

Sanitation strike:

Most of "emphis" striking sanitation workers were black, as were most of the sanitation workers. All the blacks held the most menial and lowest-paying jobs. The strike was entirely a local matter in which there was no proper federal interest. That it was not the business of the FBI, there being no law violation and particularly no federal law violation involved, did not discourage the FBI's interest. It compiled and kept large files on the Memphis sanitation workers strike. The files became a kind of black list after the strike was over.

The state of the collective FBI mind is reflected in the titling of the records. Long after the strike was over the FBI got around to establishing a special 157 or "Extremist Matters; Civil Unrest" file it call classified as "Security-related." At FBIHQ this file is 157-9146.

As with most FBI files, the field offices hold most of the records. At FBIHQ there was this Sanitation workers strike file, relatively small file. It held 141 records.

Of these three were the records of other field offices. Of the remaining 138 records, all "emphis records, 135 were originally classified as "Racial Matters - em "emphis." That file is 157-6-1/2 28.

Only two of the records did not have to be ~~reclassified~~ ^{reclassified} when FBIHQ decided to establish a separate file after the strike was over.

In reporting to FBIHQ the Memphis FBI office informed it that it had distributed copies to the United States Attorney, the Secret Service and the regional offices of military intelligence.

This was not an arbitrary and unapproved distribution of domestic intelligence information (and misinformation) by the Memphis office. It was standard FBI practise. ~~XXX~~ FBIHQ never expressed disapproval.

Forty records were ~~written~~ ^{classified as "Racial Matters - Memphis"} before the first record was given the 157-9146 number. It is of April 16, 1968, 12 days after Dr. King was assassinated. Although captioned "Sanitation Workers Strike, Memphis, Tenn.," it actually is a "Poor Peoples March" record. This reflects the FBI's overriding interest in Dr. King's last project, the Poor Peoples Campaign.