexisting frameworks for maintaining the status quo expanded and strengthened.

Within the FBI, J. Edgar Hoover used the bureau’s sinister COINTELPRO program to neutralize these social movements. This program sought to sow dissension through informants

²⁰ See *NYS Report*, 52-3.

²¹ See *NYS Report*, 11. In its emphasis on tracking leftist individuals and organizations, the NYSP mirrored the FBI. In 1970, an estimated 95 percent of all the FBI’s political investigations in the field were focused on the New Left. DeBenedetti & Chatfield, *An American Ordeal: The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era* (Syracuse University Press, 1990), 288.

and forged letters; obtained documents and intelligence through illegal search and seizures; and brought the Bureau into close collaboration with local red squads. It is important to underline the vast scope of this effort. By early 1969, 42 of the FBI's 59 field offices were engaged in COINTELPRO operations against New Left targets.²² Hoover's "G-men" took a keen interest in the nation's students, spending a substantial portion of their time snooping around colleges and setting up phone taps on dozens of campuses.²³ Although the Bureau lavished special attention on large land-grant institutions like Penn State and the University of California at Berkeley, political surveillance was widespread and affected even the smallest and most rural outposts of American higher education.²⁴

While the FBI was the leader in the campaign to monitor ideas, they were not alone. As the historian Paul Buhle writes, the Vietnam Era was a time when the FBI, CIA, local police red squads and others "undertook the most massive campaign of anti-Left intervention since the McCarthy Era."²⁵ In the 1960s and 1970s, the New York State Police was one of dozens of urban, county, and state law enforcement agencies in the nation that actively spied on social movements. Although they first targeted anarchists and communists in the early twentieth century (explaining the origin of the moniker *red squad*), these secretive units later expanded their targets to include a range of official enemies on the left. Despite their prominence,

²² James Kirkpatrick Davis, *Assault on the Left: The FBI and the Sixties Antiwar Movement* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1997), 107.

²³ Betty Medsger, *The Burglary: The Discovery of J. Edgar Hoover's Secret FBI* (New York: Vintage, 2014), 231-2. According to one account, the FBI had phone taps in places at a quarter of all college and university campuses. Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS: The Rise and Development of the Students for a Democratic Society* (New York: Vintage, 1973), 646.

²⁴ At one time in the late 1960s, an astounding fourteen FBI agents were assigned to the main campus of Penn State, where the agency also commanded a network of more than 200 student informants—the bureau's largest at any campus. Heineman, *Campus Wars*, 30. For a discussion of FBI activities at Berkeley, see Seth Rosenfeld, *Subversives: The FBI's War on Student Radicals, and Reagan's Rise to Power* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012.)

²⁵ Paul Buhle, "Peace Movement," in Mari Jo Buhle, Paul Buhle, and Dan Georgakas, eds., *Encyclopedia of the American Left* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1990), 571.

historians of the period have largely ignored local red squads and focused almost exclusively on documenting surveillance operations carried out by federal law enforcement.

B. Implications and Literature Review

This thesis seeks to advance the study of one aspect of this much larger topic by looking at New York State Police surveillance of the Vietnam-era student peace movement. It makes several significant contributions to the existing historiography on this period. The thesis fills demonstrates how state and local police contributed to the climate of state repression and political surveillance during the Vietnam Era; provides the first-ever account of the peace movement at community colleges; and reveals that antiwar organizing emerged at working-class colleges much earlier and lasted longer than historians had previously assumed.

The history of red squads troubles the taken-for-granted view of policing as a means of preventing and controlling crime, showing that law enforcement also serves to subjugate racialized and subaltern segments of the population and to target those who challenge the status quo. This repressive function of policing has helped historians understand criminal justice in the U.S., where a disproportionate share of the prison population is Black and Hispanic and militarized police routinely crush peaceful protests.²⁶ Historically any groups seen as unworthy

²⁶ A small sampling of valuable contributions by historians to our knowledge of how urban policing reinforces the dominant political, racial and economic orders includes Simon Balto, *Occupied Territory: Policing Black Chicago from Red Summer to Black Power* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 2019); Marisol LeBrón, *Policing Life and Death: Race, Violence, and Resistance in Puerto Rico* (Univ. of California Press, 2019); Kelly Lytle Hernández, *City of Inmates: Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771–1965* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2017); Daniel S. Chard, “Rallying for Repression: Police Terror, ‘Law-and-Order’ Politics, and the Decline of Maine’s Prisoners’ Rights Movement,” *The Sixties* 5, no. 1 (2012): 47-73; Andrew S. Barbero, “Riverfront Reds: Communism and Anticommunism in Depression Era East St. Louis” (paper presented at annual meeting of the Peace History Society, Miami Shores, FL, Oct. 21, 2011); and Edward Escobar, *Race, Police, and the Making of a Political Identity: Mexican Americans and the Los Angeles Police Department, 1900-1945* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1999.)

of protection by the state, or which represent a threat to the dominant social order, have suffered police repression at the hands of red squads.

In 1977, not long after the Special Services detail curtailed its operations, a Special Task Force of the New York State Assembly found that a gross lack of oversight enabled the NYSP to “develop a system of intelligence that essentially surveilled ideas.”²⁷ Evidence suggests that similar conditions enabled red squads to flourish in Los Angeles and other cities.²⁸ But as the historian Simon Balto has recently noted, it is important not to regard these operations as anomalous results of corruption or mismanagement but rather as the “logical outcome of the U.S. culture of policing.”²⁹ “There can be no history of police,” two scholars recently observed, “without a history of red squads.”³⁰ Although historians recognize its importance, there is hardly any scholarship on the topic.³¹ This thesis thus makes a significant contribution to the existing literature by showing how the NYSP routinely spied on the student peace movement.

While this thesis explores police surveillance of student activists at all types of institutions, including elite private universities and second-tier state colleges, it gives special attention to antiwar activities on the State University of New York (SUNY) system’s community colleges. During the Vietnam Era, these two-year campuses grew at a rapid clip. Between 1959 and 1972, a total of 19 new community colleges became part of the SUNY system. As their

²⁷ *NYS Report*, 49-50.

²⁸ See Donner, *Protectors of Privilege*, 245-289.

²⁹ Simon Balto, presentation to AFROAM 693B, “Rise of the Carceral State,” Univ. of Massachusetts-Amherst, Oct. 15, 2020, from author’s notes.

³⁰ David Correia, and Tyler Wall, *Police: A Field Guide* (New York: Verso, 2018), 134.

³¹ While dated, the most important work in the field remains Donner, *Protectors of Privilege*. Notable studies published since then include Scott Allen McClellan, “Policing the Red Scare: The Los Angeles Police Department’s Red Squad and the Repression of Labor Activism in Los Angeles, 1990-1940,” (PhD diss., Univ. of California, Irvine, 2011); Phillip Daniel Schertzing, “Against All Enemies and Opposers Whatever: The Michigan State Police Crusade against the ‘Un-Americans’, 1917-1977,” (PhD diss., Michigan State University, 1999), esp. 323-376; and Gary Murrell, “Hunting Reds in Oregon, 1935-1939,” *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 100, no. 4 (1999): 374-401.

numbers multiplied, two-year campuses became convenient and affordable choices for a growing number of Empire State students.³²

Far from being dissent-free oases where working-class students focused on training for careers, reports from the period suggest that protest was a regular feature of life at SUNY's two-year institutions.³³ Yet this reality is rarely acknowledged in the vast literature on the Vietnam-era peace movement.³⁴ In *Campus Life*, historian Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz stated that during the 1960s, students at community colleges and less selective public universities "eschewed politics" and "frequently paid no attention to protest."³⁵ Kenneth Heineman's *Campus Wars* blasted away the empirical basis for part of that claim, showing that non-elite state universities were indeed home to vibrant antiwar movements during the Vietnam era.³⁶ *Campus Wars* was a landmark work and won acclaim for shedding light on the working-class elements of student

³² Robert Petersend, "Community Colleges," in Peter Eisenstadt, ed., *The Encyclopedia of New York State* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2005), 378-9.

³³ More than one-third of two-year campuses had at least one student protest during the 1968-69 academic year, with military-related issues (Vietnam, on-campus recruiting, etc.) being the most frequent source of unrest. Dale Gaddy, *The Scope of Organized Student Protest in Junior Colleges* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Junior Colleges, 1970). The May 1970 demonstrations following Cambodia/ Kent State "had ... significant impact on [campus] operations" at 44 percent of two-year public institutions. Richard Peterson and John A. Bilorusky, *May 1970: The Campus Aftermath of Cambodia and Kent State* (Berkeley: Carnegie Commission, 1971), esp. Chapter 4. Both reports show that protests at two-year colleges were most frequent along the East and West Coast, with the least incidence of two-year college unrest occurring in the South.

³⁴ Kirkpatrick Sale briefly mentions SDS-related campus unrest at Los Angeles City College in *SDS*, 326-7. Although he does not engage with the relevant historiography, Donald Nichols treats antiwar protest at Oakland Community College, located in Detroit's northern suburbs, in *The Delirious Decade, 1965-1975: A Social History of a Community College* (Farmington, MI: Tri-Nic, 1990). Students protested over a variety of issues, not only those concerned with war and militarism. In Chicago and Oakland, community college students demanded culturally relevant curricula. See Andrew Diamond and Caroline Rolland-Diamond, "Au-delà du Vietnam: Chicago 1968 et l'autre mouvement étudiant-lycéen," *Histoire@ Politique* 6 (2008), 8-9; and Donna Murch, *Living for the City: Migration, Education, and the Rise of the Black Panther Party in Oakland, California* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2010.)

³⁵ Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987.)

³⁶ Kenneth Heineman, *Campus Wars: The Peace Movement at American State Universities in the Vietnam Era* (New York: NYU Press, 1992). For a more recent discussion of the working-class and the New Left, see Thomas Grace, *Kent State: Death and Dissent in the Long Sixties* (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 13-35.

protest, yet even the four state universities in Heineman's study had smaller proportions of working-class students than the average community college.³⁷

Building on the momentum generated by *Campus Wars*, in the 1990s scholars urged their peers to pursue local, campus-level histories of the peace movement.³⁸ This encouragement paid off, as illustrated by the surge of interest in such case studies over the subsequent decades.³⁹ Yet the experiences of two-year colleges must count as one of the most significant remaining gaps in the historiography of the Vietnam-era peace movement.⁴⁰ Correcting this deficiency would help historians better understand the impact of antiwar movements on campuses that by 1969 enrolled nearly one-quarter of all American college students.⁴¹ Since a majority of community college students were from blue-collar, relatively low-income backgrounds, chronicling the history of

³⁷ The four universities analyzed by Heineman are Kent State, SUNY-Buffalo, Michigan State, and Penn State. According to Heineman, in 1966, just 17 percent of all U.S. college students came from working- and lower-middle-class families. One year later, 34 percent of entering Penn State students self-identified in this way. *Campus Wars*, 81. Among different types of institutions, students at community colleges ranked lowest in terms of family income. In 1965, fifty-five percent of community college students were from working-class backgrounds. Jerome Karabel, "Community Colleges and Social Stratification," *Harvard Educational Review* 42, no. 4 (1972): 527.

³⁸ "Lacking such studies," one historian wrote at the time, researchers could "neither fully gauge the movement's constituency nor estimate the intensity and duration of movement activism." Allen Smith, "The Peace Movement at the Local Level: The Syracuse Peace Council, 1936–1973," *Peace and Change* 23, no. 1 (1998): 1. See also Christian Appy, "Give Peace Activism a Chance," *Reviews in American History* 23, no. 1 (1995): 137-143.

³⁹ It is difficult to quantify the number of local-level case studies of the Vietnam-era peace movement. However, some representative samples would include Brian K. Clardy, "The Management of Dissent: Responses to the Post Kent State Protests at Seven Public Universities in Illinois," PhD diss. (Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, 1999); and Andrew Grose, "Voices of Southern Protest during the Vietnam War Era: The University of South Carolina as a Case Study," *Peace and Change* 32, no. 2 (2007): 153-167. See also the essays collected in M. Gilbert, ed., *The Vietnam War on Campus: Other Voices, More Distant Drums* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001), and in the special forum, "Peace Activism in School," *Peace and Change* 42, no. 3 (2017).

⁴⁰ At least some of this neglect must surely be due to the archival challenges posed by studying student protest at two-year colleges. Most community college antiwar groups were ephemeral in nature and left few traces of their activities. Moreover, multiple studies have pointed out that during the Vietnam era, journalists and educational researchers paid little attention to antiwar protests from the working and lower middle classes. Thus, there is little in the archival record to aid historians. Gaddy, *The Scope of Organized Student Protest in Junior Colleges*, ix.

⁴¹ Peterson and Bilorusky, *May 1970*, 25. During the 1960s community colleges were a rapidly growing part of the American educational landscape. The decade saw the number of two-year public institutions nearly double, from 656 to 1,100. Between 1948 and 1968, the number of students enrolled in community colleges surged from just over 100,000 to more a million. Karabel, "Community Colleges and Social Stratification," 521.

protest on these campuses would also give historians another angle from which to counter the persistent myth that antiwar activism failed to penetrate working-class sectors of U.S. society.⁴²

Finally, including the experiences of community college students will further hone our understanding of the scope and chronology of what one historian has called “the most diverse and dynamic antiwar movement in U.S. history.”⁴³ The consensus view has been that the antiwar movement did not appear in rural areas or on less selective college campuses until after 1969, and that the national antiwar movement had three key phases: the teach-ins of Spring 1965, the March on Washington in October 1967, and the Vietnam Moratorium in October 1969.⁴⁴ However, March 1965 saw the first anti-Vietnam War protests at SUNY-New Paltz, while organizing activities at community colleges, many of which were located in rural areas, began to blossom as early as Fall 1967. Campus demonstrations in New York State steadily increased in number through Spring 1968, reached their high watermark with the October 1969 Moratorium and nationwide protests of May 1970, and even continued to be seen—although at a greatly reduced rate—throughout the early 1970s.

⁴² See Penny Lewis, *Hardhats, Hippies, and Hawks: The Vietnam Antiwar Movement as Myth and Memory* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013); and Christian Appy, *American Reckoning: The Vietnam War and Our National Identity* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), esp. Chap. 7.

⁴³ Christian Appy, “Exceptional Victims,” in Brandon Terry, ed. *Fifty Years since MLK*, vol. 5 of *Boston Review Forum*, (2017), 106.

⁴⁴ For the significance of 1969, see Lewis, *Hard Hats, Hippies, and Hawks*, 45. Another scholar has identified May 1970 as the moment when antiwar activism expanded into rural areas. Leslie Ann Kauffman, *Direct Action: Protest and the Reinvention of American Radicalism* (New York: Verso Books, 2017), 5. For the standard chronology, see Melvin Small, *Johnson, Nixon, and the Doves* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 1988); and Anthony Edmonds and Joel Shrock, “Fighting the War in the Heart of the Country: Anti-war Protest at Ball State University,” in M. Gilbert, ed., *The Vietnam War on Campus: Other Voices, More Distant Drums* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2001), 142-8.

C. Organization

Chapter One describes how the NYSP's political intelligence operations developed during the 1960s in response to growing student unrest. After Governor Nelson Rockefeller appointed FBI veteran Arthur Cornelius as NYSP superintendent, in 1961, he kicked off a major reorganization of the state police. Notably, Rockefeller gave Cornelius carte blanche to create a "little FBI" within the NYSP, increasing the operational tempo of what later became known as the Special Services detail and strengthening its cooperation with Hoover's agency. Given the influence of the FBI at this stage of the NYSP's development, it should not be surprising to see that anti-communism became the lens through which Special Services viewed the emergence of the anti-Vietnam War movement. This chapter places the state police in the context of broader networks of politically motivated policing which saw the Special Services detail work in partnership with college officials and red squad counterparts at county and municipal police departments across New York State and throughout the country.

Chapter One also moves through the signal events of the anti-Vietnam War movement's first five years, documenting how student activists faced close scrutiny by the state police every step of the way. During the nationwide teach-ins of 1965, state police involvement was muted. But as students began actively participating in the antiwar movement, beginning in 1967, Special Services personnel began to monitor their actions more closely. The chapter will document state police surveillance of student peace activists during Stop the Draft Week (1967), International Student Strike Day (1968), the nationwide Moratorium (1969).

