



"Any Arab or Others of a Suspicious Nature..."

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"ANY ARAB OR OTHERS OF A SUSPICIOUS NATURE . . ."

by Joe Stork and René Theberge

operation boulder: anti-arab racism

Over the past four months the US government has launched a campaign of harassment, intimidation and deportation against Arab-Americans and Arabs living in this country, a campaign which has precedent most recently in the suppression and intimidation of the Japanese-American community on the West Coast at the beginning of World War II. The campaign was initiated in September, ostensibly in response to the Palestinian commando action at the Munich Olympic games which triggered the slaughter of five Palestinian commandos and their nine Israeli hostages by the Israeli and West German governments.

In the two months following September 30th, at least 78 Arabs were deported from the US (according to government-supplied figures). Hundreds, perhaps thousands more have been interrogated, photographed and finger-printed by FBI and Immigration officials. Some have been jailed and forced to pay high bonds for no reason, or for technical visa violations which are normally excused. They have felt the heavy hand of the state for only one reason: they are "ethnic Arabs", and, presently, that's a bad thing to be in this country.

The campaign, code-named Operation Boulder, was initiated by a Presidential directive on September 25, 1972 in the hypocritical

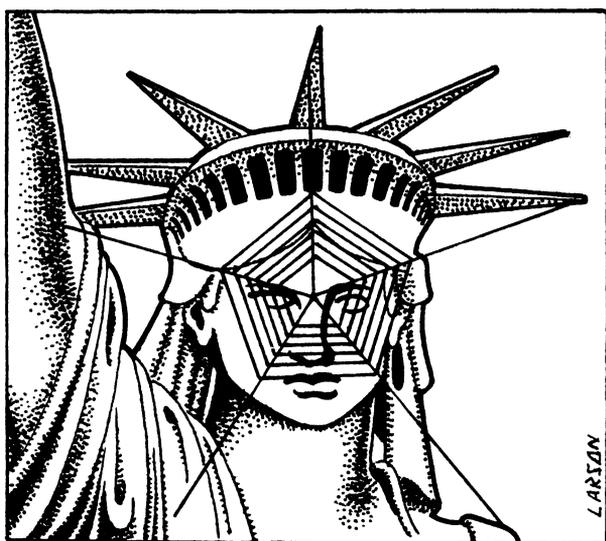
uproar that followed Munich. It is headed by Secretary of State William Rogers, and coordinates State Department, CIA, FBI and Immigration Bureau activities with the purpose of making the US safe from "the Arabs". But the mechanism for Operation Boulder already existed. In a telegram to all Ohio law enforcement agencies on September 8, 1972, two weeks before the public announcement of Operation Boulder on September 27, 1972, Michael Rykba, chief of investigation, US Immigration and Naturalization in Cleveland, could state that he was able to "check records and help establish the identity and immigration status of any Arab or others of a suspicious nature . . .". One result of Operation Boulder has been the institution of special and complicated visa procedures for "ethnic Arabs", including a mandatory five-day waiting period while a visa candidate is checked out through US, Israeli and European intelligence sources.

Other purposes of Operation Boulder are to inhibit all political activity of an anti-Zionist character, to compile a complete intelligence dossier of such activity (especially involving "ethnic Arabs"), and to create a wedge of resentment between the Arab-American community and the political activists of that community, including the creation of a network of informers. A side-

effect that is not undesirable from the official perspective is a reinforcement of the popular equation between Arabs and terrorism which has been so assiduously fostered by the media and especially by Israeli and pro-Israeli propaganda. Consider this quote from the B'nai Brith "Anti-Defamation" League: "Munich and the attack at Lydda airport were neither isolated nor surprising phenomena but rather part of an Arab history and tradition of extremism and violence which has contributed the word assassin to the international lexicon."

