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With LES WHITTEN

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WASHINGTON — Associates of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. have asked us to investigate the FBI's smear charges against him and to publish our honest findings. His widow, they say, hopes we will clear his name.

We have found that the FBI sometime after 1964 began leaking stories about Dr. King's alleged sexual exploits and supposed Communist ties. The leaks were ordered personally by the late J. Edgar Hoover who had developed a fierce hatred for the black leader.

Hoover began the smear campaign after learning in advance that Dr. King would get the 1964 Nobel peace prize. The selection was reported to the late FBI chief in a secret memo from his intelligence network. He was so infuriated that he scrawled words of outrage on the memo in blue pencil, we were told.

Not long afterwards, Hoover was visited by Atlanta's police chief, Herbert Jenkins, who was then president of the International Association of Chiefs of Police.

Suddenly, out of context, Hoover blurted that he had three enemies whom he hated more than anyone else in the world. He identified them as his former deputy Quinn Tamm, ex-Atty. Gen. Robert Kennedy and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

The dumbfounded Jenkins later encountered his friend, Dr. Martin Luther King Sr., on the streets of Atlanta. Jenkins took the occasion to warn the old man pointedly that "Junior better be on the alert. It may be that the FBI is looking into him and they look pretty thoroughly."

Indeed, the FBI kept the civil rights crusader under surveillance and even bugged his hotel suites. Then the FBI used the information to start a whispering campaign against him. At the urging of his associates, we have now checked into the stories that the FBI spread about him. Here are our findings:

Did Dr. King have secret Communist connections? He was in touch with a known Communist attorney in New York City, who tried to influence his civil rights campaign. However, Dr. King never let the Communists take over his movement and remained a staunch anti-Communist.

He eventually accepted some of the attorney's anti-Vietnam War views. But those who knew Dr. King agree he was motivated by humanity, not ideology.

Did the FBI tape a sex orgy, involving Dr. King, at Washington's old Willard Hotel? Witnesses who were with him at the Willard recall that he used some

ribald language but indulged in no sexual acts.

There was evidence on the tape, according to those who heard it, that sexual intercourse occurred. But Dr. King was not one of the lovers. The man's voice was identified as that of an acquaintance.

Did Dr. King, while in Norway to accept the Nobel peace prize, chase a woman through an Oslo hotel? Rumors of the hot pursuit were whispered around Washington by the FBI.

Witnesses recall that some supporters of Dr. King let their jubilation get out of hand, brought prostitutes into the hotel and raised a ruckus. The witnesses remember clearly that King was not among them but, on the contrary, tried to quiet the celebration.

Did Dr. King carry on a romance with the wife of a Los Angeles dentist? To check out this FBI report, we spoke directly with both the dentist and his wife. Both agreed that she was Dr.

King's close friend but not his lover.

Thus, the FBI's attempt to besmirch the great civil rights leader, as Dr. King himself predicted before his martyrdom, has backfired against the FBI.

Footnote: Neither Dr. Martin Luther King Sr. nor Herbert Jenkins would comment about the incidents involving them. But our sources had direct knowledge of the incidents.

They also told about another warning which Jenkins gave to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. before a dangerous visit to Alabama. "Don't go to Alabama or they'll kill you," urged the Atlanta police chief.

The black leader replied quietly: "If that's the Lord's will." On April 4, 1968, still guided by the Lord's will, he was assassinated in Memphis, Tenn.

INTERPOL INVESTIGATION: A confidential Senate memo raises questions about the use of FBI data, which is distributed to dictatorships through Interpol, the international police agency.

The staff memo, addressed to Sen.

Joseph Montoya, D.-NM., notes that nations of all political persuasions have access to FBI data through a computer at the Treasury Dept.

"Should the U.S. underwrite a burgeoning international data bank it cannot fully monitor?" asks the memo. "The possibility of laundering a request by an Iron Curtain country for information on an American citizen," should be explored, the memo urges.

It points out that little is known of the Interpol headquarters operation in Paris. "Some clarification of Interpol and its activities cannot but be helpful in understanding to what extent ours has become a 'dossier society,'" the memo declares.

Sen. Montoya has agreed to hold hearings next month to find out more about Interpol.

Footnote: Spokesmen insisted that American government employes keep careful tabs on everything released from U.S. files to Interpol. Only information on criminals and criminal acts are provided, the spokesmen contended.