Chapter Two continues this story, chronicling how the widespread demonstrations in May 1970 strengthened the NYSP's partnerships with college and university administrators. The chapter's concluding section challenges the consensus view of historians, which holds that

following the May 1970 protests, campus protests sharply declined as college students reverted to their usual apathy. As the state police spy files reveal, hundreds of New York State college students continued their protests during the 1970-1971 academic year and beyond.⁴⁵

The Conclusion will assess to what degree this surveillance impacted the student peace movement. It also examines the ignominious end of state police political intelligence operations, amidst media exposés and a long-overdue legislative inquiry in the mid-1970s and describes the findings of the State Assembly task force on police spying. The Conclusion also highlights the need for further research into state and urban police red squads, dozens of which were active during the Vietnam War, noting that the scope and impact of their activities still await thoughtful historical analysis.

⁴⁵ As historians have shown, campus protests did not end with the Kent State shootings. For discussion, see Robert Surbrug, Jr., *Beyond Vietnam: The Politics of Protest in Massachusetts, 1974-1990* (Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 2009); Grace, *Kent State*, 267-73.

CHAPTER 2

THE 'LITTLE FBI' TAKES ON THE PEACE MOVEMENT, 1965-1969

Special Services existed in some form during and immediately following World War II but did not step into the limelight until Rockefeller's time in office. A successful businessman and scion of one of one of America's wealthiest families, Rockefeller was enamored of Hoover's agency. Reportedly a key part of the governor's plan was to have the State Police become more like a "little FBI" by encouraging the development of robust criminal intelligence capabilities.⁴⁶ When the NYSP's then-superintendent reportedly balked at the plan, Rockefeller replaced him with 25-year veteran FBI agent, Arthur Cornelius, who in turn, filled some of the agency's top command posts with other former "G-men." According to one account, it was during Cornelius' reign that Special Services "truly took shape," and when the NYSP superintendent enjoyed "Hoover-like powers" to restructure the force, using it to target civil rights activist, the peace movement and other potential subversives.⁴⁷

The new superintendent was quite familiar with law enforcement in New York State, having spent much of his FBI career managing the FBI's Syracuse and Albany field offices.⁴⁸ While Cornelius only served six years at the top position in the NYSP before his death in 1967, during his tenure, he undertook major reforms like improving salaries and giving troopers a 40-hour workweek. Cornelius also doubled the size of the police force and grew troop strength to the highest level in the agency's history.⁴⁹ But some of the most significant changes affected the operations of the BCI. The former FBI man centralized control over field operations by

⁴⁶ Upon his death, *The Citizen-Advertiser* (Auburn) noted that "Cornelius' 'little FBI' was modeled after the organization for which he had worked for 24 years." Rpt. in the NYSP's in-house journal *The Trooper*, Sept. 1967.

⁴⁷ Hillel Levin, "Anatomy of a Whitewash," *New York*, Aug. 14, 1978.

⁴⁸ For more on Cornelius' background in the FBI, see editorial tributes in the Albany *Knickerbocker News* and the Syracuse *Post-Standard*, both rpt. in the NYSP's in-house journal *The Trooper*, Sept. 1967.

⁴⁹ *New York State Police, 1917-1992* (Albany, NY: NYSP, 1993), 48.

assigning a new Deputy Superintendent with responsibility for the NYSP’s detective branch. Cornelius also designated a Lieutenant for each Troop to supervise BCI operations at the local level. Between 1961 and 1967, the BCI grew from a force of around 240 men to 423.⁵⁰ During that time, the number of cases assigned to the BCI nearly tripled (see Table 2). Although the NYSP did not always publicly report the number of non-criminal investigations assigned to the BCI, available data suggest that the number of non-criminal cases (assigned to the Special Services branch) also grew at a comparable rate.

Table 1: Cases Reported to the BCI, 1961-1970.

Year	Total Cases	Non-criminal (subversive) Cases
1961	10,502	n/a
1962	14,465	n/a
1963	21,726	n/a
1964	24,631	n/a
1965	26,730	n/a
1966	29,931	4,908
1967	32,320	5,739
1968	37,156	6,105
1969	34,505	4,915
1970	38,300	5,936

Source: NYSP annual reports, 1961-1970, New York State Library, Albany, NY.

⁵⁰ *44th Annual Report of the New York State Police for the Year 1961*, 10, New York State Library, Albany, NY; *New York State Police: The First Fifty Years, 1917-1967* (Albany, NY: NYSP, 1967), 25, in Series 5, Box 8, Folder 9, Eliot Howland Lumbard Papers, M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York.

As the BCI's caseload rose in the early 1960s, the countersubversive unit focused much of its attention on the civil rights movement. At the FBI, Cornelius had worked under Hoover, a fierce opponent of the movement, for a quarter-century. Not surprisingly, Cornelius brought to his retirement job a similar attitude of suspicion towards Black Americans who sought to eradicate racism.⁵¹ That the FBI tried to influence the NYSP's investigations of civil rights activists is clearly seen in the effort to smear Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., as a Communist. Prior to Governor Rockefeller's December 1964 meeting with Dr. King, Hoover's agency arranged to have Cornelius brief the Governor concerning the Communist background of key King advisor, Stanley Levison. "Either Cornelius did not make much of an impression," an FBI memorandum ruefully noted, "or Rockefeller chose for reason of political expediency to ignore it inasmuch as we learned in October 1965 that Rockefeller gave King a \$25,000 donation, spoke in King's church in Atlanta, and had dinner with King's father and his family."⁵² Although the NYSP failed to influence the governor's relationship with King, it continued monitoring civil rights activities at the grassroots for years to come.⁵³

Under Cornelius, the NYSP also emphasized closer cooperation with other law enforcement agencies. Naturally, the intelligence-sharing would include the FBI. But counter-subversive investigators regularly sought information from the Internal Revenue Service, and the

⁵¹ It is also worth noting that the NYSP remained virtually an all-white organization until the 1970s. For more on FBI surveillance of the civil rights movement, see William J. Maxwell, ed., *James Baldwin: The FBI File* (New York: Arcade, 2017); Kenneth O'Reilly, *"Racial Matters": The FBI's Secret File on Black America, 1960-1972* (New York: Free Press, 1989); and David Garrow, *The FBI and Martin Luther King, Jr.: From "Solo" to Memphis* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981).

⁵² FBI memo, C.D. Brennan to W.C. Sullivan (headquarter), Apr. 14, 1967, JFK Assassination Records, HeinOnline.

⁵³ The BCI could be quite myopic at times in its scrutiny of civil rights activists. For example, in the same month that King met with Rockefeller, Troop F Special Services personnel became quite concerned about a very small meeting of a local CORE chapter in Ulster County. Although the December 1964 church meeting only had four CORE members present, the BCI pursued a lengthy investigation of an 18-year-old activist, even interviewing the youth's former high school teachers and guidance counselor. Case 2380 C Security Investigations Troop "C" Folder #1, Dec. 3, 1964 memo, Box 36, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

BCI Rolodex included the intelligence divisions of numerous local, state and county police agencies. As Cornelius' successor, William Kirwan, would later recall: "Like good police, we'd exchange police intelligence on a need-to-know basis."⁵⁴ Besides the FBI, some of the chief beneficiaries of the NYSP's file-sharing arrangement included police intelligence units in Rochester, Syracuse, Buffalo, and New York City. Red squads in those cities were also frequent collaborators with the BCI in its counter-subversive investigations. Beyond major metropolitan departments and their fully equipped red squads, the BCI could also count on assistance from local law enforcement in smaller cities like Rome and Binghamton, each of which had "community relations officers" who acted as Special Services liaisons. (See Appendix.)

What all these police intelligence units had in common was a tendency to view any type of leftist social activism through the either-or lens of anti-communism. Particularly alarming to law enforcement was the campus peace movement and its standard-bearer, Students for a Democratic Society (SDS). In June 1964, two years after its founding at the University of Michigan, SDS first came onto the NYSP radar when the New Left organization sponsored a conference in the Catskills. On June 3 a member of the Michigan State Police antiradical unit called a senior investigator in the BCI to provide a history of the SDS and share intelligence on who would lead the conference. "The organization," read a BCI agent's summary of the call, "although not Communist, is a Socialist group that has been infiltrated by the non-party Communists and also negroes who have been connected with some sit-in movements."⁵⁵ Such intelligence-sharing relied on an informal system of *quid pro quo*. In return for their assistance,

⁵⁴ Knut Royce, and Brian Donovan, "State Cops under Rockefeller Kept Intelligence Files on Officials, Dissenters," *Newsday*, Nov. 6, 1975.

⁵⁵ NYSP memo, Manhattan SP to Division Headquarters, Jun. 3, 1964, Case 2379, Item 6, Box 36, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

the Michigan State Police asked for intelligence from the BCI if the NYSP should learn of anyone traveling from Michigan to the SDS meeting in the Catskills.

A memo sent to the BCI by Chicago's local red squad, dated December 7, 1966, provides additional insight into the kinds of intelligence on the student left that the NYSP regularly consumed. It stated that SDS was "one of the most active, militant and aggressive groups" of the New Left and was "in the transitional state of becoming a communist-front [*sic*] following the aims and objectives of the Communist Party-USA."⁵⁶ Unmentioned was the fact that SDS pursued a largely nonviolent approach at this point in its history, or that growth of the organization was driven mainly by student opposition to the Vietnam War.⁵⁷ For the State Police, any person involved in any way with antiwar protest was *ipso facto* subversive. This dubious line of thinking underwrote a years-long campaign of "constant surveillance," infiltration by informants, and civil liberties violations on a massive scale.

To supplement these memos, Special Services personnel also subscribed to a number of right-wing "intelligence newsletters" such as *Pink Sheet on the Left*, edited by a former red-hunter with the House Un-American Activities Committee. Thus, the BCI's anti-communist ideology, reinforced by the presence of former FBI agents in the upper echelons of the NYSP and through correspondence with other red squads, shaped the lens through which the BCI viewed the emerging student peace movement in New York State.

⁵⁶ Intelligence Division, Chicago Police Department to NYSP Division Headquarters, Dec. 7, 1966, Chicago Police Department, Red Squad, Transmittal Files, New York State Folder, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, IL.

⁵⁷ Lewis, *Hard Hats, Hippies, and Hawks*, 80-81.

A. Emergence of Antiwar Protest

In early 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson took several critical steps towards escalating the war in Vietnam. By agreeing to deploy tens of thousands of troops, Johnson foreclosed any hope that it would have a quick resolution. (“It will be a long war,” Defense Secretary Robert McNamara told reporters later that year.⁵⁸) A commitment to using ground troops also meant that the war would be fought by draft-eligible working-class men.⁵⁹ The strategy of relying on the draft at this stage, as historians Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin have written, allowed Johnson to avoid calling up either the National Guard or reserves, “potentially controversial steps that could raise further questions about the necessity of the war.”⁶⁰ While meant to stem controversy, the decision to rely on the draft would provide a generation of youth a very concrete reason to resist the war.

As New York State college students began taking a more active role in the antiwar movement, the State Police countersubversive detail closely monitored their actions. On February 19, 1965, an antiwar group at Syracuse University held its first-ever demonstration on campus. Students involved with the three-week-old Ad Hoc Committee for Peace in Vietnam originally planned to hold a series of short speeches, but it was so cold and windy on the day of the event that the speakers stayed home. Still, around a dozen students braved the cold weather in an icy vigil outside the campus chapel, holding signs protesting the U.S. military’s involvement in Vietnam. On a flimsy card table, protestors presented petitions, including one

⁵⁸ Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin, *America Divided: The Civil War of the 1960s*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford UP, 2004), 148.

⁵⁹ Christian Appy, *Working-Class War: American Combat Soldiers and Vietnam* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2000.)

⁶⁰ Isserman and Kazin, *America Divided*, 137.

entitled “A Declaration of Conscience,” in which signers pledged to refuse to serve in the draft and to support all actions impeding the war effort.⁶¹

The fledgling group was eager to get its message out to the broader community and had arranged for local newspapers to publicize their action in advance. While other students passed out antiwar leaflets to passersby, the committee’s spokesperson, a graduate student in political science, agreed to speak with a man claiming to be a reporter. After sharing his views on the situation in Vietnam, the graduate student and his fellow activists posed for a series of photographs. Unbeknownst to the group, the “reporter” was in fact an undercover BCI investigator who later forwarded the students’ names, photographs, and organizational affiliations to NYSP Division Headquarters for placement in the agency’s “subversive” files.

Also in February, Troop C Special Services personnel began efforts to cultivate a spy network at SUNY-New Paltz. In a subsequent memorandum to the Deputy Superintendent in charge of the BCI, Captain A.J. Robson reported that they had successfully enlisted one “white male student as a Security Informant.” In just their first week as campus mole, this student enrolled himself in a civil rights study group and forwarded information to his handlers on an upcoming protest against U.S. policy in South Vietnam. While Captain Robson noted that this information was the first indication of any interest in anti-Vietnam War protest from within the Troop C area, continued escalation of the war ensured that it would not be the last.⁶²

⁶¹ This and the following paragraph draw on Case 113-51-1, Mar. 12, 1965, Box 89, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

⁶² Capt. A.J. Robson to Dep. Superintendent J.A. Roche, Mar. 2, 1965, Case 2380 C Security Investigations Troop “C” Folder #1, Box 89, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

B. Teach-Ins

Antiwar protests in 1965, as historian Christian Appy has written, “were generally small and well-mannered affairs,” and the best expression of this sort of “well-mannered affair” was the teach-in.⁶³ Originating at the University of Michigan in the spring of 1965, dozens of colleges across the country were quick to adopt the basic concept—lectures, debates and seminars on U.S. foreign policy—on their own campuses. The growing antiwar movement angered many in the Johnson administration. In his public statements, FBI director Hoover, the self-appointed spokesman for U.S. law enforcement, reinforced the conflation of Communism and peace activism. The teach-ins, Hoover told the House Appropriations Committee in March, showed “how unified, organized, and powerful an element the Communist movement is in the United States today.” In April, around 70,000 demonstrators marched in Washington, D.C. Organized by SDS and Women Strike for Peace, it was the first mass protest against the war and for Hoover only further confirmed the student left’s subversive potential. Later that month, the FBI director launched a large-scale investigation of SDS.⁶⁴ The scrutiny intensified at once.

At an April 29 teach-in at SUNY-Brockport, several professors shared their views on American intervention in Vietnam. Shortly thereafter, two of their number were summoned to a meeting with an agent from the FBI’s Rochester office. As one faculty member later recalled, the FBI agent inquired as to the views expressed at the teach-in by antiwar professors. The FBI agent also asked one of the professors to serve as a regular informant for Hoover’s agency; when the faculty member balked at the request, the agent abruptly ended the interview.⁶⁵

⁶³ Appy, *American Reckoning*, 184.

⁶⁴ Davis, *Assault on the Left*, 30-31.

⁶⁵ “FBI-CIA at Brockport,” *The Stylus*, Mar. 10, 1967.

In May, Cornell was the site of one of the region's first instances of radical civil disobedience. The BCI knew about this action well in advance, thanks to an undercover informant working for Troop C Special Services branch, T-1, who successfully infiltrated Cornell's Ad Hoc Committee on Vietnam. In this capacity, T-1 attended a planning meeting where dozens of activists pledged to interrupt the annual Presidential Review of Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) cadets in an act of nonviolent civil disobedience. Perhaps because he had advance warning from the BCI, the University's president appeared unruffled when around 75 demonstrators entered Barton Hall, three abreast—in military fashion—and stood before the review stand. Although the review went on without interruption—the president simply left his seat and moved past protestors to inspect cadets—the protest resulted in disciplinary action for dozens of students.⁶⁶

This BCI informant at Cornell stayed busy throughout the summer. On July 7, T-1 advised his handlers of an upcoming open-air meeting in the Arts Quad, organized by the university's anti-Vietnam War committee. Addressing a crowd of over 200, a Cornell professor portrayed the war in Vietnam as a symptom of moral rot in the U.S.: "The problem is not winning or losing wars but that the real problem is what has happened to America."⁶⁷ Two weeks later, on July 30, T-1 obtained the names of students and faculty involved with leading antiwar activities during Cornell's summer session. Armed with that list of names, on August 23, a Troop C BCI investigator combed through his Troop's subversive files and collaborated with personnel at the Cornell Safety Office to develop background information on four of the

⁶⁶ Case 112-5-2, Jun. 15, 1965, Box 89, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

⁶⁷ Case 112-31-1, Aug. 4, 1965, Box 89, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

protest organizers. A full report on their activities was then sent to Division Headquarters, where it added to the growing collection of intelligence on the student peace movement.⁶⁸

Over the weekend of October 15-16, 1965, more than 100,000 people in eighty U.S. cities peacefully marched and engaged in forms of direct action against the war. Among the campuses taking part was SUNY-Buffalo, whose 500-student campus SDS chapter sponsored a teach-in and march on the downtown Federal Building.⁶⁹ That weekend's activities marked the largest national action to date and signaled the growing strength of what was soon to become a mass movement.

