

FBI Acted to Disrupt Left

Socialists Targets

9/26/77
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The FBI took actions "designed to cause disruption in the peace movement, primarily in the New Mobilization to End the War in Vietnam," according to FBI documents released as the result of a federal court ruling.

The FBI's activities to disrupt the antiwar movement were revealed in documents involving the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). The documents comprise more than 3,000 pages of FBI reports and memoranda—including many to and from the late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover—concerning the Bureau's counter-intelligence program (called Cointelpro) against the Trotskyite party.

The Cointelpro activities against the SWP were initiated in 1961 by a memo from Hoover to the FBI's New York field office as well as to others across the country.

Although the current FBI director, Clarence M. Kelley, asserted last November that all Cointelpro activities were ended in April, 1971, SWP officials charged yesterday that the FBI still is trying to disrupt the party's activities.

An FBI spokesman, however, reiterated Kelley's statement last November that Cointelpro activities ceased in 1971. He declined to respond to allegations by the SWP members of specific instances where the activities have continued. "This is something in litigation," FBI spokesman

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D.C. Police Acts Cited

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A high ranking metropolitan police official urged burning a giant paper-and-wood float of the radical Yippie organization to thwart its demonstration plans against the 1973 inaugural parade of President Nixon, according to a former police intelligence official.

"But I said, 'No way,'" recalled Insp. Albert W. Ferguson, the high ranking official lost.

The Jan. 20, 1973 demonstration went off as scheduled, complete with the Yippies' float depicting a gargantuan rat with the face of Nixon.

Ferguson would not name the official, although he said it was not Jerry V. Wilson, police chief at the time.

Ferguson described this and other police intelligence activities—including the renting of a hippie commune, intercepting plans for antiwar marches, and searching through a local "think-tank's trash—in a series of rambling interviews about his leadership of the D.C. police intelligence division in 1973.

The police department has come under public criticism for collecting thousands of unevaluated files on political activists and organizations during the urban riots and antiwar demonstrations of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

Police Chief Maurice J. Cullinane in a recent report described many operational details of the intelligence division, including the use of CIA radios, cars and driv-

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FBI, From A1

James Murphy said yesterday, "We have no comment." The FBI's March 12 release of documents, following the Jan. 7 order of a federal judge in New York in a lawsuit brought by the SWP against the FBI, reveals a nationwide program to harass, embarrass of the party. Its purpose expose and embarrass members was to cause "widespread disruption within the SWP," according to a 1963 memo from Hoover.

The Socialist Workers Party was established 46 years ago as part of a breach in the Communist movement. Followers of Joseph Stalin and other Soviet party officials remained in the Communist Party, arrayed against the followers of Leon Trotsky, who formed the SWP. Trotsky, living in exile from the Soviet Union in Mexico, was murdered in 1940. The FBI estimates the SWP's membership at 1,250.

Among the activities described in the documents were:

- An attempt to embarrass the SWP by furnishing the arrest and conviction record of the party's New York City mayoral candidate to the New York Daily News, which subsequently used the information in a column.
- An anonymous letter sent in 1963 to a black independent candidate for mayor of San Francisco alerting him to the presence in his campaign of SWP members.
- An anonymous letter sent in 1962 to National Association for the Advancement of Colored People executive secretary Roy Wilkins to try to undermine a civil rights defense committee the FBI believed the NAACP was supporting. An NAACP official said yesterday that the FBI was mistaken in its belief that the NAACP had supported the group, called the Committee to Aid the Monroe Defendants.

The release of documents by the Socialist Workers Party is the latest in a series of revelations about the FBI's counterintelligence activities aimed at the Com-

munist Party, the Socialist Workers Party, black extremist and white "hate" groups.

The documents show that the FBI's activities against the SWP spilled over to the antiwar movement in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The special agent in charge of the FBI's New York field office sought permission in January, 1969, to mail anonymously a newsletter attempting to ridicule David Dellinger, chairman of a committee that sponsored a demonstration against the Vietnam war during the Inaugural in Washington.

In a Jan. 24, 1969, directive from Hoover, permission that "the usual precautions are to be taken to protect the identity of the bureau as the source of these mailings."

In March, 1969, permission was given by Hoover for another anonymous leaflet, designed to "widen the split between the Fifth Avenue Peace Parade Committee and the SDS [Students for a Democratic Society]" concerning a New York march.