FBI and Immigration officials acknowledge that there have been no instances of political violence in this country by Arabs connected to Palestinian organizations. Yet, they defend the campaign as a "precautionary measure". In the words of George Rosenberg, Director of the Los Angeles Office of Immigration and Naturalization Services: "It may be overkill but it is better to do a useless act than to take a chance on one of them killing the President or blowing up a school or something." (Guardian, 1/3/73)

The Los Angeles area, where more than 200 Arabs, mostly students,



have been interrogated, has seen one of the heaviest blitzes. Director Rosenberg asserts that under Operation Boulder he is able to check on the status of "any alien who is ethnically Arab, who was born in an Arab country, and whose parents were born in an Arab country regardless of their present nationality or residence." In other words, even an American citizen, if he or she is an "ethnic Arab", is an "alien".

political beliefs

According to sources in various cities around the country, the "status check" Rosenberg refers to invariably involves a check on political beliefs as well, except where persons have shown up with lawyers. This is what happened to David Aldamani, an Iraqi studying at California State at Long Beach, when two agents came to his house early one morning, identified themselves and walked in without an invitation:

"They walked around the house looking at papers and asking questions," Aldamani said. "They saw some pro-Palestine posters which I have and told me that they would have to take me with them. I asked for permission to call a lawyer but they told me I must wait until I got to the Immigration office in Los Angeles." According to Aldamani he was detained there for over an hour until two FBI agents arrived to question him about whether or not he was a member of Al Fatah or Black September.

Aldamani's case is much more typical than exceptional. In other places Arabs have been jailed and beaten, held incommunicado for days, and railroaded into deportation proceedings, as was one student, Rhandi Shaker El-Nátha. He

was told that his extension to study had been cancelled, his American-born wife's petition for him to become a permanent resident had been denied and that he would have to leave the country immediately if he did not cooperate. El-Natha was kept in solitary confinement for six days and only got to make phone calls when he slipped out a message to friends via a priest. He has since been deported. (Guardian, 1/3/73)

Not only Arab students and professors but shopkeepers, workers, and professionals as well have come under this dragnet. A senior highway design engineer in Kansas City, Jamil Azzah, was harassed several times by the FBI who, on one occasion, demanded his photograph and fingerprints at midnight, and on another claimed evidence that Azzah belonged to a terrorist group. (National Observer, 11/18/72) In Arab neighborhoods in Brooklyn, agents moved from shop to shop demanding to see passports and frequently "inviting" the holder down to headquarters for questioning.

divide and repress

While those Arabs and Arab-Americans who have been politically vocal have come under the heaviest surveillance, this first phase of Operation Boulder was designed as a blitz that would hit all "ethnic Arabs", most of whom have cooperated out of a mixture of intimidation and innocence. They have been largely unaware of their legal rights and eager to prove their innocence by cooperating with the agents. Some signed statements waiving rights to remain silent or consult an attorney.

This phase of Operation Boulder was designed to gather as much information as possible concerning

Arab, and especially Palestinian, political and non-political associations (e.g., Arab American University Graduates, United Holy Land Fund) and to elicit incriminating evidence against several individuals whom the US intelligence network, almost certainly with some help from its Israeli counterpart, had decided were involved with "terrorist" groups.

The second purpose of the Operation is to intimidate Arabs and Arab-Americans from any kind of political or even associational activity that relates to the Palestine/Israel question. Abdeen Jabara, a Detroit lawyer and president of the Arab-American University Graduates, has had his phone tapped and his bank account and public speeches monitored, the latter two having been admitted by the government. Jabara has filed a class action suit on behalf of all Arabs to get an injunction against further government actions of this kind. Undoubtedly the majority of those receiving official visits will have second thoughts before getting their names on any list of members of or contributors to any group which the US may decide to label a "cover" for terrorist organizations.

The most important aspect of this Operation is the clear intention of the US to drive a wedge between the relatively small number of politically active Arabs and Arab-Americans, and the majority of the "ethnic Arab" communities who might be otherwise inclined to support them. This is crucial as the next phase of Operation Boulder comes into play: the selective intimidation and deportation of those Arabs who have been most outspoken, and the creation of a popular distinction between "good Arabs" and "bad Arabs". Reports coming in from around the country indicate that this phase has begun.