C. The Beginning of Active Resistance

The momentum generated by mass actions in the fall carried over to the spring semester. The historian Stewart Burns has described 1966 as a year when the antiwar movement was “percolating at the grassroots.”⁷⁰ Naturally, this caused increasing concern among the FBI and their partners in the NYSP's countersubversive unit. In February, Hoover declared that a “communist conspiracy” was trying to “captivate the thinking of rebellious-minded youth and coax them into the communist movement itself or at least agitate them into serving the communist cause.”⁷¹ While the FBI director exaggerated their threat, it is true that student activists became more militant over the course of the year.

In spring 1966, Marist College provided a case study in the student body's gradual transition from apathy to outrage. Long before he became a noted scholar of the U.S. peace

⁶⁸ Case 112-48-1, Aug. 24, 1965, Box 89, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

⁶⁹ College Press Service, “Nation-wide Student Groups Plan Anti-war Protest Activities,” *The Herald* (Hobart and William Smith Colleges), Oct. 15, 1965.

⁷⁰ Burns, *Social Movements of the 1960s: Searching for Democracy* (New York: Twayne, 1990), 71; Sale, *SDS*, 299.

⁷¹ Hoover, “Message from the Director,” *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, Feb. 1, 1966.

movement, Charles Howlett was a sophomore history major at the Catholic-affiliated school, located just north of New Paltz, in Poughkeepsie. “By the time I came to Marist in the fall of 1964,” Howlett later recalled, “Vietnam was some far distant place on the other side of the world with little to no connection to my own personal life.” This began to change in the fall 1965 semester, when NBC News correspondent John Sharkey visited campus to present a frank and unflattering portrayal of the war. By the next semester, Marist students were joining legions of other young Americans who were eager to learn about America’s policy in Vietnam. Given that their more prestigious neighbors in the Hudson Valley—Vassar and Bard—had been relatively free of student antiwar protest, Marist’s student organizers also saw a proposed teach-in as a way to raise the visibility of their small liberal arts college.⁷²

After much hard work, Marist students succeeded in lining up high-profile intellectuals to speak at the event, including historian Staughton Lynd, Father Daniel Berrigan and (for the pro-war side) John Lodge, brother of former U.S. Senator from Massachusetts and ambassador to the United Nations, Henry Cabot Lodge. On the sunny afternoon of March 22, 1966, they saw their organizing pay off with hundreds of students from the surrounding area pouring onto the Marist campus. But as they proceeded to the venue, an art gallery in a gleaming new campus building, attendees were greeted by the glowering faces of New York’s finest. As Howlett later wrote, “each guest was met by members of the New York State Police and required to sign their name on a sheet. I suspected that this was for the purpose of keeping tabs on suspected radicals and members of the Students for a Democratic Society attending the event. It did turn out that I was correct on that score.”⁷³

⁷² This and the following paragraph draw on Charles Howlett, “The Vietnam War Comes to Marist: The 1966 Teach-in,” unpublished memoir in author’s possession.

⁷³ Although there is an index card entry on the Marist teach-in, in Box 102 of New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files, I have been unable to locate the corresponding investigative report.

As Marist students were beginning to come into their political consciousness, by the fall SDS chapters had already formed at SUNY campuses in Cortland and Stony Brook.⁷⁴ Meanwhile, SDS leaders at SUNY-Binghamton, in New York State's southern tier, had been organizing around the Vietnam issue all year. The growing university was off the radar of the BCI, whose investigators failed to attend a May 14 rally because of more pressing counter-subversive duties elsewhere.⁷⁵ But later in the year their efforts to adequately monitor SUNY-Binghamton's student left gained a boost with the assignment of Patrolman Anthony Ruffo to the city police department's newly created Community Relations Office. In public, Ruffo's new role had him coordinating the department's Toys for Tots program, taking major responsibility for handling media inquiries, and coordinating the Police Athletic League's outreach to area youth. In his other, less public role with the Binghamton Police Department, Ruffo assisted Troop C Special Services personnel with their counter-subversive investigations.⁷⁶

On December 10, 1966, when students traveled by bus to a protest in downtown Binghamton, Ruffo arranged to have his department's personnel photograph the marchers from the second floor of a retail building across the street. Ruffo subsequently worked with SUNY-Binghamton's campus security to help identify students seen in the photographs, sending the pictures—along with names and affiliations—to Special Services for analysis and inclusion in their intelligence files.⁷⁷

Less than a week later, on the morning of December 16, 1966, an FBI agent advised Troop C Special Services branch that there would be a rally later that day on Cornell University's Arts Quad, followed by a march from campus to the nearest draft board office in

⁷⁴ Sale, *SDS*, 305, 307.

⁷⁵ Case 112-96-1, n.d. [prob. Jun. 1966], Box 89, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

⁷⁶ "Ruffo Wins Bar Award," *Evening Press*, May 1, 1969.

⁷⁷ Case 112-102-2, n.d. [prob. Jan. or Feb. 1967], Box 89, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

downtown Ithaca. At the noontime rally, students and faculty engaged in symbolic protest by decorating a Christmas tree with toy guns, helmets and green berets before setting it alight. After a few short speeches, the group—which by this time included an informant working for the BCI—proceeded towards the local draft board. Two weeks later, BCI investigators stopped by the office of the *Ithaca Journal* and obtained negatives of photographs taken by the newspaper's staff photographer of the Cornell rally and subsequent march. The BCI men then forwarded these negatives to Troop C headquarters for identification, analysis, and inclusion in the Special Services intelligence files.⁷⁸

Infiltration by police informants and other unconstitutional practices may not have been exactly what SUNY Chancellor Samuel Gould had in mind when he addressed the 1966 graduates of the New York State Police Academy. “There may have been a time when an officer needed merely to know the law and the techniques of enforcing it,” Gould said in his October commencement address, “but today I am sure his duties are more numerous and are founded on quite a different set of principles.”⁷⁹ Quite different, indeed. As antiwar activism entered a militant new phase, the State Police would continue to go far beyond traditionally understood law enforcement practices by probing ever deeper into the student peace movement.

D. The Rise of Anti-Recruiting Protests

By spring 1967, as the White House pressed its intelligence agencies to show links between antiwar dissent and Communist subversion, student peace activists turned their attention to a

⁷⁸ Case 112-104-2, n.d. [prob. Jan. or Feb. 1967], Box 89, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

⁷⁹ Samuel B. Gould, “A New Dimension for the State Police Officer,” address delivered at NYS Police Academy, Albany, NY, Oct. 29, 1966, Series II, Box 2, Folder 131, Samuel B. Gould Papers, M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York.

frequent campus visitor: the military recruiter.⁸⁰ During the 1966-67 academic year, around a quarter of U.S. universities experienced protests against military, CIA or defense industry recruiters.⁸¹ As Kirkpatrick Sale has noted, in his monumental study of the SDS, part of the reason anti-recruiting protests proved so popular with the student left is that they blended a variety of different issues. First and foremost, anti-recruiting actions provided protestors with a local, tangible way to confront the war machine. At the same time, they also demonstrated against the university's complicity with the recruiting apparatus which made the Vietnam War possible. Finally, when university administrations responded by calling in police to break up anti-recruiting protests, as they often did, such demonstrations evolved into free speech fights.⁸²

On March 21, around a dozen members of the SDS chapter at SUNY-Binghamton picketed the presence of Navy recruiters in the campus Student Center. In a mimeographed statement distributed to onlookers (and later obtained by the State Police), SDS explained their opposition to on-campus recruiting:

The U.S. Navy is not recruiting students for just another job—at this point their business is murder and they are recruiting students for the position of murderers—whether in an executive capacity or in the actual dropping of burning jelly on civilians. The action of our college administration (which has not had the guts to take a strong stand against U.S. atrocities) in approving the presence of these professional murderers on campus is insulting.

Although BCI investigators were at Cornell covering a visit by Secretary of State Dean Rusk, SUNY-Binghamton's campus security director kindly furnished Special Services personnel with the protest leader's name, date of birth, and other private information.⁸³

⁸⁰ Anxious to make a case for subversion even without evidence to back up his claim, Secretary of State Dean Rusk declared that peace activists were "supported by a communist apparatus and were prolonging the war rather than shortening it." DeBenedetti, *An American Ordeal*, 177.

⁸¹ Sale, *SDS*, 380. See also Lawrence Wittner, *Rebels against War: The American Peace Movement, 1933-1983* (Temple UP, 1984), 285.

⁸² Sale, *SDS*, 300.

⁸³ Case 112-116, Apr. 28, 1967, Box 89, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files; "Students Demonstrate against Presence of Navy Recruiters," *Colonial News*, Mar. 24, 1967.

On April 20, a high-ranking official at SUNY-New Paltz phoned the BCI to advise that a student group was negotiating with campus administrators over the issue of military recruiting. Over the following few days, the official kept state police apprised of rising tensions on campus. The administration's initial stance was to allow the anti-recruiting protest so long as it took place outside the College Union Building (CUB). At first, students agreed. But on the morning of April 24, members of the New Paltz Committee to End the War in Vietnam flouted the rules, entered the building and began to set up their literature table as well as a 15-foot-long poster which read: "RECRUITERS ARE THE PIMPS OF DEATH." The Committee also released a statement, part of which read: "We are opposed to the presence of the Marines because they are corrupting the purpose of the University, from a center of life to a center for death."⁸⁴ In response, faculty members attempted to deescalate the situation by facilitating communication between anti-recruiters and the administration. But this seemed only to worsen the crisis. By 2:00 p.m., there were around 40 demonstrators sitting on the floor of the CUB.⁸⁵

Although student activists were careful not to block access to Navy and Marine recruiting tables, college administrators wanted the demonstration to end immediately. As State Police officials argued with the administration over whether they or the county sheriff had the authority to make arrests, the situation eventually petered out when the recruiters left campus in the afternoon. Later that evening, when a New Paltz faculty member co-led a workshop on civil disobedience in the CUB, Special Services personnel made sure that one of their informants, CS-3, would be available to infiltrate the meeting. CS-3 reported that during the workshop, faculty and students discussed whether they were willing to face arrest the next day, when recruiters

⁸⁴ "Demonstrators Waiver [*sic*] about Blocking Table," *The Oracle*, Apr. 28, 1967.

⁸⁵ This and the following five paragraphs draw on Troop C memo, Apr. 28, 1967, Box 89, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

were again scheduled to be in the CUB. Although the majority of those in attendance had no strong desire to be arrested, they said they would submit to it if it would help their cause.

The next morning, as student activists arrived at the CUB to set up posters, the most senior supervisor of Troop C's BCI unit joined other investigators on campus to personally monitor the situation. It was an indication of just how seriously Special Services was treating the developments at SUNY-New Paltz.

By the afternoon, as students staged another sit-in to protest the presence of Marine recruiters, days of protest had created a tense situation. Soon dozens of counter-protesters were marching into the CUB carrying an American flag and BCI agents scrambled to confirm rumors that construction workers at a job site on campus were threatening to attack any students they saw burning Old Glory. But open confrontation was averted, and by the end of the day sheriff's deputies had dislodged the sit-in and made 29 arrests.

The departure of the bus full of shackled students might have signaled the end of the protest, but serious surveillance work remained to be done. After State Police investigators met with CS-3 to collect identifying information of professors and students who had been actively involved (but not arrested) in the protests, they contacted the Kingston office of the FBI to share everything they had learned.

The next day, on April 25, another undercover informant advised the BCI that some SUNY-New Paltz "agitators" would be attending an antiwar meeting at a private residence in nearby Wappinger Falls. After BCI investigators were dispatched to the scene, Special Services personnel lurked outside and recorded the license plate numbers of attendees. Inside the house, yet another informant—a 22-year-old male, most likely a SUNY-New Paltz student—acted the

part of an antiwar activist by sitting in on the meeting and taking copious notes that he later provided to his handlers at the BCI.

E. March on Washington and Stop the Draft Week

Later that year, in Washington, D.C., the Johnson administration's decision to deploy over 400,000 U.S. troops and initiate a massive bombing campaign led to high casualty rates and an accompanying need for replacement personnel. When nineteen-year-olds moved to the top of the draft list that summer, it catalyzed an antiwar movement which channeled much of its energies into a planning an October 21 march on the nation's capital. At first, the BCI struggled to keep track of this diffuse and dynamic movement.

On September 19, Troop B in Northern New York learned of a request by police in Washington, D.C., whose local red squad desired "all available information" related to the upcoming demonstration in their city, "particularly numbers of persons coming, leaders, groups participating, mode of travel, anticipated time of arrival and departure, and any other information that would be of interest." Fanning out to interview their contacts, Troop B Special Services personnel soon found that their informants at area colleges had little to say about students traveling to D.C. It was only after the fact, at a day-long conference organized by the Northern New York Committee for Alternatives in Vietnam, that an undercover BCI agent learned that around 30 students and faculty from SUNY-Potsdam, Clarkson University, and St. Lawrence University had indeed traveled to the March on Washington.⁸⁶

This mass demonstration, estimated to have been attended by more than 200,000 people, marked a major turning point for the New Left. Author James Carroll states that this day was the

⁸⁶ Case 238-62-1, n.d. [prob. Nov. 1967], Box 89, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

moment when “the peace movement became a mass phenomenon.”⁸⁷ Stop the Draft Week, a series of nationwide protests, coincided with the March on the Pentagon and was the occasion for the first-ever recorded demonstration at Dutchess Community College (DCC). In reaction to a Marine recruiting visit to this campus, located in Poughkeepsie (a riverfront city 80 miles north of Manhattan), four students set up a table outside the Office of Student Affairs and distributed antiwar literature. Some of the same DCC students participated in a similar action on November 8, when army recruiters came to campus. In between the two events, two of the student-organizers formed a Peace Club which received support from around 70 students. Later in the month, the same two students traveled together to the home of a SUNY-New Paltz professor where they helped plan for an upcoming antiwar rally at nearby Vassar College. Much of this intelligence came to Special Services by way of “a Federal source of known reliability” who closely tracked DCC’s student activists.⁸⁸

For his part, Selective Service Director Lewis Hershey responded to the March on Washington and Stop the Draft Week by writing a letter to the nation’s local draft boards. In the memo, the draft director suggested that college students who involved themselves in anti-recruiting or anti-draft activities could be stripped of their deferments and subject to immediate call-up.⁸⁹ Thus, by gathering and sharing intelligence on the identities and actions of DCC’s anti-recruiting demonstrators, Special Services and the FBI were laying the groundwork for a potential punitive action—including loss of deferments—at some later date.

⁸⁷ James Carroll, *House of War: The Pentagon and the Disastrous Rise of American Power* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2006), 293.

⁸⁸ Case 238-652-1, Dec. 26, 1967, Box 48, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files; Case 238-535-1, n.d. [probably Dec. 1967], Box 48, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

⁸⁹ B. Drummon Ayres, Jr., “Hershey Pledges Draft Crackdown,” *New York Times*, Nov. 8, 1967.

On December 5, two days after the Vassar rally and a month after Hershey's agency announced its new policy, an FBI source informed Special Services that students at Rockland Community College (located close to the New Jersey border) were busy organizing against the draft. On this campus, the secretary for a group that hoped to start an SDS chapter was distributing "Complicity Statement" forms to students. Each half-page form contained a pledge to "knowingly advocate" draft resistance and support youth who had defied the government's authority in drafting them into the military. Those who signed this statement were committing acts of civil disobedience against what they viewed as an illegal war.⁹⁰

Stop the Draft Week had the effect of politicizing the student population. During the 1967-1968 school year, anti-draft protests occurred at a quarter of all US colleges, and half of all large public universities.⁹¹ As Michael Stewart Foley has noted, by advocating open resistance to the draft, such protests "raised the stakes for both the rest of the antiwar movement and the Johnson administration."⁹² Student activism in Rockland and Dutchess counties illustrate, as well, how fall 1967 marked an increase in antiwar activism among students at New York State's less selective colleges that continued through the early 1970s.