In forwarding the proposed leaflet to Hoover for approval, the New York FBI field office explained in a memo that "this leaflet was written in the jargon of the New Left necessitating the use of a certain amount of profanity. It is written from the viewpoint of a disillusioned, SDS member presently attending Columbia University." The leaflet attacked the Socialist Workers Party, the Young Socialist Alliance and other groups.

In February, 1970, permission again was sought and granted for a leaflet depicting a duck captioned "New Mobe" copulating with a duck captioned "S.W.P." and urging recipients to write the New Mobilization Committee to throw the SWP out of its organization. The memo to Hoover from the New York field office noted that the leaflet "has been marked 'obscene' because of its contents."

At a press conference yesterday, two members of the SWP—Syd Stapleton and Catherine Perkus—charged that on several occasions since 1971 the FBI has informed employers that they had an SWP member work-

ing for them or have told parents of SWP members of their participation in the party.

Similar actions of the FBI were described in an official Justice Department report of Cointelpro activities released last November.

Police Official Cites Tactics On Activists

ers, and ordered guidelines tightened in the division.

Ferguson described these other activities:

- Police rented a hippie commune apartment through a paid informant for \$200 a month. Antiwar activists often met there to discuss demonstration plans, which were then passed on to police by the informant.

- Two or three informants penetrated to the "planning levels" of major antiwar organizations and relayed precise plans for marches and rallies to police.

- Undercover police regularly inspected the trash of the Institute for Policy Studies, an independent public policy research center that police say drew radical activists during the antiwar movement. The trash was obtained through an arrangement with the "trash company" responsible for the institute's building, Ferguson said. Nothing of significance was discovered, he said.

- The department sent undercover police officers to observe demonstrations at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968 and at Republican and Democratic conventions at Miami Beach in 1972.

- D.C. police alerted New Jersey authorities just prior to the 1973 Nixon inaugural parade to stop a Washington-bound truck loaded with two cases of oven spray and a quantity of piano wire to be used presumably to disable foot police and interfere with scooter officers during demonstrations.

- In the Yippie rat float incident, Ferguson said the demonstrators had parked the 25-foot-long apparatus next to a house on Capitol Hill the night before the demonstration.

- One high official wanted to go down there that night and burn it," Ferguson re-



ALBERT W. FERGUSON
... opposed burn-out

called, but Ferguson counseled against it.

Besides the questionable legality of the act, he said, the fire might have spread to the adjacent house. Also, he said, he was concerned that destruction of the float might trigger violent reac-

tion by the Yippie demonstrators.

Throughout the interviews, Ferguson stressed the intelligence division's preoccupation with second-guessing the moves and attitudes of antiwar leaders.

"There was constant fighting among the leaders . . . you know, the hot heads and the moderates," he said. "We were interested in who won out. . . . We were behind the moderates because they were easier to control."

The dependability of informants — he called them "snitches" — varied widely. Some produced solid, precise data on demonstration plans and logistics so that police could plan their own manpower deployment accordingly, he said. Other informants produced "garbage" — wrong information inated in press releases and

other public documents.

He spoke of two former public informants who have been identified in previous news accounts: Ann Kolego and Earl Robert Merritt.

"Annie really had a good disposition" for undercover work and had been at it "since she was 16 or 17," Ferguson said. She was known in the street as "Crazy Annie." Explained Ferguson: "Her cover was to act a little goofy."

Merritt, on the other hand, "was bringing garbage in," Ferguson said. Merritt was assigned to infiltrate the Institute for Policy Studies "but was bringing back pamphlets, handouts . . . nickel-and-dime stuff."

Ferguson said some snitches were "real sophisticated . . . working for two or three different (law enforcement) agencies. If they played it right, he said, they could clear "a couple of hundred dollars a week tax free from each agency."

Informants went to the Republican and Democratic national conventions in Miami Beach in 1972, he said, as part of their cover, since they were associated with specific antiwar groups and were expected to go. Informants went to Chicago in 1968, he said, primarily to observe crowd-police actions.

In the long run, Ferguson said, D.C. police intelligence activities have been justified, even though much useless and unnecessary information was collected.

While the bulk of the antiwar movement consisted of peaceful people with good intentions, he said, "I think some of the leadership was definitely communist, and they were playing on the issue of an un-popular war."

Violent elements among such organizations as Students for a Democratic Society (SDA) and the Weather Underground came to the demonstrations, he said, taking advantage of peaceful protesters, hoping to trigger violence by provoking the police and thus discrediting the establishment.

"They were trying to penetrate the legitimate peace groups," he said, thus making surveillance of the antiwar movement as a whole necessary.