

F.B.I. TRIED TO BAR SPY BOOK FROM TV

Memo Says Bureau Tried to Keep Authors of Rosenberg Story Off the Air

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WASHINGTON, June 1—The Federal Bureau of Investigation took steps in the mid-1960's to prevent the authors of a book about Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, the convicted atomic spies, from discussing their work on television interview programs, according to newly released bureau documents.

In a memorandum written on Oct. 16, 1965, William C. Sullivan, then an assistant F.B.I. director, reported to his superiors that Walter and Mariam Schneir, the authors, had approached "a leading television man in Chicago" with a request to discuss on his program their book, "Invitation to an Inquest."

Mr. Sullivan said he believed that the Schneirs intended not only to "exonerate the Rosenbergs," who were executed in June 1953 while continuing to maintain their innocence, but also "to attack and undermine the F.B.I. in its investigations."

Sullivan's 'Instruction'

"In view of this," Mr. Sullivan wrote, he had told an intermediary, a Chicago lawyer, "to instruct" the unnamed television personality "not to permit the Schneirs to go on his television program for no good would come from it."

Mr. Sullivan, now retired, recommended that the bureau "take careful steps to secure the cooperation of friendly television stations and prevent this subversive effort from being successful. It should be kept off television programs and smothered and forced out of the public eye," he said in the memorandum.

Mr. Schneir said in a telephone interview that he recalled having been rebuffed in an attempt to appear on a television program in Chicago conducted by Irv Kupcinet, a columnist for the Chicago Sun-times, but he could not say

whether that was the program to which Mr. Sullivan referred.

Mr. Kupcinet, reached at his Chicago office, said that the Schneirs had asked for an appearance, but that he had decided that "there was no way we could use them," and that he had never sought guidance on the matter from the F.B.I.

Request by Sons

The Sullivan memorandum and other documents were released by the bureau in response to a request under the Freedom of Information Act by Michael and Robert Meeropol, the Rosenbergs' sons.

Some details were made public recently by the Senate Intelligence Committee relating to the bureau's use of informants and "contacts" in media and elsewhere in its attempts to manipulate public opinion, but this is the first documented example of the bureau's response to a particular publication.

Mr. Sullivan also suggested that the bureau take steps to refute and expose the Schneir's book thereby "putting the authors in proper perspective."

Another F.B.I. document that accompanied the Sullivan memorandum noted that "steps have already been taken in view in New York and various 'contacts' of ours to refute the book written by the Schneirs."

That document reported that Irving R. Kaufman, the judge in the Rosenberg case and now Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, which includes parts of New York, "has been furnished certain public source information" by the bureau.

Judge Kaufman, the report said, "is having a lengthy letter written to the editor of The New York Times" regarding the Rosenberg case, and it noted that another "syndicated columnist," whose name was not given, "is also doing this."

"A number of Catholic publications will also assist in this matter," the report said.

Also, a letter was sent to all bureau field offices in November 1965 advising agents that "attempts will be made to get the Schneirs on television programs throughout the country."

All offices should be alert to any indication of such action and immediately notify the bureau in the event information is received indicating such an attempt on the part of the authors," it said.

Mr. Schneir was quoted in a Nov. 11, 1965 article in Variety, the show business trade publication, as saying that the F.B.I. had been responsible for the cancellation of two scheduled broadcast interviews in Cleveland the previous week.