The following January's Tet Offensive was a major turning point in the Vietnam War. Before Tet, President Johnson could rely on a relatively compliant press corps to put a positive spin on the American war effort. Showing progress was far more difficult after Viet Cong guerillas and North Vietnamese troops launched attacks on five of the country's six largest cities and dozens of U.S. military installations.⁹³ Tet illustrated the bankruptcy of U.S. military

⁹⁰ Copy of statement attached to Case 238-535-1, n.d. [probably Dec. 1967], Box 48, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

⁹¹ Sale, *SDS*, 261.

⁹² Michael Stewart Foley, *Confronting the War Machine: Draft Resistance During the Vietnam War* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2003), 14.

⁹³ Appy, *American Reckoning*, 173.

strategy, led to the first basic review of war policy in three years, and ultimately factored into Johnson's decision not to seek reelection.⁹⁴ "If there was a beginning of the end to America's war in Vietnam," one historian recently wrote, "Tet provided it."⁹⁵ Images of the Tet Offensive, beamed into millions of Americans' living rooms through network news coverage, turned many more against the war.

On January 8 and January 9, BCI investigators worked undercover to monitor anti-recruiting protests at SUNY-New Paltz. Antiwar students and faculty were incensed by the college administration's decision to rescind a short-lived policy banning military recruiters from campus.⁹⁶ On January 9, as 50 protesters picketed the presence of a Marine recruiting team in the College Union Building, they squared off with a smaller group of counter-demonstrators calling themselves the Semper Fidelis Society. The anti-recruiting demonstrators, led by campus chapters of SDS and Vietnam Veterans Against the War, wore red-stained clothing (claimed to be actual human blood) and carried picket signs reading "Join Marines—Kill Children," and "Marines are Recruiting Killers." Although SDS had five student marshals to keep the protest nonviolent, Special Services apparently took the situation so seriously that they dispatched Troop C's highest-ranking BCI man to campus for a briefing and to personally monitor the situation. Special Services later worked with the SUNY-New Paltz campus security director and the FBI to help identify the names of faculty and students involved in the protest.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ DeBenedetti, *American Ordeal*, 213.

⁹⁵ Andrew Preston, "The Irony of Protest: Vietnam and the Path to Permanent War," in M. Halliwell & N. Witham, eds., *Reframing 1986: American Politics, Protest and Identity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Univ. Press, 2018), 59.

⁹⁶ The New Paltz recruiter ban came in response to faculty and student protest over the controversial proposal by Lewis Hershey, director of the Selective Service Administration, that students protesting on-campus military recruiting be subjected to selective service reclassification. Believing Hershey's policy would never be enforced, the SUNY-New Paltz administration lifted the ban in January.

⁹⁷ Surveillance reports and news clipping attached to Case 238-556-1, Mar. 11, 1968, Box 53, New York State Non-Criminal Investigations Files.

The next month, the college SDS chapter joined with the New Paltz Peace Council and a group of concerned faculty to sponsor an open meeting on “Military Recruiting and the University.” In a mimeographed statement, provided to Troop C Special Services personnel by a campus informant, SDS leaders framed the struggle over recruiting as a concrete, tangible way to oppose U.S. policy in Vietnam:

The Marines, the shock troops of American foreign policy, are engaged in the subjugation of Vietnam, and recruiting is essential to that operation. This is the context in which the problem of military recruiting on campus must be discussed ... Once the relationship of the Marines, the university and American society is understood, the question arises: what can we do, as members of an academic society? ... We must begin to refuse to allow our community to become a part of the process which destroys Vietnam.

Between 8 p.m. and 10:30 p.m., a BCI investigator conducted surveillance of the open forum from just outside the meeting room. From his covert location, this investigator identified eleven of the 25 students and faculty attending the meeting, forwarding their information to Troop C and Division Headquarters.⁹⁸

F. International Student Strike Day

Over the course of several weeks in April and May, students at Columbia University—led by SDS chapter leader Mark Rudd—occupied university buildings to protest both the Vietnam War and a planned expansion that would have displaced residents of a largely Black and Puerto Rican neighborhood. Police evicted the demonstrators in a bloody free-for-all that left hundreds of protesters injured and led to a campus-wide strike that cancelled classes for the rest of the

⁹⁸ Surveillance reports and SDS flyer attached to Case 238-329-1, Mar. 13, 1968, Box 89, New York State Non-Criminal Investigations Files.

semester.⁹⁹ While protest percolated at Columbia, the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (SMC) organized the first major antiwar demonstration after Tet. Calling an International Student Strike Day on April 26, 1968, the SMC urged students to skip classes and organize teach-ins and other activities calling for an end to the draft, an end to the war in Vietnam, and support for civil rights in the South. The next day, the National Mobilization Committee planned to gather students and concerned citizens in New York City for another demonstration and panel of speakers.

The SMC's plans perturbed professional red-hunters. On March 22, a thinly sourced article by conservative syndicated columnist David Lawrence appeared in the *Kingston Daily Freeman* under the ominous headline, "Communists Instigate April 26 Disorders." Lawrence's column drew on a recent speech to the House floor in which the chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee portrayed the planned student strike as part of a "worldwide movement by the Communists." Lawrence fully agreed, suggesting that subversive forces were using the SMC to undermine U.S. war aims in Vietnam.¹⁰⁰

The Special Services personnel who clipped and filed Lawrence's column were also extremely critical of the student mobilization concept. In reports on how students were planning to respond to the International Student Strike Day, for example, investigators characterized the SMC as a "Communist-front group" and the coordinated campus actions "part of a world-wide movement by Communists to undermine public support of the present U.S. Policy [*sic*] of resisting Communist aggression in South Vietnam."¹⁰¹ Even though there was little evidence to

⁹⁹ Foley, *Confronting the War Machine*, 269-70.

¹⁰⁰ David Lawrence, "Communists Instigate April 26 Disorders," *Kingston Daily Freeman*, Mar. 22, 1968, attached to Sidney JJ-210, n.d. [probably May 1968], Box 98, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

¹⁰¹ See, e.g., Case 238-1646-26, Jan. 6, 1971, Box 94; Case 238-880-1, n.d. [prob. Jun. 1969], Box 89; and Sidney JJ-210, n.d. [prob. May 1968], Box 98, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

support such beliefs, the State Police, like the FBI, saw the student peace movement as insidious because it allowed more destructive ideas—like Communism—to sneak onto campus underneath the petticoats of pacifism.

In the weeks leading to the strike, student leaders at Sullivan County Community College (SCCC) and New York Agricultural and Technical College at Delhi, both located in the Catskills, wrote letters to SMC's house journal, *The Student Mobilizer*, indicating that their rural campuses would participate. A writer for the *National Guardian*, another New Left publication, took Delhi Tech's participation to be a sign of how the antiwar movement was expanding to include previously untapped constituencies. Special Services personnel, avid readers of both the local and alternative press, clipped the articles and began coordinating coverage of campuses.¹⁰²

The State Police surveillance network was growing more extensive every month, and investigators with the Special Services detail had no difficulty working directly with some college administrators. To better plan for protests in their region, between April 1 and April 26, Troop C's Special Services personnel maintained constant contact with its informants at area colleges and forwarded information "concerning the progress and participation of individuals at each campus" to their BCI supervisor at Troop Headquarters.¹⁰³

At SUNY-New Paltz, State Police investigators learned that the local SDS chapter was organizing speakers and entertainment for the day of the boycott. An informant, most likely an employee of the college, furnished investigators with a copy of the SDS chapter's request for the use of college facilities. This document allowed state police to obtain the names of speakers

¹⁰² Clippings and surveillance report attached to Case 238-387-1, Jul. 8, 1968, Box 94, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

¹⁰³ This and the following six paragraphs draw from clippings and surveillance reports attached to Case 238-387-1, Jul. 8, 1968, Box 94, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

which were then forwarded to Division Headquarters for review, analysis, and placement in the appropriate intelligence files.

At Ulster County Community College, investigators met with a dean who provided information on student participation in the upcoming strike. Both this college official and another UCCC dean agreed to cover the strike so that the “day’s events would be observed with detailed information being furnished to the Security Detail.”

During their April 24 visit to SUNY-Oneonta, State Police investigators gathered intelligence about a professor who was allegedly responsible for stirring up student protest on campus. Of note, a high-ranking official at the college pledged to task his staff with “keeping track of the events as they occurred” during the student strike and reporting identities of participants to the State Police.

On April 26, the student strike involved nearly a million students across the country. Still, SMC organizers later observed that it was hard to call the action a complete success since many students probably skipped class for the day without participating in anti-Vietnam War activities.¹⁰⁴ Although it was difficult to parse the data on student participation, it was still notable that even small two-year colleges held strike-related events. For many students at those institutions, the strike likely served as a gateway to further involvement in the antiwar movement. For example, a mass meeting at Westchester Community College, involving around 300 of the school’s 2,000 enrolled students, and a sparsely attended lecture on Vietnam at Delhi Tech, were the first-ever antiwar demonstrations on those campuses.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ See DeBenedetti, *American Ordeal*, 215; and Davis, *Assault on the Left*, 36.

¹⁰⁵ For Westchester Community College, see “The Strike around the Country,” *Newsletter & Strike Bulletin*, May 2, 1968.

On April 26, Special Services personnel devoted most of their attention to SUNY-New Paltz, where the protest leaders had planned a day of activities on the campus lawn. From 10 a.m. until 4 p.m., the local SDS chapter had arranged a line-up of speakers, poetry, live music, and even an interactive game called “Monopoly Capitalism.” State Police investigators maintained contact throughout the day with CS-3, one of their campus informants, and the college’s Director of Security. As CS-3 gathered pamphlets and other evidence of subversion from student-manned tables and literature racks, BCI investigators snapped surveillance photos of the speakers. Special Services personnel subsequently conducted follow-up meetings with CS-3 and the campus security director to determine the identities of 18 student protesters based on photographic analysis. Throughout the day, Special Services “maintained a constant surveillance of the activities” at SUNY-New Paltz with “all progress reports being referred” to Troop C Headquarters.

Because investigators had their hands full monitoring antiwar activities in New Paltz, Special Services personnel lacked sufficient manpower to cover another well-organized strike day event at Sullivan County Community College (SCCC), located in the Catskills. Luckily, they had made arrangements with a campus informant, T-1, whom state police investigators tasked with being Special Services’ eyes and ears during SCCC’s teach-in on April 26.¹⁰⁶

On the day of the student strike at SCCC, Vietnamese poet Vo-Dinh arrived on campus, having driven from his Pennsylvania home with the aim of reading his work to attendees. Other featured speakers included a Liberal Party candidate for State Assembly; a writer for a GI underground newspaper; and a member of a local chapter of Clergy and Laymen Concerned about Vietnam. As the event kicked off, students popped in and out of the campus lounge area at

¹⁰⁶ This and the following two paragraphs draw from Sidney JJ-210, n.d. [prob. May 1968], Box 98, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

regular intervals to listen to speakers or browse the literature table—all standard fare for an antiwar teach-in. Special Services’ trusty informant, T-1, performed an admirable job spying for the State Police. As an investigator later related in his report on the event, T-1 identified all speakers by name and political affiliation, furnished 17 Polaroid photographs of speakers and other participants in the teach-in, and procured 25 pamphlets and pieces of literature from a “peace table” in the student lounge. Of note, photos of two speakers were later provided upon request to an unnamed “Federal Investigator.”

But the proceedings took a strange turn when uniformed police suddenly entered and asked all present to immediately vacate the premises. In a phone call that prompted the law enforcement response, a young man had threatened to kill “all the Communists” with a bomb planted somewhere near the antiwar event. After a search that lasted all of thirty minutes, the police ushered attendees back inside to finish their day-long demonstration against the war—just one of many going on across New York State on April 26 but apparently the only one interrupted by a bomb threat. The State Police report on this event, including photographs and other enclosures, totaled eleven pages. As usual, copies were sent to headquarters in Albany, where participants’ names and personal information eventually found their place in the state police’s sprawling intelligence files.

G. Outside Agitators

The BCI’s countersubversive unit, conservative student groups and local newspapers often pinned responsibility for student protest on that reliable scapegoat, the outside agitator. Although such outsiders were not as common as authorities believed, the agitator conspiracy persisted partly because it meshed with the belief—popular among law enforcement and school

officials—that students were themselves incapable of political organization and thus only protested when impelled to do so by some sinister off-campus influence.¹⁰⁷

For many in law enforcement, SDS represented just such a threat to the nation’s youth. In September 1968, Hoover used his platform in *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* to warn that the “revolutionary terrorism” of SDS and other New Left groups was “invading college campuses.” It was therefore necessary for educators and law enforcement to stop this threat, lest SDS succeed in its campaign to “‘restructure’ our society.”¹⁰⁸ According to a former FBI agent, in the fall Hoover ordered “intensified investigations of student agitators and expanded informant penetration of campus SDS groups.”¹⁰⁹ The case of one Hudson Valley community college shows how this aggressive strategy played out and illustrates the ways in which blaming outside agitators could undermine civil liberties and destroy nascent New Left organizations.

Starting in October and continuing throughout the Fall 1968 semester, a group of nine students interested in forming an SDS chapter at Orange County Community College (OCCC) coalesced under the leadership of a seasoned student activist on campus.¹¹⁰ In media interviews, this group sought to distance itself from the controversies surrounding national SDS and claimed to want greater student participation in campus governance, removal of campus police, and an end to the OCCC administration’s collaboration with local draft boards. As the effort gained traction and more students expressed interest in what SDS had to offer, school officials and law enforcement stepped up their surveillance, enlisting help from student informants and the FBI to

¹⁰⁷ “Young people come to these campuses,” the authors of a popular policing textbook later wrote, “with very little experience of the real world and with minds that are still easily moldable.” Donald Schultz and Stanley Scott, *The Subversive* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1973), 63. For more on the outside agitator, see Donner, *Protectors of Privilege*, 23-4; and Aaron Fountain, Jr., “The War in the Schools: San Francisco Bay Area High Schools and the Anti-Vietnam War Movement, 1965–1973,” *California History* 92, no. 2 (2015): 22-41.

¹⁰⁸ Hoover, “Director’s Message,” *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, Sept. 1, 1968.

¹⁰⁹ Qtd. in Sale, *SDS*, 499.

¹¹⁰ The New York State Archives asks researchers to abide by rules meant to protect the privacy of individuals named in the BCI files. Thus, I cannot print the name of this student leader.

obtain intelligence on the group. Remarkably, an FBI agent monitoring the campus reported to the State Police that of the 15 students who attended the initial meeting of SDS, nearly half were there to secretly gather information on behalf of OCCC administrators.¹¹¹

The BCI and its partners in the FBI kept close tabs on SDS between its initial meeting in October and December, when the Student Senate was scheduled to vote on whether to grant the group a charter (a preliminary step before allowing any student group to request funds and use space on campus.) Yet in December the Student Senate erected a roadblock. After the Senate asked SDSers to pledge an oath of allegiance to the school and the state, SDSers ripped up their proposed charter in a defiant public display. Just as SDS at OCCC appeared to be on the ropes, the local daily newspaper published a series of articles sowing public suspicion of outside agitators at OCCC. Days after the charter denial, an unattributed report appeared in the *Newburgh Evening News* full of speculation that by allowing an SDS chapter on campus, OCCC could invite the kind of chaos experienced earlier that year at Columbia. Although the article was ostensibly about a single student's decision to withdraw from the OCCC SDS chapter, words like "riot," "state of anarchy," and "havoc" came tumbling from the reporter's pen. The writer also gave a platform to an anonymous source in the Student Senate, who suggested that "the trouble-makers for the most part were not local students" but rather from New York City.

