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Documents Show F.B.I. Harassed Foes of War

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WASHINGTON, June 24—The Federal Bureau of Investigation produced a flurry of anonymous letters and spurious "publications" during the late nineteen-sixties that it hoped would cost political activist their jobs, disrupt their personal lives and temper their opposition to the Vietnam war, according to confidential F.B.I. documents made public today.

In one case, a Texas school teacher was dismissed from her post after F.B.I. agents had her had once sought public office as a candidate of the Socialist Workers party.

The documents, part of the F.B.I.'s Cointelpro counterintelligence operation, were obtained by the Socialist Workers in connection with the party's lawsuit against the Justice Department, and were made available to reporters and the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence Activities.

The 256 pages of F.B.I. files, captioned "Cointelpro — New Left," described a number of incidents between 1968 and 1971 in which bureau agents, by sending "anonymous" letters to employers and parents, attempted to secure the discharge of teachers and other individuals and disrupt their personal lives because of their political war activities.

The papers, which show for the first time the extent to which the F.B.I. attempted to disrupt, confuse and "neutralize" the domestic antiwar movement, are the first to be made public relating to program for disrupting the "New Left," one of a dozen separate operations initiated under the name Cointelpro between 1956 and 1971.

The documents produced today include a memorandum, dated April 27, 1971, that ostensibly ends the seven Cointelpro efforts—aimed at the Socialist Workers, the New Left, "white hate groups," the American Communist party and others—that were then in effect.

But the Socialist Workers also released the details of scores of more recent Cointelpro-style incidents, including cases in which F.B.I. agents "gratuitously" informed landlords, employers, parents and friends of individuals' political activities, that it said showed that the bureau's efforts at disruption had continued well beyond 1971.

idents," and was intended by the F.B.I. to "expose the conspiracy of the New Left" at the school.

"The Rational Observer," the bureau's offering of what was billed as "an alternative American University campus newspaper," described itself as "an attempt by a small group of students, who love democracy, to preserve democracy," and contained such homilies as "War can only be abolished through war" and "Liberty relinquished to government is liberty lost."

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Telephone Interview

Evelyn R. Sell, a member of the Socialist Workers who lost her job in 1970 with the Austin, independent school district, said in a telephone interview today from Los Angeles, where she now resides, that as late as January, 1972, F.B.I. agents continued to visit her subsequent employers to inform them about her political background and to ask whether she was "still working here."

More than two years earlier, according to the documents, F.B.I. agents in San Antonio, requested and received from the bureau's Detroit office, information describing the woman's unsuccessful candidacy in 1968 on the Socialist Workers ticket for the Michigan State Board of Education.

The information, the documents show, was made available by the F.B.I. to Austin police intelligence officials, who promised to keep its source confidential and who then passed it on to the school district.

The result, according to the documents, was "the decision" by school officials "not to issue a new contract or consider the subject further for employment after the termination of her current contract."

Two Other Cases Cited

The papers also noted that Mrs. Sell had a reputation as "an intelligent, excellent teacher who was well qualified in her field."

In two other cases, the F.B.I. offices in Detroit and Washington prepared bogus letters, signed "a concerned citizen" and "a fed-up taxpayer!" that described the radical activities of a public school teacher here and a professor at Wayne State University.

In both cases, however, the authorities to whom the letters were addressed failed to react by dismissing the teachers, although the District of Columbia School Board did open a police investigation of the F.B.I.'s anonymous allegations.

The Cointelpro files gave evidence of a number of similar anonymous letters fabricated by F.B.I. agents in various cities, often based on unsupported information received from its informants and, in many cases, directed against individuals who were involved in legitimate antiwar activities.

Bogus College Papers

The F.B.I.'s apparent concern about the growing magnitude of the antiwar movement in the late nineteen-sixties was reflected in two files that concerned arrangements for the publication by the F.B.I. of bogus "college newspapers" to be distributed on the campuses of Indiana University and the American University in Washington.

The paper that was distributed on the Indiana University campus at Bloomington, called "the Armageddon News," purported to have been published by "a group of concerned, conscientious stu-