

U.S.-Funded Police Unit Spied

By Bill Richards

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A national police intelligence network, which received federal funds, kept intelligence files on political activists and others, and included officials of at least two California utilities in its meetings, according to records kept by the group and the FBI.

The files were kept on suspected political activists by the Law Enforcement Intelligence Unit, a national police information network set up in 1956 to aid local and state police departments in keeping tabs on organized crime. The group numbers about 250 police departments across the country today and generally keeps a low public profile.

In the past, LEIU officials have testified before a congressional investigating committee that their organization keeps intelligence files only on organized crime figures. Officials said the group's bylaws restrict membership to police intelligence organiza-

tions and that the files are tightly controlled to prevent information from leaking outside its membership.

Civil rights activists and others have challenged the LEIU recently, claiming the organization spied on political activists and maintained intelligence files on persons not directly involved in organized crime activities—including opponents of nuclear power.

FBI documents obtained by a Chicago-based coalition of civil rights groups and others show that special agents of the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Co. attended an LEIU meeting as a member in 1960 in San Francisco and that PT&T agents and representatives of the Pacific Gas and Electric Co. attended a similar meeting in Oakland in 1962.

Additional intelligence files, kept by LEIU and obtained by the Chicago coalition, also indicate that LEIU maintained intelligence files as late as 1976 on members of a black nationalist group, an Indian activist group and members of antiwar groups.

The files are scheduled to be made public at a press conference in Detroit called today by the National Organizing Conference to Stop Government Spying.

They were obtained by attorneys for the Alliance to End Repression, a Chicago organization, and a coalition of 31 other civil rights, church and political organizations. The coalition obtained the files recently under a disclosure motion made in a suit it filed in 1974 against the Chicago police department's antisubversive unit.

Richard Gutman, an attorney for the coalition, said yesterday that his group obtained more than a hundred intelligence cards kept on individuals by LEIU. Most of the cards were kept on organized crime figures, he said, but about 20 were kept on persons Gutman described as "political dissidents."

"A number of these people have no criminal record or connection with organized crime," Gutman said. "They

on Activists, Documents Show

were only involved in lawful political activity."

"This is the first concrete evidence that LEIU engaged in gathering and disseminating information on lawful political activists," Gutman said. "We think it has the effect of inhibiting people from freely expressing their First Amendment right."

Thomas Ruxlow, vice chairman of LEIU, denied yesterday that his group maintained files on political activists. Ruxlow, who is head of the Iowa state division of investigation, said that if files were kept in the past on political activists they have been purged from the organization's records. He added, however, that the files may have been still in the Chicago police records because the Chicago police department may not have followed an order by the national group to purge its LEIU files.

According to LEIU documents made available to The Washington Post by the Chicago coalition, several intelli-

gence files included persons who apparently were not covered by the group's bylaws.

One 1971 file contributed by the Redlands, Calif., police department lists a law student with no arrest record. The only information on the student in the intelligence file is that he was a "recognized leader of peace movements" and that he organized

and raised money for draft-evasion counseling and peace demonstrations.

Other files were kept on a University of Washington professor; a leader of the Republic of New Africa, a southern black separate movement; a member of the Black Panther party; a member of the Communist Party and members of the American Indian Movement.

Mob Got Data From Police Unit, FBI Files Show

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A controversial national police intelligence association, which federal officials tried to merge with the FBI's computer operation three years ago, has had serious leaks of intelligence material to the underworld going back to 1960, according to FBI files.

The files indicate that an official in the Law Enforcement Intelligence Unit, a privately chartered group that received federal funds until this year, apparently took a file on organized crime from federal agents during the 1960s. The theft so angered FBI officials that they set up their own intelligence network inside LEIU to report on the group's activities.

According to the FBI files, one LEIU chapter in Colorado leaked data on organized crime to underworld figures in 1960 and two other chapters were tossed out of the group during the 1960s "on corruption charges."

LEIU's most recent leak problem occurred this year when an FBI wiretap uncovered information that an intelligence specialist with the Las Vegas police with access to LEIU files was leaking organized crime material to reputed mobsters. The Las Vegas chapter was thrown out of the LEIU in September.

Despite such intelligence transgressions an adviser to then acting FBI director L. Patrick Gray III recommended in 1972 that the FBI cooperate more closely with the LEIU.

Gray apparently rejected the advice. But the Justice Department's Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, which funded LEIU's computer operation until June of this year, was still trying to merge the FBI and LEIU computer networks in 1973, citing possible violence during the Bicentennial as a reason for the matchup.

The FBI files were obtained recently by David Power, a Temple University law student, through the Freedom of Information Act.

The LEIU was started in 1956 to exchange organized crime data among local police departments. Officials testified for the group in 1974 before a Senate investigating committee that LEIU files were closely protected and only included data on organized crime.

Recently the association has come under fire from civil rights activists who claim LEIU intelligence files include material on civil rights acti-

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Police Group Leaked Data To Mob, FBI Files Show

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visits, black organizations, antinuclear groups and others with no organized crime affiliation.

According to the FBI files, the LEIU leaks go back to 1960 when sensitive intelligence material was escaping through the LEIU chapter in the Pueblo, Colo., police department.

"Our Dallas office was advised . . . that the LEIU data received by the Pueblo police had, in turn, been passed along to the underworld," noted a 1972 background memo on the LEIU which was compiled by the FBI.

The memo continued that the LEIU police chapters in Denver and Kansas City were evicted from the organization during the 1960s because they were corrupt.

Maj. Steven Bertucelli, of the Dade County, Fla., public safety department, who is LEIU's general chairman, said yesterday that the group's Las Vegas police chapter was also expelled in September of this year on corruption charges. FBI investigators learned through a wiretap in Detroit that intelligence data was being leaked to underworld figures by a Las Vegas police detective who had access to the LEIU computer, Bertucelli said.

He said the FBI did not notify the LEIU of the leak and the group only learned of the security violation through newspaper stories.

But perhaps the most serious security violation, in the eyes of the FBI's memo writers, was the apparent theft by an LEIU official in Texas in 1966 of a Xerox copy of an FBI file entitled "La Cosa Nostra, Anti-Racketeering-Conspiracy."

The LEIU official, identified as a former Dallas police official, got the report "through surreptitious means," according to the FBI. The FBI file does not indicate if the material made its way into underworld hands.

As a result, FBI field offices were instructed to keep close watch on LEIU activities, and the FBI rejected attempts to merge its computerized

files with LEIU computers. One FBI memo in 1971 reported that the bureau's sources were reporting on a 1971 LEIU meeting in New York. "No sentiments or opinions unfriendly to the bureau were expressed," the memo noted.

In another 1972 memo, Daniel M. Armstrong III, an administrative aide to acting FBI director Gray, advised Gray "to make known to LEIU your willingness to give serious consideration to specific requests or suggestions from them for an improved relationship."

A similar attempt to knit together the intelligence operations of the FBI and the LEIU was made by Justice Department officials in 1975. The FBI memos paint the Justice Department effort as an attempted power grab by the department's LEAA using the potential threat of Bicentennial year violence to justify its interest.

An FBI spokesman said yesterday that there is no mingling of intelligence data between the FBI and the LEIU. "I don't think we ever got involved with them at all," the spokesman said.