

LEVI IS REVIEWING F.B.I. SURVEILLANCE

Panel Is Assigned to Study Domestic Effort and Then to Notify Some Targets

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WASHINGTON, April 7.—Attorney General Edward H. Levi announced today that he had assigned a panel of Justice Department lawyers to review the Federal Bureau of Investigation's domestic counterintelligence program and, under certain circumstances, to notify its victims of actions taken against them.

In a statement given to reporters, Mr. Levi said that such notification would be made only if, in the opinion of the review board, the F.B.I.'s actions were improper and resulted in "actual harm" to an individual and where the individuals were not already aware that they had been targets of such activities.

The counterintelligence records to be examined are those produced by the bureau's 17-year-long Cointelpro effort, which was intended to disrupt, harass and "neutralize" domestic political groups ranging from the Communist Party to the Ku Klux Klan.

One Justice Department official said that the form such notifications would take had not been decided, and that they might range from telephone calls from Justice Department lawyers to letters delivered by F.B.I. agents.

Another Justice Department official, one of the few who reportedly opposed the notification program, said that, apart from his belief that such a method was "unworkable," he was concerned that the F.B.I. would see it as an attempt by the Justice Department to "rub their noses" in the excesses of Cointelpro.

An F.B.I. spokesman said that the bureau would have no comment on Mr. Levi's announcement, but one F.B.I. agent, who asked to remain anonymous, confirmed that "the impact on morale has been very disturbing."

The agent said that the impending notifications were being viewed within the bureau as "apologies" to those whom the F.B.I. had historically opposed. "We always thought that the Communist Party was the enemy," he said, adding, "You just feel that every value you had been led to believe all these years is totally wrong."

12 Separate Programs

The 12 separate Cointelpro programs implemented from 1956 to 1972, when the effort was terminated, resulted in 2,370 actions, many of which ultimately involved more than one individual.

The Justice Department official said, however, that he believed that only a "few hundred people" would eventually qualify for notification under the criteria established by Mr. Levi today.

The Attorney General conceded in his statement that "there might be difficulties in carrying out the program," but he said that care would be taken to preserve the rights to privacy of the individuals involved and that any cases that presented special problems would be given his personal attention.