Another important aspect of this affair is the assiduous cultivation of anti-Arab racism on the part of Zionist groups, the Israeli government, and the US government. Taking his cue from the "Anti-Defamation" League statement quoted earlier, the Israeli consul in Chicago charged on TV there that all of the city's Arab community were "potential terrorists". The FBI for its part frequently opens its interrogation by telling the detainee that "we know you are a terrorist . . ."

israeli collusion

Israeli collaboration in Operation Boulder is all but bragged about, although the details are hard to come by. For some indication of Israeli participation we can look to a long article in the Washington Post, October 15, 1972, by Raphael Rothstein, an American who is the New York correspondent for the leading Israeli newspaper, Ha'aretz. Rothstein co-authored a book called Fedayeen: Guerrillas Against Israel, which shows evidence of cooperation of Israeli intelligence sources. According to Rothstein, "while the immediate focal point of Israeli surveillance is Europe, the Mosad has the full cooperation of the CIA and FBI. According to the Israelis, the US has shown

great initiative in relaying intelligence and coordinating anti-terrorist techniques." Organized violence associated with the Palestine/Israel conflict in the US has without exception been perpetrated by Zionist groups, notably the Jewish Defense League. Rothstein indicates that such activities will increase, with the covert collaboration of Israeli authorities. "Among Jewish communities in Europe," he writes, "Israel operatives will teach self-defense methods and advise Jews on how to protect themselves from fedayeen threats of violence." He adds: "It is Israel's view that the fedayeen no longer distinguish between Israelis and other Jews as objects of terror," but provides not a shred of evidence for this preposterous assertion.

Citing the bombing of the Palestine Liberation Organization bookstore in Paris by the self-styled "Masada Action and Defense Movement" and the subsequent murder of the PLO representative in Paris as precedent, Rothstein writes of a 70-member Jewish Student Front in New York which is "conducting surveillance and espionage among suspected Fatah sympathizers and pro-fedayeen radical circles," threatening Arab consulates and UN missions, and maintaining a training camp and arsenal. Rothstein says Israel is "determined (CONTINUED ON p. 13)



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to discourage this kind (i.e., vigilante) of activity," while elsewhere suggesting that such groups are in fact covers for Israeli "counter-terror" activities. "Whatever is done, of course, Israel will not take public responsibility."

There are indications that this campaign of harassment and intimidation is not limited to Arabs and Arab-Americans alone. Individuals suspected of "pro-Palestinian" sympathies have been subjected to similar treatment. A case in point is Norton Mezvinsky, a professor of history at a Connecticut college, and an anti-Zionist Jew, who publishes the monthly newsletter KNOW. This newsletter, which consists of translations from the Hebrew press in Israel, often prints material critical of the Israeli government. Mezvinsky has had the FBI at his door asking for his mailing list and harassing him in other ways. (Guardian, 1/3/73) According to Aryen Neier, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union, such behavior by federal officers can create the impression "that public statements of support for the Arabic position in the Arab-Israeli dispute will be reason enough for Federal officers to take an official interest in the spokesmen of those views . . . with the consequent impairment of rights protected - to resident aliens as much as to citizens - by the First Amendment." (National Observer, 11/18/72)

That Operation Boulder has moved beyond its original stated purpose should come as no surprise. The harassment and intimidation of anti-war protestors began with the first demonstration over a decade ago. Similarly, foreign students, particularly those from countries such as Vietnam or Iran (see Current Events), who have criticized either the foreign

policy of the US or conditions in their own countries, have felt the heavy hand of the US government's displeasure. Operation Boulder is different from previous cases only in its degree of coordination between international and domestic agencies of surveillance and in the blatant manner in which it has been carried out.

CURRENT EVENTS

repression in turkey

In recent months repression has intensified sharply in Turkey. On December 12, 1972, 70 persons were given prison sentences ranging from 10 months to 16 years after being convicted of "having founded a secret society with the aim of setting up a far left regime in Turkey."

Later that month, 59 members of the Turkish teachers union (TOS) were sentenced to terms ranging from ten months to over 10 years. They were found guilty of a variety of charges. The most serious charge was that they "transformed the TOS into an illegal left-wing organization whose goal was to turn Turkey into a communist state."

More recently, the January 30, 1973 edition of the New York Times reported that two former deans of law and political science at the University of Ankara are now "shoveling snow and digging ditches at Mamak military prison where they are serving six year sentences." Their crimes consisted of writing a textbook on constitutional law which the government claimed had a "class conflict" ideology, in the case of Mumtaz Soysal; and in the case of Ugar Alakaptan, the crime was leading a funeral march for a leftist law student shot on campus.