

America Radical Underground: The FBI and the Forgotten Age of Revolutionaries

The history of the United States is filled with moments of radicalism and revolt. From the American Revolution itself to the Civil Rights Movement, there have been countless individuals and groups who have fought for change and justice. This article delves into the forgotten age of revolutionaries in America and explores the intricate relationship between the FBI and these radical underground groups.

The Emergence of Radicals

The late 1960s and early 1970s witnessed a surge in radicalism in the United States. Various social, political, and economic factors contributed to this rise, such as the Vietnam War, racial tensions, and the growing inequality. Organizations like the Black Panther Party, Weather Underground, and Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) gained prominence during this period.

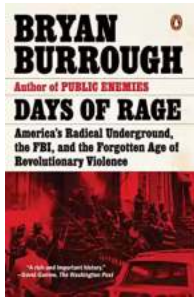
These radicals sought to challenge the existing power structures and bring about revolutionary change. They were deeply critical of the government's policies and believed in taking direct action to advance their causes. They organized protests, engaged in acts of civil disobedience, and some even resorted to violent means.

Days of Rage: America's Radical Underground, the FBI, and the Forgotten Age of Revolutionary Violence

by Bryan Burrough (Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 4.6 out of 5

Language : English



File size	: 15300 KB
Text-to-Speech	: Enabled
Screen Reader	: Supported
Enhanced typesetting	: Enabled
X-Ray	: Enabled
Word Wise	: Enabled
Print length	: 479 pages



The FBI's Counterintelligence Program

In response to the rise of radicals, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) under the leadership of J. Edgar Hoover initiated the COINTELPRO (Counterintelligence Program). The FBI's primary objective was to disrupt and dismantle these radical groups, considering them to be a threat to national security.

Through COINTELPRO, the FBI engaged in covert and often illegal activities to neutralize these organizations. The Bureau infiltrated their ranks, planted informants, and used surveillance techniques that violated civil liberties. While some argue that the FBI's actions were necessary to maintain law and order, others criticize the agency's methods as being excessive and infringing upon people's constitutional rights.

The Clash of Ideologies

The conflict between the radicals and the FBI represented a clash of ideologies. The radicals believed in radical change through direct action, while the FBI saw itself as the guardian of the status quo. This ideological clash resulted in a series of confrontations, some violent and others marked by extensive legal battles in courtrooms across the country.

The radicals accused the FBI of being an oppressive force that aimed to silence dissent and maintain the existing power structures. They argued that their actions were necessary to expose injustices and force the government to address them. On the other hand, the FBI justified its activities by emphasizing the need to preserve law and order, protect American citizens, and prevent potential acts of violence.

The Legacy and Lessons

The era of revolutionary underground movements in America eventually subsided. Many radical leaders were arrested or went into hiding, while others shifted their focus to more peaceful forms of protest or pursued alternative paths of activism. The scars left from this turbulent period of American history still influence perceptions of government surveillance and the balance between national security and civil liberties.

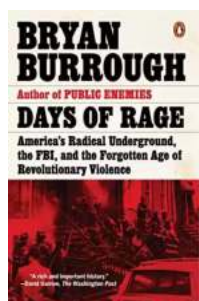
The legacy of this forgotten age of revolutionaries reminds us of the power of dissent and the importance of protecting fundamental rights. It serves as a cautionary tale of the potential dangers of an unchecked government and the need for vigilant oversight. The lessons learned from this era continue to shape how we navigate issues of social justice, equality, and civil liberties in present-day America.

The forgotten age of revolutionaries in America represents a complex chapter in the nation's history. The FBI's struggle against radical underground groups symbolized a clash of ideologies and raised critical questions about the limits of governmental power and individual freedoms.

By examining this forgotten age and understanding the motivations and struggles of both the revolutionaries and the FBI, we can uncover valuable

insights into the ongoing tension between security and liberty. It reminds us to be vigilant in protecting our democratic values while pursuing change and justice.

As we reflect on this period, it is crucial to remember that history has a way of repeating itself. The lessons learned from the era of revolutionaries can guide us as we face new challenges in the pursuit of a more just society.



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From the bestselling author of Public Enemies and The Big Rich, an explosive account of the decade-long battle between the FBI and the homegrown revolutionary movements of the 1970s

The Weathermen. The Symbionese Liberation Army. The FALN. The Black Liberation Army. The names seem quaint now, when not forgotten altogether. But there was a stretch of time in America, during the 1970s, when bombings by domestic underground groups were a daily

occurrence. The FBI combated these groups and others as nodes in a single revolutionary underground, dedicated to the violent overthrow of the American government.

The FBI's response to the leftist revolutionary counterculture has not been treated kindly by history, and in hindsight many of its efforts seem almost comically ineffectual, if not criminal in themselves. But part of the extraordinary accomplishment of Bryan Burrough's *Days of Rage* is to temper those easy judgments with an understanding of just how deranged these times were, how charged with menace. Burrough re-creates an atmosphere that seems almost unbelievable just forty years later, conjuring a time of native-born radicals, most of them "nice middle-class kids," smuggling bombs into skyscrapers and detonating them inside the Pentagon and the U.S. Capitol, at a Boston courthouse and a Wall Street restaurant packed with lunchtime diners—radicals robbing dozens of banks and assassinating policemen in New York, San Francisco, Atlanta. The FBI, encouraged to do everything possible to undermine the radical underground, itself broke many laws in its attempts to bring the revolutionaries to justice—often with disastrous consequences.

Benefiting from the extraordinary number of people from the underground and the FBI who speak about their experiences for the first time, *Days of Rage* is filled with revelations and fresh details about the major revolutionaries and their connections and about the FBI and its desperate efforts to make the bombings stop. The result is a mesmerizing book that takes us into the hearts and minds of homegrown terrorists and federal agents alike and weaves their stories into a spellbinding secret history of the 1970s.



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