Days later, the same newspaper allowed the student body president, Andrew Zarutskie, to sound off about how SDS at OCCC was being coached by some outside source. Again, the *Evening News* reporter forecast chaos, noting how events at OCCC are "beginning to resemble the basic pattern of confrontation that eventually led Mark Rudd of Columbia University's SDS to stage a riot ... that resulted in extensive damage, bloodied heads, and eventual resignation of

¹¹¹ Compiled from press clippings and surveillance reports in Case 238-754-1, Dec. 20, 1968, Box 89, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

the Columbia University president.” The article also summarized a recent FBI report claiming that SDS planned to “bomb draft boards and to topple the U.S. government through force.” Finally, the article quoted Zarutskie as saying that national SDS saw OCCC as a beachhead in its struggle to infiltrate community colleges: “If they can succeed in getting control of OCCC, they can use this as a model to take over control [*sic*] of other [two-year] schools.”¹¹²

The student body president need not have worried. On December 6, the BCI’s source in the FBI had reported that the SDS student leader “had received so much criticism from both Community [*sic*] residents and students that he had withdrawn” from OCCC. Less than a week later, the FBI source informed the BCI that two other key SDSers at the school planned to leave at semester’s end. In this agent’s view, “without the[ir] leadership ... the group would literally fall apart.” On December 18, the *Evening News* provided a fitting coda to this story. In an editorial, aptly titled “The Outsiders,” the newspaper decried those “who are trying to infiltrate many American colleges and create campus disorders” and praised OCCC’s anti-SDS campaign before adding that it hoped such efforts would “prevail at other colleges also!”¹¹³ It would not be the first, nor the last time that unconstitutional policing practices, as well as college administrators’ hostility to the student left, combined to destroy a campus SDS chapter. But it was easy to overlook the fate of OCCC’s student left because the antiwar movement was about to enter its most vibrant and dynamic period to date.

¹¹² Michael Krawetz, “OCCC Student Club Charter Torn Up,” *Newburgh Evening News*, Dec. 13, 1968; “Newburgh Youth Quits SDS,” *Newburgh Evening News*, Dec. 13, 1968; Michael Krawetz, “Organizers Seen Backing SDS at OCCC,” *Newburgh Evening News*, Dec. 17, 1968, all attached to Case 238-754-1, Dec. 20, 1968, Box 89, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

¹¹³ Clipping and surveillance report found in Case 238-754-1, Dec. 20, 1968, Box 89, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

H. Vietnam Moratorium

As numerous scholars have observed, beginning in 1969 the peace movement became far more diverse, making inroads into faith communities, labor unions, veterans, and students attending smaller and less selective colleges.¹¹⁴ This change was nowhere more noticeable than on America's two-year campuses. As an article in the March 1969 issue of the *Journal of Higher Education* noted: "For several years student unrest was primarily on campuses of four-year colleges and universities. More recently it has become manifest on two-year college campuses."¹¹⁵ A report commissioned by the American Association of Junior Colleges found that during the 1968-1969 academic year, student protests occurred at more than one-third of all two-year college campuses in the U.S. While this was still a lower rate than one would find at a four-year university, the report pointed out, "the time has ceased to be when junior colleges were cloaked with veils of tranquility."¹¹⁶

On March 7, 1969, Governor Rockefeller held a town hall-style meeting at Suffolk Community College, located in the sleepy Long Island community of Selden. To greet the governor, the campus' 25-member SDS chapter had obtained permission to stand behind barricades and protest proposed state legislation that would have prevented student activists from obtaining grants to pay for college. As a battalion of more than 100 Suffolk County police officers sat in buses near the college in case a more serious disturbance arose, members of the county police department's Intelligence Unit stayed close to the action to better monitor the protest. Three months later, in a follow-up memo to their counterparts in the State Police, the Intelligence Unit shared a wealth of information on one of the campus SDS leaders, a Vietnam

¹¹⁴ See, e.g., Sale, *SDS*, 511-12; Lewis, *Hard Hats, Hippies, and Hawks*, 45.

¹¹⁵ Clifford Erickson, "The Two-Year College," *Journal of Higher Education*, vol. 40, no. 3 (Mar. 1969): 243.

¹¹⁶ Gaddy, *The Scope of Organized Student Protest in Junior Colleges*, 15. Although these protests were sparked by a number of different causes, student opposition to Vietnam was the most frequently protested issue.

veteran—including his military experience, where he attended high school, and even his summer travel plans.¹¹⁷

In early March, after weeks of protest in solidarity with the Buffalo 9, SUNY-Buffalo administrators agreed to allow a week-long campus teach-in where students could learn about the university's involvement with Project Themis, a \$20 million dollar Pentagon program using dozens of universities for defense-related research.¹¹⁸ While administrators hoped that dialogue would calm campus tensions, the teach-in seemed to further inflame the situation. On March 19, several hundred students engaged in a night-long rampage, destroying construction equipment on the future site of the university's Pentagon-funded research center. Students then marched into another building on campus, Hayes Hall, where they smashed doors and windows, climbed the building's tower to ring "bells of liberation," and faced off with a detachment of 150 Buffalo policemen who soon surrounded the building. Throughout the night and into the early morning hours, one of the NYSP's top BCI supervisors and a former Troop C Special Services investigator, Lieutenant Jim Kaljian, relayed intelligence on the uprising to a top SUNY administrator. At 7 a.m. that morning, truncheon-wielding policemen watched as 175 students left Hayes Hall. Facing unprecedented pressure from not only the campus chapter of SDS but the student newspaper and student government, SUNY-Buffalo's president soon agreed to hold a student referendum on the university's involvement with ROTC and Project Themis.¹¹⁹

While seemingly effective in Buffalo, such confrontational methods were alienating to many Americans. This is perhaps part of the reason why a majority told pollsters later in the

¹¹⁷ Case 238-1151-1, Jul. 3, 1969, Box 50, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

¹¹⁸ See Heineman, *Campus Wars*, 17-18. For more on Project Themis at Buffalo, see "UB Given Defense Dept. Contract for 'Project Themis' Research Program," *The Spectrum*, Dec. 15, 1967.

¹¹⁹ This paragraph draws on Heineman, *Campus Wars*, 213-216; Sarah deLaurentis, "Another 'Liberation.' And Now ...," *The Spectrum*, Mar. 21, 1969; and Mather to Kirwan, Mar. 25, 1969, Series II, Box 4, Folder 19, John J. Mather Papers, M.E. Grenander Department of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University at Albany, State University of New York (hereafter referred to as the Mather Papers).

year that antiwar protesters were hurting, not helping the cause of peace.¹²⁰ Disruptive protests also provided ammunition to critics of the movement, like Hoover, who told a House subcommittee in April that the New Left was “dedicated to the complete destruction of our traditional democratic values and principles of free government.”¹²¹ Chaotic scenes of campus unrest also made it harder to recruit potential activists. After all, students were likely more willing to attend an antiwar rally or teach-in than occupy a campus building.

Far more effective at activating grassroots support for an end to the war was the Vietnam Moratorium of October 15, when campus protests and curbside vigils drew millions of Americans in what historians consider the “most potent and widespread antiwar protests ever mounted in a Western democracy.”¹²² During an era marked by the symbolic importance of mass demonstrations at the nation’s capital, the Moratorium was unique in emphasizing smaller, local actions across the country. “Such moderate tactics,” the historian Michael B. Friedland has written, “hit a resonant chord among Americans dissatisfied both with the war and with radical antiwar protesters.”¹²³ Originally conceived as a series of actions that would increase by one day per month as the war dragged on, interest in continuing protests waned after November 15, when more than 200,000 Americans attended a Moratorium march in Washington, D.C.

Within the SUNY system, Moratorium demonstrations on October 15 differed depending on the location and type of institution. At SUNY-New Paltz, participation was nearly universal as only 45 of 3,800 enrolled students attended classes.¹²⁴ Meanwhile, the student newspaper of

¹²⁰ DeBenedetti, *American Ordeal*, 264.

¹²¹ Qtd. in Davis, *Assault on the Left*, 111.

¹²² DeBenedetti, *American Ordeal*, 248 ff. For more on the far-reaching impact of the Moratorium, see Burns, *Social Movements of the 1960s*, 106.

¹²³ Michael B. Friedland, *Lift up Your Voice Like a Trumpet: White Clergy and the Civil Rights and Antiwar Movements, 1954–1973* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1998), 218.

¹²⁴ Linda Lesback, “Reverberations from Moratorium Day May be Felt in State for Long Time,” Oct. 16, 1969, *Wellsville Daily Reporter*.

Corning Community College, tucked into a rural part of the state's Southern Tier, noted no Moratorium-related activities on its campus. At Auburn Community College, located in a working-class town where many residents worked in the nearby state prison, nearly 400 students, roughly a quarter of its student body, participated in a silent, orderly march from campus to a public park. Joining the students in their demonstration were local clergy, parents carrying toddlers on piggyback, and even the college president.¹²⁵ On the other end of end of the state, two-year colleges close to the New York metropolitan area also registered substantial levels of dissent. In Middletown, some 400 Orange County Community College students, many donning black armbands, assembled to hear antiwar speakers.¹²⁶ During a December Moratorium day, UCCC faculty and students marched through the city of Kingston.¹²⁷

The Vietnam Moratorium was notable not only for being the largest public protest ever on a national scale, involving millions of Americans, but also for its relatively peaceful nature. Aside from a few isolated incidents, Nancy Zaroulis and Gerald Sullivan write in their history of the antiwar movement, the Moratorium was marked by a degree of restraint that was almost "Whitmanesque" in its "gentle spirit of comradely acceptance."¹²⁸

For some in the New Left, like SUNY-Stony Brook's radical economist Michael Zweig, that Whitmanesque spirit was precisely the problem. The Moratorium, Zweig said in an interview with the Long Island campus' student newspaper, "channels dissent about the war into traditional liberal lines in an attempt to disarm the radical movement." Instead, he said, "It might just be necessary to overthrow the government." A top aide to the SUNY Chancellor, reading

¹²⁵ Tom Rose, "March Highlights Auburn Moratorium Rites," *Post-Standard* (Syracuse, NY), Oct. 16, 1969.

¹²⁶ "How Seven Communities Observed Vietnam Moratorium," *Oneonta Star*, Oct. 16, 1969.

¹²⁷ Middletown KK-413, n.d. [prob. Dec. 1969], Box 89, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

¹²⁸ Zaroulis and Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up? American Protest against the War in Vietnam, 1963-1975* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 269.

the interview and underlining its most subversive passages, promptly clipped the article and sent it to a Lieutenant in the Special Services Unit at NYSP Division Headquarters in Albany.¹²⁹

Despite their nonconfrontational approach, Moratorium protests were still viewed by the State Police as sites of possible disorder that required constant surveillance. In early November, as the BCI sought to learn about Moratorium plans at SUNY-New Paltz, Troop F Special Services maintained contact with two of its “security informants” on campus. While these informants were helpful, providing BCI investigators with a schedule of upcoming moratorium-related events, the BCI men themselves did most of the dirty work. On November 11, one of their number showed considerable derring-do when he visited an unattended peace table on campus and stole several lists showing the names and addresses of students who had signed up for moratorium activities.¹³⁰

Between November 13 and 14, during two full days of moratorium activities on campus, Special Services personnel and campus informants listened to antiwar teach-ins and folk music and even attended an “after party”-type event at the end of the second day. Partygoers did not stay too long, however, because many planned to rise early the following morning to catch a charter bus from campus for the massive moratorium march in Washington, D.C. Since Special Services had a prior engagement that morning, they arranged to have an FBI agent on the scene to cover the all-important bus departure. So it was that in the predawn hours of November 15, a G-man observed the comings and goings of four buses. Between 4 a.m. and 5 a.m., this federal investigator counted precisely 169 passengers who left New Paltz for the nation’s capital, where

¹²⁹ “Many Faculty Continue to Work for Peace,” *Statesman* (SUNY-Stony Brook), Oct. 10, 1969; and John Mather to Lt. Jim Kaljian, Nov. 26, 1969, both in Series II, Box 4, Folder 19, Mather Papers.

¹³⁰ This and the following paragraph draw from Case 238-1344-1, Aug. 13, 1970, Box 94, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

they partook in a march of over a quarter-million people—then the largest-ever mass demonstration in U.S. history.

The impact of all this activism may have been hard to detect then, but memoirs and declassified memos have since given scholars a better understanding of the Moratorium’s effect on policy. Earlier in the year, Nixon had used his National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, to send a message to a key diplomat in discussions with North Vietnam: if by November 1 there was no meaningful progress in negotiations, the U.S. would undertake what Kissinger described to his staff as a “savage, decisive blow”—dubbed Operation Duck Hook—a massive bombing attack against targets in North Vietnam, including dikes, along with the mining of harbors and perhaps even the use of tactical nuclear weapons near the Chinese border. On September 10, 1969, Kissinger told the president that he should be concerned about the coming Moratorium:

The pressure of public opinion [is] on you to resolve the war quickly, and I believe [it will] increase greatly, in the coming months. The plans for student demonstrations in October are well known, and while many Americans will oppose the students’ activities, they will also be reminded of their own opposition to the continuation of the war.¹³¹

As this memo shows, and as Nixon later admitted in his memoirs, the Moratorium curbed his plans to escalate the war through Operation Duck Hook.¹³²

By the end of the 1960s, despite law enforcement’s efforts to curb the growing student peace movement, activists were experiencing some small measure of success. As their movement entered the 1970s, changing shape to assume a smaller and more grassroots orientation, Special Services would adapt by forming ever-closer bonds with their intelligence contacts on campuses and in the SUNY Chancellor’s office.

¹³¹ Tom Hayden, *Hell No: The Forgotten Power of the Vietnam Peace Movement* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 83-4.

¹³² Appy, *American Reckoning*, 87-8.

CHAPTER 3

STATE POLICE AND STUDENT PEACE ACTIVISTS IN THE 1970s

In the summer of 1970, John Mather decided that a simple “thank you” would not do. After the BCI’s assistance in subduing campus disorders, the Assistant to the SUNY Chancellor wanted to find creative ways to show his appreciation. Spring semester had brought an unprecedented wave of protests across SUNY campuses and around the nation. Following President Nixon’s announcement of his intent to use U.S. troops in a land invasion of Cambodia, rioters set fire to the ROTC building at the SUNY flagship in Buffalo while class boycotts and other less violent disturbances sprang up across the state university system—from North Country Community College in the Adirondacks to downstate campuses like Farmingdale. In the midst of the crisis, Mather’s boss, Chancellor Samuel Gould, told SUNY college presidents that he feared an actual “shooting revolution” might erupt unless Nixon reversed course. Yet in nearly every case of student unrest, BCI agents were on the scene, relaying pertinent intelligence to their partners in the FBI and soothing frayed nerves in the SUNY Chancellor’s office.

Mather had been in close contact with the BCI since the anti-Themis protests at Buffalo in spring 1969, and by 1970 was on a first-name basis with key players in the NYSP and its counter-subversive unit: Superintendent William Kirwan; Colonel George Infante, Assistant Deputy Superintendent and head of the BCI; and Lieutenant Jim Kaljian, a long-time “BCI man” who was then stationed at Division Headquarters in Albany, not far from Mather’s desk at SUNY central office.

In a July 8 note, Mather thanked Infante “for all the help you have given us this year.” The same day, Chancellor Gould’s right-hand man found time to send a missive to the Assistant

Counsel to Governor Rockefeller, suggesting that “special merit commendations [be] put in the personnel jackets of Colonel Infante and Lieutenant Jim Kaljian for their continuous, round-the-clock availability and immediate assistance on call during the weeks of campus disorders.” As if that were not enough, Mather also showed appreciation to the State Police in a most extraordinary way. When the NYSP superintendent learned that his young relative did not have the grades to gain admittance to SUNY-Brockport, Kirwan wrote to Mather asking if there were some way to “break through the barrier of obstacles.” Apparently, Mather had little compunction about fulfilling this request, for by July 21 Kirwan was firing off a thank-you letter of his own: “I want you to know that my relative has been accepted at Brockport and I want to let you know of my sincere thanks for your efforts in this behalf [*sic*].”¹³³

This correspondence illustrates both the high degree of cooperation between top officials at SUNY and the NYSP, and the depth of concern about student activism at the Chancellor’s office. Given how the year began with a period of relative peace on campus, administrators like Mather were understandably caught off-guard by May’s wave of protests.

