

Quaker Report Criticizes Police Intelligence Net

Part 4/17/79
Associated Press

The American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker group, charged yesterday that local police departments conduct political surveillance on a vast scale, stifling lawful protest and posing "a grave threat to constitutional rights."

The committee said much of the political information and "misinformation" gathered is shared by 250 state and local law enforcement agencies belonging to a private organization "whose members happen to be intelligence officers in state and local law enforcement agencies."

The organization received federal funds from sometime during the Nixon administration until June 1978, the committee said in a 153-page report.

The report said surveillance targets included Asians and blacks planning to protest demolition of Seattle's Chinatown, anti-nuclear witnesses at a Los Angeles city council meeting and the president of the Philadelphia city council.

The report, entitled "The Police Threat to Political Liberty," has separate sections on police surveillance in Seattle, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Baltimore and Jackson, Miss.

But Louis W. Schneider, executive secretary of the Philadelphia-based committee, told a news conference that "we believe what we found in a few cities is happening in many cities."

Said the report: "Our work has confirmed that to a disturbing extent there has developed within our democracy a 'secret police' often used for political surveillance and lacking accountability to the public."

Information gathered by separate police agencies is spread nationally, said the report, adding, "This widespread police intelligence network has federal, state, local, quasi-public and private components which are interconnected and functioning today."

The committee describes itself as an independent Quaker organization chartered to carry out religious, charitable, social, philanthropic and relief activities.

The Quaker group said local police

intelligence agencies share information through their membership in the Law Enforcement Intelligence Unit, a private organization which says its purpose is to gather confidential information on organized crime that is not available through regular police channels.

The report says that "the single most important function of the organization is to provide a clearinghouse for intelligence information." The unit, which does not employ its own investigators, does have a computer for storing information, the report said.

Despite the unit's claim that it is private, the Quaker group said, the organization's computer record-keeping operation began receiving federal funds during the Nixon administration.

Federal funds were terminated in June 1978, the report said, and the system is now financed by a combination of California state funds and local government money.

Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo, a former city police commissioner, "set up a specially constituted, 33-member police unit to spy on two of his political opponents, Democratic city committee chairman Peter J. Camiel and George X. Schwartz, city council president," the report said.

Chicago's late Mayor Richard Daley used a police "red squad" to spy on his opponents, "particularly those who criticized the Chicago police department," the report said.

In Baltimore, Rep. Parren Mitchell (D-Md.) and state Sen. Clarence Mitchell III had their political campaigns watched and at times infiltrated by the Baltimore inspectional services division, the study said.

Quaker group charges local police agencies stifle lawful protest

EPusk
4/17/79

WASHINGTON (AP) — The American Friends Service Committee, a Quaker group, charged Monday that local police departments conduct political surveillance on a vast scale, a practice that stifles lawful protest and "poses a grave threat to constitutional rights."

The committee said much of the political information and "misinformation" gathered is shared by 250 state and local law enforcement agencies belonging to a private organization "whose members happen to be intelligence officers in state and local law enforcement agencies."

The organization received federal funds from sometime during the Nixon administration until June 1978, the committee said in a 153-page report.

The report said surveillance targets included Asians and blacks planning to protest demolition of Seattle's Chinatown, anti-nuclear witnesses at a Los Angeles city council meeting and the president of the Philadelphia city council.

The report, entitled "The Police Threat to Political Liberty," has separate sections on police surveillance in Seattle, Philadelphia, Los Angeles, Baltimore and Jackson, Miss.

But Louis W. Schneider, executive secretary of the Philadelphia-based committee, told a news conference that "we believe what we found in a few cities is happening in many cities."

Said the report: "Our work has confirmed that to a disturbing extent there has developed within our democracy a 'secret police' often used for political surveillance and lacking accountability to the public."

Information gathered by separate police agencies is spread nationally, said the report, adding, "This widespread police intelligence network has federal, state, local, quasi-public and private components which are interconnected and functioning today."

The committee describes itself as an independent Quaker organization chartered to carry out religious, charitable, social, philanthropic and relief activities.

The Quaker group said local police intelligence agencies share information through their membership in the Law Enforcement Intelligence Unit, a private organization which says its purpose is to gather confidential information on organized crime that is not available through regular police

channels.

The report says that "the single most important function of the organization is to provide a clearinghouse for intelligence information." The unit, which does not employ its own investigators, does have a computer for storing information, the report said.

Despite the unit's claim that it is private, the Quaker group said, the organization's computer record-keeping operation began receiving federal funds during the Nixon administration.

Federal funds were terminated in June 1978, the report said, and the system is now financed by a combination of California state funds and local government money.

The Los Angeles city council incident occurred Feb. 28, 1978, when a police videotape crew and a still photographer were spotted in the press gallery during a public hearing on nuclear power plant construction.

The council president said he was told

the crew said the police asked permission for the crew to make a training film. But police officials later admitted they were told a violent disruption was planned and wanted the crew to aid in any possible prosecutions.

The Seattle police intelligence unit, the report said, kept notes of a 1976 meeting of a small group of Asians and blacks.

"A ring of illegal gamblers? Narcotics pushers? No, they were planning a demonstration ... due to their fear that Chinatown would be torn down and replaced with parking lots," the Quaker group said.

Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo, a former city police commissioner, "set up a specially constituted, 33-member police unit to spy on two of his political opponents, Democratic city committee chairman Peter J. Camiel and George X. Schwartz, city council president," the report said.

Chicago's late Mayor Richard Daley used a police "red squad" to spy on his opponents, "particularly those who criticized the Chicago police department," the report said.

In Baltimore, Rep. Parren Mitchell, D-Md., and state Sen. Clarence Mitchell III had their political campaigns watched and at times infiltrated by the Baltimore inspectional services division, the study said.

In Jackson, Miss., the study said, police infiltrated black civil rights groups. The report also cited an ABC broadcast in September 1978 in which the Ku Klux Klan disclosed it had penetrated police departments in north Mississippi.