

BLACK PASTOR GOT F.B.I. THREAT IN '69

MAR 17 1975

Letter With Bogus Signature Led Minister to Give Up Mississippi Rights Work

NYTimes

By JOHN M. CREWDSON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 16—The Federal Bureau of Investigation sent a spurious, threatening letter in 1969 to a black Baptist minister to compel him to cease his civil rights work in Mississippi and return to the North, newly released bureau documents show.

The documents, which reflect part of the bureau's controversial Cointelpro operation aimed at "black nationalist" groups, were made available last week by the bureau in response to a lawsuit brought by the minister, Donald W. Jackson, who is now known as Muhammad Kenyatta.

Approved by Hoover

Mr. Kenyatta said today in a telephone interview that the letter, sent to his home in Tougaloo, Miss., in April, 1969, was the central factor in his decision to leave the Jackson Human Rights Project the following month and return to Pennsylvania.

A copy of the letter, signed by the "Tougaloo College Defense Committee," was among the documents of the Cointelpro, or Counterintelligence Program, provided by the bureau to lawyers of the American Civil Liberties Union representing Mr. Kenyatta.

The letter, which the documents show was approved by the late J. Edgar Hoover, then the F.B.I. director, accused Mr. Kenyatta of immaturity and irresponsibility and told him to remain away from the Touga-

Continued on Page 19, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 1

looo College campus. The final paragraph read:

"Should you feel that this is a hollow directive and not heed our diplomatic and well thought out warning we shall consider contacting local authorities regarding some of your activities or take other measures available to us which would have a more direct effect and which would not be as cordial as this note."

In their assessment of the letter's potential impact shortly before it was sent, agents in the F.B.I.'s office in Jackson, Miss., said in a memorandum:

"It is hoped that this letter, if approved and forwarded to Jackson, will give him the impression that he has been discredited at the Tougaloo College campus and is no longer welcomed there."

The assessment also said that "it may possibly also cause him to decide to leave Mississippi and return to his original home in Pennsylvania."

One Cointelpro report provided with the letter shows that a few weeks earlier an organization calling itself the "Tougaloo College Defense Committee" had been formed

on the campus and that its members were armed.

"While it does turn out that the F.B.I. sent this letter in the name of this defense committee," Mr. Kenyatta said in recalling his fear for his safety and that of his family, "I think that my instincts and reactions were absolutely correct."

John H. F. Shattuck, a lawyer in the A.C.L.U.'s New York office, said in an interview that with the letter and other Cointelpro materials attached to it, "we think we can now prove that the F.B.I. disrupted the latter part of the civil rights movement" in the South.

Other Documents Cited

Mr. Shattuck said he referred not only to the letter, but also to other Cointelpro documents that showed the following:

Mr. Kenyatta's name had been placed on an "agitator index" by the F.B.I.'s Jackson office, that he had been put under physical surveillance by the bureau and that F.B.I. checks had been made of his credit, employment and long-distance telephone records.

F.B.I. agents had encouraged Tougaloo College officials to sign a complaint charging Mr.

Kenyatta with the "fairly well known" theft of a television set from a campus dormitory, a charge Mr. Kenyatta denies.

The F.B.I. helped a representative of the Episcopal Church, which was funding the Jackson Human Rights Project, to obtain "derogatory" information on Mr. Kenyatta that, according to bureau documents, led to the church's decision to end its support of the project.

Mr. Shattuck, who said he was convinced that his client did not steal the television set, asserted that the matter had been fabricated by the F.B.I. "as a cointelpro operation."

The stated aim of cointelpro, which was begun by Mr. Hoover in 1956 and ended by him following the theft of some cointelpro documents in 1971 from the F.B.I. office in Media, Pa., was the "disruption, exposure or neutralization" of various domestic political groups.

According to these and other cointelpro documents that have since been made public, Mr. Hoover encouraged his agents to use such counterintelligence techniques as spurious letters to discredit leaders with their followers, to sow confusion, and suspicion within groups, and the like.

A Candidate for Mayor

Mr. Kenyatta, a candidate for

the Democratic mayoral nomination in Philadelphia, said today that the practical effect of the warrant charging him with the theft had been to prevent his entering Madison County, Miss., where the Tougaloo campus is situated.

He said that when his attorney attempted to arrange with the sheriff's office of Madison County for his surrender on the theft charge, it was dropped and a charge of disturbing the peace was substituted. He did not contest that.

Mr. Kenyatta said, however, that one F.B.I. report obtained by the liberties union contained a reference to the theft charge and the misinformation that he "paid a fine and was released regarding this matter."

"I can only assume that wherever I have subsequently lived," he said, "law enforcement agencies have been told as the gospel truth that I am a thief."

Mr. Kenyatta also noted that the purported theft had been mentioned in the report on an investigator who appeared in Mississippi in 1969 to check on his fitness as a recipient of funds from the General Convention for Special Programs of the Episcopal Church, which was

then supporting Mr. Kenyatta's Jackson Human Rights Project.

Attacked by Churchman

Mr. Kenyatta described the investigator as an influential member of the church who was "disturbed by its liberalism" in funding poverty programs such as the Human Rights Project, which was then involved in black voter registration and welfare rights work.

According to the F.B.I. documents, the unnamed man "contacted the Jackson F.B.I. office" in August of 1969, "stated he did not know where to begin his investigation and asked if the F.B.I. could give him any guidelines in this regard."

The documents show that the investigator was "referred" by the F.B.I. to local police officers and others who were "in possession of information regarding" Mr. Kenyatta.

According to the documents, the churchman reported back to the bureau that, "based on information he developed from guidance provided by the F.B.I.," he had compiled "extensive derogatory information" on Mr. Kenyatta that he believed "would have a detri-



Associated Press

PRESIDENT WATCHERS: People in Washington yesterday responding to a wave from President Ford as he left St. John's Church after a service there. A few returned his wave; most seemed intent on getting material for the family album. Later, Mr. Ford played golf. Today, he flies to South Bend, Ind., where he will hold a news conference.

<p>mental effect on all future funding of the Jackson Human Rights Project."</p>	<p>F.B.I.'s Jackson office advised its Washington headquarter that "funds previously approved for [the] Jackson Human Rights</p>	<p>Project have been d'scontinued ... due to the development of derogatory information regard- ing Mr. Kenyatta's activities.</p>
<p>A few months later, the</p>		