A. May 1970 and Beyond

By the beginning of January 1970, there were still 472,000 American troops stationed in Vietnam. Yet the peace movement seemed moribund. Originally intended to be an ongoing series of actions, by mid-April the Vietnam Moratorium Committee had officially disbanded. Once the nation’s most powerful and influential New Left organization, SDS was by then

¹³³ Mather to Infante, Jul. 8, 1970; Mather to Whiteman, Jul. 8, 1970; Kirwan to Mather, Jul. 6, 1970; and Kirwan to Mather, Jul. 21, 1970, Series II, Box 4, Folder 19, Mather Papers.

seriously weakened by factional strife.¹³⁴ But student radicals at New Paltz and elsewhere were still organizing against the war.

On February 26, an undercover informant for the Troop F Special Services detail attended a meeting at SUNY-New Paltz to discuss plans to protest an upcoming military recruiting visit. The following day, the mole, codenamed FS-2, conferred with a campus SDS member, obtained the names and addresses of students leading the anti-recruiting effort, and furnished this intelligence to Special Services. When a follow-up meeting was held on March 4, attended by 18 faculty and students, FS-2 and a BCI investigator were present and recorded details about the planned demonstration. On March 18, another campus informant, FS-1, told his handlers that the Dean of Students and another college administrator had met with Ulster County District Attorney to discuss the potential for violence if the college proceeded with its plan to host military recruiters the following week. After the meeting, administrators mailed letters to various branches of the armed services formally cancelling the recruiting visits.

On March 24, the date when recruiters had originally planned to arrive on campus, several Special Services investigators, along with FS-1 and FS-2, conducted surveillance between 8 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. In one of the few cases where news media took note of Special Services activity, a reporter for the *Kingston Daily Freeman* observed: “Three black sedans each with two uniformed guards, were seen cruising around the campus grounds shortly after 9 a.m.” From the safety of their state-issued vehicles, the “BCI men” and their informants managed to identify and record the names and affiliations of ten students, alumni and faculty who were seen on the quad trying to drum up interest in a protest. Investigators later watched from afar as 28

¹³⁴ Davis, *Assault on the Left*, 161.

Quakers stood in silent vigil to protest recruiting. Throughout the day, Special Services personnel dispatched periodic updates via Teletype to Division Headquarters in Albany.

While remnants of a once-strong SDS chapter continued to organize at New Paltz, on many of New York State's rural campuses SDS had never had much of a presence to begin with. As demonstrated by a scattering of protests in Spring 1970, students were quite capable of mounting spontaneous protests without aid from national organizations. Always eager to discover fresh pastures for their spies and new possibilities for political intelligence, the BCI dispatched Special Services personnel to campuses far removed from centers of radical activism like Buffalo and New Paltz.

In March, 20 students at Corning Community College worked in shifts to picket on-campus recruiting by IBM, a major defense contractor. The Special Services detail expressed keen interest in the action by the local student group, which called itself the Independent Radical Coalition. This was "the first indication of any Leftist activity at this Community [*sic*] college," an investigator later noted in his report, "and continued liaison will be maintained with the administration and sources of information at this campus, relative to future activities, or any acceleration of interests in this anti movement [*sic*]." ¹³⁵

On April 1, around 40 students from Herkimer County Community College led an antiwar chant in front of their local draft board. Special Services personnel later interviewed the Dean of Students, who said the protest was "sort of a spontaneous act," organized by no registered student group. Names of student activists were dutifully noted and promptly forwarded to Division Headquarters. ¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Case 238-1518-1, Mar. 13, 1970, Box 49, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

¹³⁶ Case 238-1191-1, Apr. 19, 1970, Box 50, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

At all-male Hobart College, the month of April saw sit-ins and a days-long occupation of a campus building by students opposed to the presence of ROTC on campus.¹³⁷

On April 30, President Nixon appeared on television to announce that U.S. troops would soon be crossing into Cambodia. Although the mass media largely embraced his decision, it was hard not to interpret this move as a sign of a widening war.¹³⁸ Over the following days, 80 percent of the nation's college campuses reported protests.¹³⁹ Although students attacked ROTC buildings on some campuses, most of these demonstrations ended peacefully. But on May 4 at Kent State University, where students had also damaged an ROTC building during a night of raucous protest, members of the Ohio National Guard opened fire on a group of students, killing four and seriously wounding several others. A week later, members of the Mississippi Highway Patrol unleashed a barrage of bullets at a group of unarmed Black youth on the campus of Jackson State College, leaving two dead and twelve wounded. The Kent State and Jackson State tragedies further rocked the nation's campuses, as close to two million students left their classes to protest both government repression and military violence in Indochina. Protests affected 44 percent of two-year schools, and a fifth of all types of campuses completely closed for anywhere from one day to rest of the semester.¹⁴⁰

The response at New York State's colleges and universities was immediate and widespread. After hearing the news about Kent State, SUNY-Buffalo's students were quick to organize. On May 6, 2,500 of them marched down Main Street. That evening, a much smaller contingent set fire to the campus ROTC building. According to historian Kenneth Heineman,

¹³⁷ For more on this protest, and the role played at Hobart College by a mysterious *agent provocateur* possibly in employ of the FBI, known as "Tommy the Traveler," see Ron Rosenbaum, "Run, Tommy, Run!" *Esquire*, Jul. 1971.

¹³⁸ Howard Means, *67 Shots: Kent State and the End of American Innocence* (New York: Da Capo, 2016), 141-2.

¹³⁹ Davis, *Assault on the Left*, 180.

¹⁴⁰ Peterson and Bilorusky, *May 1970*, 32; Appy, *American Reckoning*, 190.

“City police promptly laid siege to the university,” firing tear gas into university buildings and firing birdshot rounds indiscriminately at students walking to class.¹⁴¹

While few other colleges in New York State recorded levels of violent unrest on par with Buffalo, some protests were scenes of tense face-offs with police. In Albany, thousands of protesters shut down the state capitol while a separate action by around six hundred demonstrators confronted the State Police as they blocked traffic on the New York State Thruway.¹⁴² Near Rochester, State Police cordoned off the campus of SUNY-Brockport after hundreds of students occupied the administration building.¹⁴³

At the New York State Agricultural and Technical College at Farmingdale, 150 students occupied the college’s main administration building. Bolstered by the chanting of more than 100 demonstrators outside, the occupiers demanded that the college publicly denounce both the Cambodia invasion and the incident at Kent State. However, it seems the college president was loath to take this step, as he soon called in a detachment of 200 Suffolk County police officers to break up the protest. Observing the actions of the Farmingdale students were investigators working with Suffolk County Police Department’s Intelligence Unit, who promptly furnished names of arrested student protesters to the BCI.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Heineman, *Campus Wars*, 249. A joint report by SUNY-Buffalo graduate students and the American Civil Liberties Union later found that the shotgun rounds fired by city police injured at least twelve students. Bill Vaccaro, “Birdshot Evidence Conclusive,” *The Spectrum*, Sept. 23, 1970.

¹⁴² Calley Quinn, “Authority’s Last Stand: Mainline Protestants, Catholics, and Albany’s Tumultuous Sixties,” (honor’s thesis, Univ. at Albany, 2017), 11. The thruway action is depicted on the cover of the *53rd Annual Report of the New York State Police 1970*, New York State Library, Albany, NY.

¹⁴³ Thom Jennings, “More Scared than Radical: The Story Behind the Hartwell Hall Takeover, May 6-7, 1970,” (honor’s thesis, SUNY-Brockport, 2006), 25.

¹⁴⁴ Case 238-1365-1, Sept. 22, 1970, Box 49, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

Meanwhile, students at Syracuse University erected mounds of debris to block roads into campus. To ensure a steady supply of volunteers who could man the blockades around the clock, student organizers formed a Barricade Committee.¹⁴⁵

Protests also rocked SUNY-Oneonta, where students physically blocked access to classrooms and more than 1,000 students (or around one-third of the college's total enrollment) participated in a daylong boycott of classes. Also, for the first time since the war began, faculty took a stand on the issue when it voted to publicly demand that President Nixon stop the invasion of Cambodia and end the war in Vietnam.¹⁴⁶ On May 6, Special Services personnel obtained (probably from Oneonta's police department) a parade permit application submitted by protesters who wanted to demonstrate against the expanding war in Southeast Asia. Names appearing on the document, including faculty from Oneonta and nearby Hartwick College, were subsequently indexed in Special Services files.¹⁴⁷ To their credit, neither Oneonta police nor the BCI attempted to deny protesters the right to march. On May 9, the result was Oneonta's largest demonstration in years, involving more than 2,000 students, faculty, and community members.¹⁴⁸

On May 6, the BCI supervisor at Troop A headquarters ordered an investigation of a planned protest at Genesee Community College, located between Buffalo and Rochester. Two investigators from the Special Services detail later observed the group of around 100 students as they marched from their campus to the city of Batavia's local draft board. "We wish to make it perfectly clear," read a flyer passed out during the demonstration, "that we are not striking against this college, but against federal policies which do not represent the beliefs of this

¹⁴⁵ James Eric Eichsteadt, "Shut It Down!": The May 1970 National Student Strike at the University of California at Berkeley, Syracuse University, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison," (PhD diss., Syracuse Univ., 2007), 267.

¹⁴⁶ Lory VanGordon, "Massive Marches and Services Protest War," *State Times*, May 8, 1970; John Kelleher, "Faculty Demands Nixon withdraw All Troops," *State Times*, May 8, 1970.

¹⁴⁷ Case 238-1571-1, Sept. 28, 1970, Box 49, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

¹⁴⁸ "2,000 March for Peace," *State Times*, May 12, 1970.

segment of the people.” Throughout the event, investigators used their radios to “provide a continuous flow of information to Troop Headquarters regarding this demonstration, the number of students taking part, and any other pertinent facts relating thereto.”¹⁴⁹

Meanwhile, more than two-thirds of students at North Country Community College (NCCC), serving the mountainous and remote Adirondack region, supported a strike action in a campus-wide referendum. On May 11, the college hosted an all-day teach-in, where speeches by faculty and student activists were summarized and reported back to Division Headquarters by Special Services personnel. The same day, an informant, T-2, advised the state police investigators that a pair of out-of-state SDS organizers had arrived in town allegedly for the purpose of urging insurrection among students. The next day, the college president closed campus as hundreds of NCCC students marched through the nearby town of Saranac Lake. While organizers at the head of the march carried a coffin to signify those killed in Vietnam and at Kent State, another informant, probably an FBI agent, surreptitiously photographed protesters. The state police report for this event notes that this particular source had been photographing protest leaders in the Saranac Lake area for days prior to the march. The informant later sent these photographs to Troop B headquarters for identification purposes.¹⁵⁰

Elsewhere, student activists reacted to Kent State and Cambodia in ways that angered influential community members. Weeks of unrest at Ulster County Community College did not sit well with certain members of the county legislature, responsible for allocating a large share of the institution’s funding. To protest the U.S. invasion of Cambodia, as well as the killing of four students at Kent State University, student activist and Marine veteran William Warner helped

¹⁴⁹ Flyer and surveillance report attached to Case 238-1198-1, May 11, 1970; Troop A Memorandum, May 6, 1970, all in Box 50, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

¹⁵⁰ Case 238-1433-1, Jul. 29, 1970, Box 49, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

lead a student strike which shut down UCCC for half-a-day. While his organizing efforts failed to convince the student body to extend the strike to a second day, radical faculty and students did succeed in establishing a “Free University” on campus for the duration of the semester.

Free University classes, open to all and taught by both UCCC students and faculty who supported the strike, tackled such topics as “Revolutionary Analysis and Modern America” and “Poetry and the Dharma Revolution.” While the Free University at UCCC was in full swing, and after hearing disturbing reports of flags being lowered on campus, Republican County Legislator Lester C. Elmendorf used a visit to the county legislative board by UCCC’s president and Dean of Administration as an opportunity to vent his frustration about student radicals. Demanding an “explanation of what is going on out there,” Elmendorf expressed his desire to see expulsion for the student strikers and withheld paychecks for the faculty who supported them.¹⁵¹

In a May 8 conference call, SUNY Chancellor Samuel Gould urged community college presidents to be flexible in response to the demands of student protesters. In a remarkable admission from the head of one of the country’s largest state university systems, Gould also expressed concerns about the “possibility of a real shooting revolution” unless President Nixon calmed the situation.¹⁵² Meanwhile, in Washington, D.C., the scale and intensity of the protests also rattled the Nixon administration. As historians Maurice Isserman and Michael Kazin write, Nixon “was quick to back down from the Cambodian invasion” and withdrew all American forces from that country by the end of June.¹⁵³ In his memoirs, Nixon’s National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger later wrote that “the fear of another round of demonstrations

¹⁵¹ Lynn Mulvaney, “UCCC Unrest Legislature Topic,” *Kingston Daily Freeman*, May 14, 1970, attached to Case 238-1725-1, Nov. 20, 1970, Box 48, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

¹⁵² Chancellor Gould’s remarks are reported second-hand in an internal memo by the president of North Country Community College, attached to Case 238-1433-1, Jul. 29, 1970, Box 49, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

¹⁵³ Isserman and Kazin, *America Divided*, 279.

permeated all the thinking about Vietnam in the Executive Branch that summer—even that of Nixon, who pretended to be impervious.”¹⁵⁴ Despite State Police efforts to monitor and corral the movement, student peace activists were having an impact.

As noted, prior to Cambodia and Kent State, the U.S. antiwar movement appeared to be in decline. In keeping with this declension narrative, the consensus view of historians holds that following the May 1970 protests, college students reverted to their usual apathy. Scholars have written of the demoralizing effect of the Kent State incident, noting how afterwards “students had more or less withdrawn into themselves and their campus lives.”¹⁵⁵ However, contemporaneous social science research shows that for a full year after the Kent State tragedy, campus unrest continued. This perpetuation of protest largely escaped notice at the time as antiwar organizing shifted to the smaller, less selective colleges which were less visible to national media due to their larger proportions of working-class students.¹⁵⁶ This counter-narrative is borne out by the BCI files, which show how New York State’s college students continued their protests during the 1970-1971 academic year.

In April 1971, as the War in Indochina dragged on, the SMC showed its continuing relevance by organizing the “Spring Mobe,” a massive antiwar demonstration in Washington. On April 15, informant T-1 advised Special Services that an SMC field organizer would visit Orange County Community College on April 20 to try to establish an SMC chapter on campus and to generate interest in traveling to Washington, D.C., for the demonstration. The SMC

¹⁵⁴ Qtd. in DeBenedetti, *American Ordeal*, 285.

¹⁵⁵ Zaroulis and Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up?*, 381; see also Means, *67 Shots*, 215; and Michael W. Miles, “Student Alienation in the U.S. Higher Education Industry,” *Politics and Society* 4, no. 3 (1974): 339.

¹⁵⁶ See Alan Bayer and Alexander Astin, “Campus Unrest, 1970-1971: Was It Really All that Quiet?” *Educational Record* (Fall 1971), 301-313.

organizer's presence drew immediate attention from the State Police. After contacting an investigator with the House Internal Security Subcommittee, Special Services personnel learned that the organizer had "numerous past associations with Communist front organizations." Even more damning, the source added that the SMC was a "Trotskyite Communist Party Organization" seeking to "gain control of the new Youthful Left Wing" [*sic*]. Informant T-1 promised to attend the campus visit and report their findings to Special Services.¹⁵⁷

His efforts apparently paid off, as T-1 noted that OCCC had dozens of interested students and faculty, enough to fill two charter buses. However, a \$400 request for funds to hire the buses passed the student senate twice only to be vetoed—first by the OCCC administration, later by the Board of Trustees. Against this backdrop of State Police surveillance and administrative meddling, a hardy group of students proceeded with their protest plans. Relying on their own transportation, thirteen OCCC students finally managed to attend the march in Washington where they joined a chorus of a quarter-million other voices all crying for an end to war.

B. Antiwar Veterans

During the early 1970s, opposition to the wars in Southeast Asia grew within the military and took a variety of forms. In the army, the number of active-duty soldiers applying for conscientious objector status surged from 829 in 1967 to 4,381 in 1971.¹⁵⁸ Some units in Vietnam expressed dissatisfaction by resorting to violence against their commanding officers.

¹⁵⁷ This and the following paragraph draw from Case 238-2053-1, Oct. 11, 1971, Box 49, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

¹⁵⁸ Appy, *American Reckoning*, 214.

