

FBI Bares Cointelpro Highlights

By Orr Kelly

Washington Star Staff Writer

The FBI took credit in 1970 for causing the expulsion of a leader of a domestic Nazi party by leaking the fact that the man was of Jewish ancestry.

Bureau officials said yesterday that they could not say, without further study, whether there was any relationship between the incident mentioned in a 1970 memo and two similar cases in 1965 — one of which resulted in the suicide of a former Washington man.

The 1970 memo was contained in a batch of documents made public yesterday by the FBI in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act. The papers covered a campaign to disrupt the activities of the Ku Klux Klan, the American Nazi Party and other white hate groups between 1964 and 1971.

AMONG HIGHLIGHTS achieved through the so-called Cointelpro (for Counterintelligence Program) operations, according to the memo, was the following notation: "Midwest coordinator of the National Socialist White People's Party, formerly known as the American Nazi Party, was expelled from that organization after publicity disclosed he was of Jewish descent."

"The above information was furnished under this program," the memo said.

Files in the library of the Washington Star told of two similar incidents in 1965.

On Oct. 31 of that year, the New York Times carried a front page news story by McCandlish Phillips reporting that Daniel Burros, an organizer for the KKK in New York and a former official of the American Nazi Party, was of Jewish ancestry and had been confirmed in the Jewish faith at a bar mitzvah at the age of 13.

When Burros was confronted with that information, he threatened to

kill the reporter if the information were published. When the story appeared in the paper, Burros shot and killed himself.

PHILLIPS IS no longer associated with the Times and could not be reached for comment on the reference in the FBI documents to its apparent practice of furnishing information revealing the Jewish background of members of white hate groups.

The original news story said Burros' life "was minutely traced through many sources" after "a Jewish agency" revealed that he was born of Jewish parents.

Two days after Daniel Burros killed himself, the Middletown (N.Y.) Times Herald Record ran a news story which said that Robert J. Burros, national secretary of the National Renaissance Party, a neo-Nazi, anti-Semitic group, had concealed the fact that his father was Jewish.

Robert Burros, who said he was not related to Daniel, even though they knew each other and worked together in right wing activities, was expelled from his post in the party after the news story appeared.

The FBI documents describe a campaign carried out, under extreme secrecy and with top-level control from Washington, to disrupt the Klans and other white hate groups. The tactics ranged from spreading embarrassing information about group members to producing a joke book and mailing out crudely-drawn cartoons designed to make Klan members suspicious of each other.

THE HIGHLY successful attempt to disrupt the violent activities of the Klan began in the fall of 1964 shortly after several murders — including two cases in which persons were shot and killed while driving through the south — had shocked the nation.

A year later, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover boasted in letters to then-Atty. Gen. Nicholas deB. Katzenbach and then-presidential assistant Marvin Watson of the bureau's success in infiltrating all 14 Klan organizations.

Katzenbach replied with a warmly favorable letter in which he said he hoped the bureau's work might someday be made public.

The documents released yesterday are only one section of the files on the Cointelpro operations that FBI Director Clarence M. Kelley agreed last Dec. 6 to make available under the Freedom of Information Act. The success in dealing with the Klans is frequently cited by FBI officials as a justification for the program.

However, former Atty. Gen. William B. Saxbe described some of the tactics used by the FBI in the effort to disrupt the Klans and other groups as "abhorrent in a free society" and Atty. Gen. Edward H. Levi has described some of the programs as "foolish and outrageous."

But Levi also said in a speech on Wednesday that he is considering new guidelines that would permit the bureau to carry out certain carefully controlled preventive actions to head off potential violence in cases where an arrest was not possible.

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