Rec'd [illegible]

[illegible]

By Vin McLellan

A month ago, the *Phoenix* reported on the court-ordered release of secret information on the FBI's seven top-secret counterintelligence programs. The Bureau counterintelligence programs were not spy operations, they were programs under which the FBI targeted groups, organizations and individuals for harassment and infiltration "to disrupt and otherwise neutralize" their activities.

A freedom of information suit got a court order forcing the FBI to release documents on the purpose, scope and nature of the counterintelligence program against the New Left. Because the document that terminated the Cointelpro-New Left also terminated the other six programs, the Bureau was forced to make at least the names of all six public last month.

The seven Cointelpros were: Cointelpro-Espionage; Cointelpro-New Left; Cointelpro-Disruption of White Hate Groups; Cointelpro-Communist Party, USA; Counterintelligence and Special Operations; Cointelpro- Black Extremists; and Socialist Workers Party- Disruption Program. The Bureau released two directives from late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, one which set up the program against the New Left in May of 1968 and the other which discontinued all six programs on April 28, 1971.

In a shrewd press relations move, the FBI delayed releasing the documents two months and then made them public on the same day Vice President Ford took his oath of office, judging correctly they would get scant attention with the flood of newsprint about Ford.

Two weeks ago, two more documents on the Cointel programs were quietly released in Washington under the same court order by the U.S. Attorney's office. There was no press release and the documents received virtually no media

[illegible]

circulation, although they go further than any other internal FBI memoranda previously released, stolen or leaked in documenting the parochial, capricious, and vindictive approach the Hoover FBI took toward the protest movements of the late sixties.

[illegible] then assistant director in charge of the Bureau's Domestic Intelligence Division, setting forth justifications for the two Hoover directives previously released. They were written "for the record." [illegible] the day before the respective Hoover orders, and offer an unusual opportunity to see the bureaucratic FBI mind looking at soaring [illegible] and the anti-war movements.

"Our Nation is undergoing an era of disruption and violence caused to a large extent by various individuals generally connected with the New Left," wrote [illegible] "[illegible] of these activists [illegible] in America [illegible] defeat of the [illegible]. They [illegible] allege [illegible] do not [illegible] unlawful acts to [illegible] so-called causes.

"The New Left has on many occasions viciously and scurrilously attacked the Director and the Bureau in an attempt to hamper our investigation of it and drive us off college campuses.

"With this in mind, it is (the Domestic Intelligence Division's) recommendation that a new Counterintelligence Program be designed to neutralize the New Left and the Key Activists. The Key Activists are those individuals who are the moving forces behind the New Left and on whom we have intensified our investigation."

The next day, Hoover issued the order setting up Cointelpro - New Left. The purpose of the program, Hoover wired his agents, "is to expose, and otherwise neutralize the activities of the various New Left organizations, their leadership and adherents."

New Left groups were to be followed on "a continuous basis," he ordered, agents were to take advantage of all opportunities for disruption and disruption within the young leftist groups and [illegible] information about groups and their leaders would be leaked to the news media both locally and nationally through "reliable news sources."

"We must frustrate every effort of these groups and no opportunity should be missed to capitalize upon the

[illegible]

the [illegible] was willing to afford to [illegible].

The Brennan policy [illegible] this was clear from the Hoover directive ordering up the New Left program [illegible] what the [illegible] a [illegible] than the [illegible] of criminal acts. [illegible] Hoover told his agents to get [illegible] young people "[illegible]" challenging the [illegible] that it was the [illegible] he considered criminal.

It's clear from Brennan's definition of the New Left "key activist" that the Bureau was still tied up in the old "outside agitator" perspective on social [illegible] his [illegible] by [illegible] famous list of White [illegible] for was such a collection of vestiges "straights," with very a long hair [illegible]. The White House knew it could trust Hoover's view of the "criminal" to bring the FBI down on those who challenged the government in organized [illegible]. (The FBI, [illegible] to [illegible] interviews [illegible] on these [illegible] "[illegible] activists," [illegible] refused [illegible] after the President's [illegible] "criminal.")

The [illegible] provocation [illegible] other Cointel programs [illegible] for how long they had been in operation. Interviews with several former agents, however, date the counterintelligence program against "black extremists" within a month of the New Left program, in April or May of 1968. The programs against espionage and the American Communist Party probably go back decades. The program against the white hate groups, principally the American Nazi Party and the Klu Klux Klan, [illegible] begun in the [illegible]. And the Cointel against the Socialist Workers Party, the largest Trotskyite socialist group in the U.S., was begun in 1961, according to papers the Justice Department filed in a New York court one last week.

FBI Director Hoover cancelled all seven Cointel programs about a week after a group that called itself the Citizen's Commission to Investigate the FBI began circulating to newsmen packets of secret FBI memos and files stolen from the Media, Pa., office of the FBI in March of 1971. What was reported as an informed interruption last week — that Hoover cancelled the Cointelpros in his frantic and worried fury after the "Media Papers" began to circulate — is lent more weight by the wording of the Brennan policy memo on the termination order.

"To afford additional security to our sensitive techniques and operations, it is recommended the Cointelpros operated by the Domestic Intelligence Division be discontinued," wrote Brennan. The emphasis on threatened "security" and the uncommonly defensive phrasing suggest that the Bureau wanted to be able to lean heavily upon this memo if the Media revelations spilled over into the Cointel programs. (Indeed, a notation on one of the Media papers that there was a FBI program called Cointelpro-New Left was the basis for Stern's original suit for access.)

The termination of the formal Cointel programs on April 28, 1971 probably did not mean the end of similar neutralize-and-destroy FBI operations. By withdrawing official approval, Hoover, the ultimate bureaucrat, covered his own ass but to withdraw approval is something quite different from forbidding. And as I reported last month, academics who have done extensive work for the Bureau, have told me that the level of activities [illegible] in the summer of 1971, after the Cointelpros were ended, [illegible] were still trying to deepen the split between the Cleaver and Newton factions and shatter the Black Panther Party. (They were apparently successful; as they were with the New Left, the CP, etc.)

The *Phoenix* was able to interview former FBI agent Robert Walk. Walk, who now lives in Canada, was in the FBI for five years, and from late 1968 to 1970 was assigned to the Washington Field Office working on the Left and Black militants. In my last article, I described one Cointel project Walk had written about elsewhere, in which he had a forged letter sent to the Midland Publication Committee in 1969 demanding $20,000 "security bond" for the Mobe's upcoming demonstration in the name of the D.C. Black United Front.

"There were constantly calls for suggestions on how we could screw the Black Panther Party," said Walk. "There was kind of a special target, it almost had its own aggressive counter intelligence program, beginning from somewhere in May of 1968 right through when I left in 1970."

In 1969, Stokely Carmichael was organizing in Washington and, in an effort to limit his mobility, Walk's squad came up with a Cointelpro suggestion that someone should contact him with a false death threat, or information about a plot in his life. "It was approved but we didn't get it back to execute," said Walk. "I found later that they had a black clerk in the New York FBI office phone him with the warning."

A suit by the Socialist Workers Party charging the government with infringing on its members civil liberties, will probably be the next major source of information on the FBI's counterintelligence tactics.