Nurturing all this dissent were dozens of radical newspapers published by and for those active-duty GIs and veterans who were opposed to the war.¹⁵⁹

By 1971, veterans had become a major force in the antiwar effort, and one of the most prominent anti-war alliances was Vietnam Veterans against the War (VVAW). At the time, supporters of the war could easily discredit peace activists by portraying them as an unwashed mass of unpatriotic, tambourine-banging hippies. But since military veterans, no matter their level of service, seem to enjoy automatic credibility on issues of war and peace, VVAW members had far more political clout and influence than other antiwar organizations.

The VVAW's legitimacy was also owed to their strategic use of patriotic symbols and Revolutionary War iconography. As historian Christian Appy has noted, these dissidents founded their opposition to the Vietnam War on "loyalty to the nation's founding principles."¹⁶⁰ Thus, in early 1971, the VVAW harkened back to the Revolutionary War era when their members convened what they called the Winter Soldier hearings in Detroit to testify to war crimes they claimed to have committed in Vietnam. "The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis," Paine had written, "shrink from the service of their country." After Paine's pamphlet, of course, was the brutal winter at Valley Forge when General George Washington's soldiers deserted *en masse*. Winter soldiers, therefore, were the loyal patriots who would remain true to their calling even during times of crisis.¹⁶¹ By calling their event Winter Soldier, the VVAW was thus drawing on patriotic symbols that would have been easily recognizable to most Americans in the early 1970s.

¹⁵⁹ See Harry Haines, "Soldiers against the Vietnam War: *Aboveground* and *The Ally*," in K. Wachsberger, ed. *Insider Histories of the Vietnam Era Underground Press*, Pt. 2 (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State Univ. Press, 2012), 1-46.

¹⁶⁰ Appy, *American Reckoning*, 215.

¹⁶¹ Nancy L. Zaroulis and Gerald Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up? American Protest against the War in Vietnam, 1963-1975* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 354.

That the VVAW identified with the Revolutionary spirit of Thomas Paine is further illustrated by the group's repeated choice of locales for their demonstrations—like the Lincoln Memorial, the Betsy Ross House, and the Lexington Battle Green—that were symbolically loaded with American patriotism. Perhaps because of the group's appropriation of such symbols, all levels of law enforcement targeted the VVAW. The FBI closely monitored the group between 1971 and 1972, when future U.S. Senator and Secretary of State, John Kerry, served on its executive committee.¹⁶² Local police antiradical units in Los Angeles and Nassau County, New York, also kept close tabs on the group's activities.¹⁶³

Meanwhile, as veterans in New York State proved receptive to the VVAW message and began to organize on their own campuses, the State Police followed their every move. Motivating the BCI's interest in the group was the belief—held by some, but by no means all of their countersubversive investigators—that the VVAW group was a “Communist Front” that was “geared to destroy [the] United States' image.”¹⁶⁴

On April 20, 1971, a dean at UCCC advised State Police investigators that the leader of the campus VVAW chapter and two other UCCC students planned to hold an antiwar rally the next day. Prior to their action, a BCI investigator observed flyers posted around campus urging students to show up and demonstrate that they “no longer believe in Mr. Nixon's lies.” On the day of the event, an investigator took long-distance photos of the three students as they set up a speakers' platform in front of the college library. Although the protest was a flop—organizers began breaking down the speakers' platform and sound equipment early due to lack of student

¹⁶² Laura Blumenfeld and Dan Balz, “FBI Tracked Kerry In Vietnam Vets Group,” *Washington Post*, Mar. 23, 2004

¹⁶³ Donner, *Protectors of Privilege*, 273; Patrick Owens, “Where Has All the Freedom Gone,” *Newsday*, Aug. 10, 1971; David Behrens, “Caso to Police Don't Pose as Press,” *Newsday*, May 26, 1971.

¹⁶⁴ For sharply diverging assessments of local VVAW chapters, see summaries of subversive organizations compiled by investigators with SP Manhattan and Troop E, attached to Case 238-3133-1, Dec. 11, 1973, Box 89. New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files. That many State Police investigators were proud veterans themselves could have also influenced their views on the VVAW.

interest—from the State Police perspective it was well worthwhile. The BCI’s report noted that an agent from “the Federal Investigating Agency of known reliability” later met with the dean and had him examine the BCI’s surveillance photos. This meeting with UCCC college administration produced short biographical profiles of the three student organizers, providing their addresses, dates of birth, Social Security numbers, and educational and military backgrounds to state police investigators. Special Services personnel and their counterparts at the FBI maintained contact with the UCCC dean throughout the year, noting that by the fall the campus VVAW boasted a membership of 50 students.¹⁶⁵

On April 23, in one of the antiwar movement’s most iconic moments, hundreds of Vietnam veterans traveled to Washington, D.C. and hurled their combat medals onto the steps of the capitol building.¹⁶⁶ Weeks later, veterans affiliated with Rockland Community College drew on the symbolic power of that protest. On May 5, following a campus teach-in aimed at raising awareness of the continuing carnage in Vietnam and commemorating the anniversary of Kent State, protestors traveled by motorcade to the neighboring town of Spring Valley. Following the protest was a plainclothes BCI investigator who collected flyers and took notes.¹⁶⁷

After marching and distributing literature in Spring Valley, more than 250 demonstrators arrived at the town’s draft board offices. As a group of eight Vietnam veterans led the procession by carrying an empty casket to represent area youth killed in the war, a uniformed trooper sat in his patrol car taking surveillance photographs. In a dramatic gesture, after placing the coffin in front of the entrance to the draft board, the veterans tossed their combat medals atop the tomb. This was apparently too much for members of the Spring Valley Police Department,

¹⁶⁵ Case 238-1646-23, Oct. 18, 1971, Box 51, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

¹⁶⁶ DeBenedetti, *American Ordeal*, 306, 309-10.

¹⁶⁷ This and the following paragraph draw on clippings and surveillance reports attached to Case 238-1646-26, Jan. 6, 1971, Box 94, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

who swooped in and arrested twelve protesters for blocking entry to a public building. The local police department proved happy to help the BCI in other ways, logging license plate numbers of protesters' cars and sharing their vehicle registration information to help Special Services open new intelligence files on protesters. A BCI investigator later noted that he kept the FBI apprised of the day's activities, and later submitted his report—including photographs—to Troop F and Division Headquarters.

C. May 1972 and the Renewal of Antiwar Dissent

By 1972, the Nixon administration's strategy paired a gradual withdrawal of U.S. ground forces with an enormous increase in bombing. This process of Vietnamization, together with the draft lottery and a constricting job market for college graduates, all combined to make antiwar protest seem less urgent to college youth. In February, when a Vassar student organized a February peace vigil in Poughkeepsie, Special Services personnel monitoring the event reported that attendance remained in the single digits.¹⁶⁸ Turnout was anemic, as well, at SUNY-Cortland, where the BCI reported that "all anti-war demonstrations during the current academic year have been poorly attended."¹⁶⁹ This apparent lack of interest among New York State's students mirrored the national mood. With SDS in disarray, there were fewer big organizations to channel students' discontent. Between 1969 and 1972, groups like Clergy and Laity Concerned about Vietnam, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and SANE all

¹⁶⁸ Case 238-2445-1, Sept. 27, 1972, Box 49, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

¹⁶⁹ Case 238-2708-1, Jun. 19, 1972, Box 48, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

experienced membership loss between ten and twenty-five percent.¹⁷⁰ Prior to May, the nation's campuses had seen months of relative peace.¹⁷¹

This all changed when the Nixon administration resumed B-52 strikes against Hanoi and Haiphong—the first publicly acknowledged attacks against those cities in years—and began the mining of ports in North Vietnam. Prompting this escalation had been the fall of the Northeastern Province of Quang Tri and Nixon's desire to influence negotiations with North Vietnam (which were by then at an impasse.)¹⁷² In response to the Nixon administration's aggressive moves, there was a renewed wave of nationwide protests in May 1972.¹⁷³

In early May, a group calling itself the Cortland Conspiracy for Change held a three-day series of antiwar workshops. On May 4, a few dozen protesters marched from the state college campus to the downtown Cortland offices of the Selective Service and armed forces recruiters.¹⁷⁴ At Vassar, 300 students held a spontaneous demonstration while the college administration postponed final exams so students could travel to protests in Washington.¹⁷⁵

Meanwhile, at SUNY-New Paltz, students' response to the escalation in North Vietnam was swift and spontaneous. Around midnight on the evening of May 8, the college's assistant director of housing placed a frantic call to campus security, reporting that students were walking from dorm to dorm, pulling fire alarms to create awareness of the escalation in Vietnam.

Campus security learned through its informants that around five or six different groups were

¹⁷⁰ DeBenedetti, *American Ordeal*, 320, 380.

¹⁷¹ Zaroulis and Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up?*, 380.

¹⁷² See Jeffrey Kimball, *Nixon's Vietnam War* (Lawrence, KS: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1998.)

¹⁷³ Zaroulis and Sullivan, *Who Spoke Up?* 385 ff. The response varied among different types of campuses. In New York State, students at commuter schools like OCCC and Catholic-affiliated institutions like Marist reportedly greeted news of the escalation with a collective shrug. George Basler, "Students Stage Protests at New Paltz and Vassar," *Newburgh Evening News*, May 10, 1972, attached to Case 238-2669-1, Mar. 28, 1973, Box 53, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

¹⁷⁴ Case 238-2708-1, Jun. 19, 1972, Box 48, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

¹⁷⁵ George Basler, "Students Stage Protests at New Paltz and Vassar," *Newburgh Evening News*, May 10, 1972, attached to Case 238-2669-1, Mar. 28, 1973, Box 53, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

actively working throughout the night to organize a response to President Nixon's handling of the war.¹⁷⁶

As fire alarms continued going off throughout the early morning hours, an unidentified professor allowed students to gain access to the administration building, where they quickly began placing furniture in stairwells to deny access to upper levels. Students closed and locked the outer doors to the building, placing Epoxy cement in keyholes to prevent anyone from entering. With disorder spreading rapidly across campus, students broke into the college print shop and removed mimeograph machines and typewriters. By the time State Police arrived later that morning, students had already used the pilfered equipment to produce an "Information Bulletin" and a flyer entitled "Where Will Escalation Stop?"

The next day, a public relations official at the college told the BCI that while the campus situation had calmed, there were now hundreds of students marching on Rt. 32 towards the Village of New Paltz. By 11 a.m., 500 students were blocking traffic at a major intersection in the Village. With traffic at a stand-still, students passed out leaflets to puzzled motorists as BCI investigator on the scene snapped photos, collected flyers, and identified protesters.

Back on campus, activists attended an afternoon rally on the campus quad where plans were discussed to block the Thruway. This information moved quickly back to the BCI, by way of its trusty student informant, FS-1. Special Services personnel in turn phoned the supervisor of Troop T, responsible for policing the state highway system. By 3:15, as dozens of students piled into their cars and left campus for the nearest Thruway exit, hoping that their action would force motorists to stop and think of what their country was doing in Vietnam. As a flyer passed around at the afternoon rally explained: "We will drive [illegible] the NY Thruway and slow cars

¹⁷⁶ This and the following three paragraphs draw on flyers and surveillance reports attached to Case 238-2669-1, Mar. 28, 1973, Box 53, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

to an eventual halt in a blockade. Thus stopped, we will explain to all blockaded traffic and any media the necessity of this war-related inconvenience.” Another flyer instructed motorists: “Think, reflect as you sit in your cars about the situation of the world, about the situation of our country. Understand, please, that this reflecting pause is necessary—for things can hardly continue as they are now.” But their ability to follow through on this plan was compromised from the start by the BCI’s student informant.

State troopers met the student motorcade at the interchange but let them onto the thruway after receiving assurances they would not attempt to block traffic. In the end, New Paltz’s Thruway action involved as many as 125 students in eighteen cars holding up traffic for twenty-five minutes. Thruway authority snowplows later came in to move students’ cars out of the way after protestors refused to move. As one news report later put it, “Some students later said that the blockade failed to tie up traffic as planned because police had been tipped off beforehand.” Still, the number of students involved, and their militancy, marked a radical departure from lackluster antiwar efforts at the New Paltz campus earlier in the semester.¹⁷⁷

New Paltz students were not alone. Over the next several days, President Nixon’s decision to escalate in North Vietnam triggered a wave of protests up and down the Hudson Valley. On May 10, around 600 SUNY-New Paltz students attended a 9 a.m. meeting to plan the day’s major peace action: A walk from campus to the IBM headquarters in Poughkeepsie that was expected to draw scores of area students. Later known for developing some of the earliest personal computers, during the Vietnam War the Poughkeepsie-based technology firm had a Pentagon contract to assist in target selection for bombing runs. In accordance with the Nixon

¹⁷⁷ Jon Powers, “Paltz Students Continue Protesting,” *Kingston Daily Freeman*, May 10, 1972; George Basler, “Students Stage Protests at New Paltz and Vassar,” *Newburgh Evening News*, May 10, 1972; Bill Lowry, “New Paltz Student Protestors Block Thruway,” *Times Herald Record* (Middletown), May 10, 1972, all attached to Case 238-2669-1, Mar. 28, 1973, Box 53, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

administration's Vietnamization scheme, IBM's role became more prominent as the war became increasingly fought through the air. Students kept this connection front and center during their march, indicting what was then the nation's fifth-largest corporation for its role in the war. "The automated air war which is killing 300 Indochinese a day," read one of their flyers, "would have a hard time continuing without IBM's complicity."¹⁷⁸

Later that morning, as 150 students proceeded to Poughkeepsie, Special Services and uniform personnel wrote down license plate numbers for vehicles involved in the line of march. By 2 p.m., after Vassar students had joined the procession, as many as 300 marchers advanced along Route 9W to the Oakwood School, a Quaker institution where students would meet with the IBM plant's general manager and an IBM attorney. Leading this piece of the protest was 22-year-old Michael Stamm, a Quaker peace activist whose parents were teachers at Oakwood. According to one press account, Stamm had attended "more antiwar protests there and elsewhere than he can recall" and in the process been arrested "more times than most members of the mafia." As Stamm and other organizers urged these officials to end their collaboration with the war, IBM representatives warned that any acts of civil disobedience would result in arrest.

At 4 p.m., students massed near IBM parking lot property in Poughkeepsie. As they held a banner reading "End the Computer Complicity," some demonstrators upped the ante by trespassing in an act of nonviolent protest. When twelve refuse to move from IBM parking lot property, they were promptly arrested by Poughkeepsie police.

Later that evening, New Paltz was again the site of protest when around 20 students locked themselves in the Humanities Building; demonstrators ended their sit-in only after the Dean of Students entered through a window to discuss their concerns.

¹⁷⁸ This and the following four paragraphs draw on flyers, clippings and surveillance reports attached to Case 238-2669-1, Mar. 28, 1973, Box 53, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

Two days later, on May 12, Special Services personnel phoned an official at the Air Force's Office of Special Investigations to inform them of an upcoming demonstration at Kingston Recruiting Station and Kingston Draft Board. As around 50 students walked 12 miles from the UCCC campus, another group of Bard and New Paltz students began their march from a local center of antiwar activity: Kingston's Trinity United Methodist Church. The two groups converged at Academy Green in the center of Kingston, where they marched in a loop around the Green, the draft board offices and recruiting station. All in all, it was an impressive display of unity and purpose by the Hudson Valley's student peace movement which only months before had seemed to be drained of energy.

Throughout 1972, the war in Vietnam was increasingly fought through the air. In June alone, U.S. forces dropped more than 100,000 tons of bombs on targets in North and South Vietnam.¹⁷⁹ In October, there appeared to be a breakthrough in the Paris Peace talks when the U.S. finally agreed to allow North Vietnamese troops to remain in the South. However, following Nixon's reelection in November, U.S. diplomats brought to the bargaining table a set of much harsher terms. When North Vietnam balked, the Nixon administration seized on this opportunity to present military force as the only logical response to communist obstinacy.¹⁸⁰

Nixon boasted beforehand that U.S. military maneuvers would be "massive and brutal in character," and what became known as the "Christmas bombing" lived up to its hype. Over a period of twelve days, between December 18 and December 29, B-52s dropped 15,000 tons of bombs on targets in Hanoi and Haiphong.¹⁸¹ As Kissinger's biographer later wrote, when the U.S. eventually signed the peace agreement, "The modifications for which these lives were lost

¹⁷⁹ Friedland, *Lift Up Your Voice Like a Trumpet*, 232.

¹⁸⁰ Isserman and Kazin, *America Divided*, 291-2.

¹⁸¹ Hayden, *Hell No*, 101.

were so minor that neither Nixon nor Kissinger would adequately remember what they were.”¹⁸² Thus, the most extensive bombing campaign since World War II killed thousands of civilians but did little to extract substantive concessions from North Vietnam.

Conveniently for the Nixon administration, the carnage came at a time when college campuses were closed for the holidays. However, while the bombs were still falling in North Vietnam, students and community members joined a three day “Christmas Peace Pilgrimage” from Poughkeepsie to West Point to protest the continuing war in Vietnam and IBM’s role in the bombing campaign. In January 1973, Auburn Community College students returning from winter break convened an all-night peace vigil in front of their city’s federal building. Approximately 50 of these protesters braved the freezing temperatures to “bring pressure on Congress to stop all appropriations for further military action in Indo-China.” Two of the bravest stayed overnight into the morning. A BCI investigator also braved the cold to identify the organizers, providing their names and other information in a report to Division Headquarters.¹⁸³

With the signing of the Paris Peace accords, on January 27, the Vietnam War had ceased to be an American conflict.¹⁸⁴ Although U.S. forces remained two more years before a North Vietnamese invasion pushed American personnel out of Saigon, during that time peace activists drifted away in droves. In 1973, the Student Mobilization Committee operated on a bare-bones organizational structure while membership of movement standard-bearers SANE and CALC dropped by half.¹⁸⁵

On March 26, in one of the last gasps of the once-strong New Paltz movement, a campus informant kept Special Services apprised of a sit-in involving around a dozen students outside a

¹⁸² Qtd. in Carroll, *House of War*, 341.

¹⁸³ Case 238-2672-1, Feb. 1, 1973, Box 48, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

¹⁸⁴ DeBenedetti, *American Ordeal*, 349.

¹⁸⁵ DeBenedetti, *American Ordeal*, 351.

Marine recruiting table in the college's administration building. Later that fall, Special Services maintained regular contact with its student informants at SUNY-New Paltz to keep tabs on the waning antiwar effort.

At the close of 1973, Special Services was in its ninth year of monitoring the student peace movement. At an increasing rate through the 1960s and into the 1970s, their agents carefully compiled lists of names and license plate numbers, created dossiers on individual activists, indexed this information and made it all available to members of the NYSP's intelligence network. Although it remains hard to tell how often it occurred, the NYSP spy files make clear that the contents of their intelligence reports were sometimes passed on to academic authorities, employers, other law enforcement agencies—anyone who might have an interest in prosecuting, further investigating or punishing the subjects of surveillance.

Much of this activity was perfectly unconstitutional, of course. The secrecy surrounding the Special Services detail, and the effort made to maintain it by top officials at the NYSP, suggests that there was at least some knowledge that they were operating on shaky legal ground. By 1971, there had been at least eighteen lawsuits challenging the political intelligence practices of police agencies across the country.¹⁸⁶ But the New York State Police escaped such scrutiny in part by striking a implicit bargain with college administrators: Allow our spies on campus, keep silent about our activities, and we will help ensure peace on campus.¹⁸⁷ Support from academia, combined with lack of any meaningful legislative oversight, allowed the NYSP to continue its spying operation well into the mid-1970s. In 1974 alone, the BCI opened more than 7,000 new

¹⁸⁶ Donner, "The Theory and Practice of American Political Intelligence."

¹⁸⁷ Less than a week after the anti-Themis protests at SUNY-Buffalo, Assistant to the SUNY Chancellor John Mather acknowledged this silent pact in a thank-you note to Superintendent Kirwan. After praising the BCI's "support of our efforts to maintain stability on the State University campuses," Mather noted: "Unfortunately, it is the story no one can ever tell about." Mather to Kirwan, Mar. 25, 1969, Series II, Box 4, Folder 19, Mather Papers.

non-criminal investigations—the highest tally ever recorded.¹⁸⁸ Although no one could have predicted it at the time, the agency’s political intelligence work was about to come to an abrupt end.

¹⁸⁸ *58th Annual Report of the New York State Police 1975*, 18, New York State Library, Albany, NY.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION: THE LEGACY OF “POLICE STATE TACTICS”

In November 1975, the wall of secrecy surrounding State Police spying finally came tumbling down. Press accounts called it “the biggest civil-liberties scandal in New York’s history.” And it started with a hunch one month earlier, when Bill Haddad—then director of Assembly Office of Legislative Oversight—asked the NYSP if they ever kept files on people not suspected or convicted of criminal activity. State Police officials invited him to Division Headquarters in Albany, where he was led to a 50-yard-long room lined with filing cabinets containing all the intelligence on student peace activists and other subversives. When Haddad decided to test the system, checking entries on famous progressive names or organizations—the ACLU, Congressman Shirley Chisholm, the NAACP—he found thick files whose contents left him shaken and disturbed. After Haddad sent a brief report to his boss, the Assembly Speaker, someone “leaked” the report to *Newsday*, one of the state’s largest daily newspapers, which published a sensational cover story headlined “‘Political Dossiers’ Kept by State Cops.” In the months to come, the newspaper published more than a dozen follow-up stories on the NYSP’s spying operation.

All that the State Police had tried so hard to obscure over the years—the use of informants, its massive file collection, and the apparent targeting of anyone who held unpopular (usually leftwing) political opinions—had finally become public knowledge. Most damning of all was a *Newsday* report on the transcript of a phone conversation where State Police officials discussed purging evidence to prevent disclosure of the BCI’s informant network among college officials. In response, a SUNY spokesman made this patently false statement: “We do not know

of any official or campus that has turned over information on student activists to State Police.”¹⁸⁹ But SUNY was not the only agency trying to manage the public relations fallout. The new State Police Superintendent also claimed that Special Services spying operations had been disbanded early in 1975, and that civil libertarians had nothing to worry about because NYSP intelligence files only contained news clippings.

But official denials became less plausible as revelations continued to mount and prominent critics joined the fray. After learning that Special Services had kept a file on him, former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark was circumspect. “Already battered by Watergate and a massive assault on privacy by public and private institutions and dynamics,” he ruefully observed, “we are inclined to react with a sense of *déjà vu*.” In an op-ed, Clark noted that the upcoming bicentennial should be an opportunity for Americans to reflect on the meaning of democracy and to turn away from “police state tactics.”¹⁹⁰

Within weeks of the exposé, Haddad’s preliminary report on State Police spying reached the office of Governor Hugh Carey, who promptly set in motion the creation of a special legislative task force to investigate the BCI’s intelligence-gathering operation. Critics were quick to question their *modus operandi*, particularly the task force’s failure to subpoena witnesses and the fact that its members had the opportunity to analyze only a small sample of Special Services files.¹⁹¹ The overall tone of the ensuing report, published in the fall of 1977, was conciliatory, giving the NYSP the benefit of the doubt when it observed that Special Services engaged in “questionable methods” but showed “no pattern of illegal acts.”¹⁹² Similarly, the task force sought to go easy on the State Police while acknowledging the harm

¹⁸⁹ Knut Royce and Brian Donovan, “School Aides Called Informants,” *Newsday*, Nov. 9, 1975.

¹⁹⁰ Ramsey Clark, “Preserving Liberty, Police-State Style,” *Newsday*, Nov. 18, 1975.

¹⁹¹ See, e.g., Levin, “Anatomy of a Whitewash.”

¹⁹² *NYSP Report*, 47.

done to civil liberties. Although its members claimed to have found “no policy or systematic attempts to stifle free speech,” they recognized that “the system of intelligence-gathering that existed could have caused repression of free speech.”¹⁹³ Even this critique was not as powerful as it could have been because task force members were not able to interview the subjects of surveillance.

In hindsight, the State Assembly’s task force would have done well to talk with someone like Jonathan Garlock whose political organizing activities resulted in years of State Police surveillance. Between 1966 and the early 1970s, the NYSP’s countersubversive unit focused special attention on Garlock, who moved to the Hudson Valley in 1965 from Berkeley, California. While receiving a graduate degree in English from the University of California’s flagship, he helped organize a graduate students’ union and was arrested during the Free Speech Movement’s sit-ins on campus. During a brief stint as an instructor at SUNY-New Paltz, his radical credentials endeared him to the campus left, helping him become one of the area’s most prominent activists, “a constant agitator at New Paltz” (in the words of one Special Services report) and the focus of numerous investigative reports by Special Services.¹⁹⁴

In an oral history interview, Garlock remarked on the general climate of repression during the Vietnam era. “Back in those days, anyone on the left assumed that their phones were being tapped,” he said. While there is no evidence the BCI tapped Garlock’s phone, they did employ intrusive methods to gather intelligence. Starting in October 1968, the BCI used an “unofficial” (read: illegal) mail cover at his home for the purposes of “identifying associates.” As a result of the mail cover, which continued through much of the next year, the BCI started intelligence files on anyone receiving and sending mail to Garlock’s address.

¹⁹³ *NYSP Report*, 52.

¹⁹⁴ This and the following two paragraphs draw from Jonathan Garlock, author interview, Mar. 14, 2021.

Working as regional organizer for SDS and other New Left organizations in the Hudson Valley, Garlock spent a lot of time driving from meeting to meeting. Regardless of whether he was navigating busy highways or dusty country roads, he often saw a familiar sight in the rear-view mirror of his green Volkswagen minibus: “You had to drive pretty carefully because you were always being tailed by the State Police or the county sheriff.” On November 8, 1968, the Special Services detail followed Garlock for miles as he picked up area youths *en route* to a regional SDS conference at the University of Rochester. When Special Services lost track of Garlock’s vehicle amidst traffic congestion, investigators drove back to the Village of New Paltz and searched in vain for more than an hour before returning dejected to Troop Headquarters.¹⁹⁵

Garlock was a seasoned activist who years later seemed philosophical about the routine harassment, even taking in stride his 1966 arrest by State Police on a trumped-up hit-and-run charge. But what was the effect of surveillance on students and those newer to political organizing? Without conducting oral history interviews it would be difficult to gauge the extent to which State Police spying chilled free speech on campus. However, one scene from the State Police spy files does suggest that students were unnerved by campus surveillance. In February 1966, when Garlock was still an instructor at New Paltz, he was involved in a free speech fight on campus. A new leftwing student organization, the Student Action Movement, was demanding access to college facilities equal to that enjoyed by other groups. Their struggle was multidimensional—SAM protests sometimes morphed into antiwar rallies and vice versa—and at a particularly large demonstration, on February 22, 1966, the BCI dispatched no fewer than three

¹⁹⁵ Case 238-756-1, Dec. 18, 1968, Box 86, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

undercover informants along with at least seven plainclothes BCI agents, including a pair of Special Services photographers.¹⁹⁶

The overt surveillance of that rally was clearly still on students' minds the next month, when a SAM meeting in the Student Union provided an opportunity for the group's chairman to calm frayed nerves. According to a BCI informant who was there to take notes for Special Services, the SAM leader told students "not to be concerned about being photographed" because their pictures were likely already in the files of the FBI. According to this student protest leader, there were "innumerable FBI agents on the campus." Not only did Hoover's agency have people in the SUNY-New Paltz administration working as paid informants, the SAM chairman said, but he even knew their names. Finally, the chairman claimed that the FBI knew that SAM was "peace-loving and anti-war" and was simply "trying to harass the members." As this example shows, students were concerned enough about spying on campus that the leader of their organization took the time to address the topic in a speech. However, it is noteworthy that these students assumed that any plainclothes officers on campus with cameras had to be from the FBI. It was simply unthinkable to them that the State Police had the resources and manpower to carry out a spying operation of this magnitude.

Like those students at SUNY-New Paltz, historians often assume that spying and other forms of repression in the Vietnam era were strictly the province of the FBI. By offering the first-ever examination of the extent of state police spying on the antiwar movement, this thesis has proposed to include stories and experiences too long absent from the record of political repression in the postwar United States. During the Vietnam War, the NYSP went outside its

¹⁹⁶ This and the following paragraph draw from Case 238-926-1, Mar. 13, 1966, Box 89, New York State Non-Criminal Investigation Files.

traditional law enforcement role to target individuals and organizations solely on the basis of political beliefs and activities. During the years when Governor Rockefeller was in office, the State Police doubled in size and increased the scope of its political intelligence gathering operations to include the student peace movement. Although composed mostly of nonviolent protesters, campus peace activists in the state were photographed and surveilled, their identities and affiliations shared widely with other law enforcement agencies—all because of baseless claims that equated antiwar activity with Communist subversion.

Another contribution that this thesis makes is to demonstrate that antiwar organizing emerged at working-class colleges much earlier and lasted longer than historians had previously assumed. Scholars have long believed that 1969 marked the year when the antiwar movement expanded onto less-selective, working-class campuses. But anti-recruiting and antidraft protests roiled schools like Dutchess Community College as early as fall 1967; the following spring, several two-year schools in the state participated in the SMC's International Student Strike. And contrary to the claims of some historians that there were no major antiwar demonstrations in the U.S. after 1971, some of the most militant protests at SUNY-New Paltz did not occur until May 1972.¹⁹⁷

Finally, this study has provided the first-ever account of the anti-Vietnam War movement at community colleges. In New York State, community college students' protests were often spontaneous affairs emanating from groups that often had no known organizational affiliation. These ad hoc committees organized protests or teach-ins and melted away after a while, finding it difficult to sustain any enduring presence among a largely transient, working-class student body. At times, the ideology and appeal of national student organizations like SDS did find

¹⁹⁷ See, e.g., the discussion of post-1971 protest in Nelson Lichtenstein et al., *Who Built America? Working People and the Nation's Economy, Politics, Culture and Society*, vol. 2 (New York: Worth, 2000), 654.

fertile ground at two-year campuses. However, as the example of OCCC shows, scrutiny from student government, local media outlets, and the NYSP Special Services branch limited what student protesters could achieve. Community colleges' strength—their roots in a local, often rural or suburban community—was also their weakness as it created more opportunities for agents of repression to stifle New Left activities. Moreover, as seen in the case of UCCC during the May 1970 student strike, the unique funding arrangement of SUNY's community colleges allowed county legislators to apply pressure on college administrators.

Future research could benefit by incorporating oral histories into this narrative to add texture to what historians know about the impact of political repression on individuals' lives. The most obvious methodological problem of the present study is the extreme subjectivity of police surveillance reports. However, whether they treat the act of surveillance itself as a topic or simply utilize these reports to compensate for a dearth of other documentation, historians have consistently recognized the importance of such materials to the study of radical movements.

The full astonishing extent of the NYSP's spying operation suggests that historians ought to pay closer attention to the kinds of political intelligence gathered during the 1960s and 1970s by local, county and state law enforcement agencies. The historical narrative's persistent focus on the FBI offers a comforting illusion that repression of the New Left was strictly a federal affair or the product of J. Edgar Hoover's obsessive anti-Communist crusade. As this thesis has suggested, historical studies of political repression might find in state and local law enforcement a more fruitful unit of analysis. The overarching aim of this thesis has been to encourage the use of police spy files in future studies of social movements in postwar United States. Not to do so would be to exclude an entire dimension of state power from the historical narrative.

APPENDIX
AGENCIES EXCHANGING POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE WITH
NYSP BUREAU OF CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION, SPECIAL SERVICES

California

Los Angeles Police Dept.

Connecticut

Connecticut State Police

District of Columbia

Metropolitan Police Dept.

Florida

Metro Dade County Police Dept.

Maryland

Maryland State Police

Michigan

Detroit Police Dept.

Michigan State Police

Ohio

Ohio State Highway Patrol

New Jersey

New Jersey State Police

New York State

Albany Police Dept.

Binghamton Police Dept.

Buffalo Police Dept.

Ellenville Police Dept.

Kingston Police Dept.

Middletown Police Dept.

Nassau County Police Dept.

New York City Police Dept.

Oneonta Police Dept.

Rochester Police Dept.

Rome Police Dept.

Suffolk County Police Dept.

Syracuse Police Dept.

Troy Police Dept.

Utica Police Dept.

Yonkers Police Dept.

Other

Federal Bureau of Investigation

108th Military Intelligence Group, Army Intelligence

U.S. Army Intelligence Unit, Stewart Field, Newburgh, New York

Office of Special Investigations, United States Air Force

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