

Ex-Army Officer Says Unit Spied on Campuses in City

By MARTIN ARNOLD

A former Army agent said yesterday that Army intelligence personnel had spied on student political groups on college campuses in the city and on welfare mothers demonstrating at City Hall.

In one case, he said, the Army's intelligence unit in the city paid the tuition fees of a black member of the unit for New York University's black-studies program. The soldier, during the 1968 fall session, was to monitor all classroom discussion and report on it to his superiors.

This report of Army intelligence comes at a time when the Pentagon—particularly the Army—has been accused of meddling in civilian politics. Army intelligence has been accused, for instance, of spying on Adlai E. Stevenson 3d during his recent Senatorial campaign and on former Gov. Otto Kerner of Illinois and on 800 other civilians.

The statement yesterday was made by Joseph Levan, a 27-year-old lawyer of Montgomery, Ala. Between July, 1967, and February, 1969, Mr. Levan was a first lieutenant in the 108th Military Intelligence Group, assigned to the Manhattan field office at 26 Federal Plaza.

Newsmen who had learned of Mr. Levan's involvement got in touch with him to ask him about his activities.

He said yesterday in an interview that no reason was ever given for such assignments but "it was understood that with everything exploding at Columbia and elsewhere the Army felt it had a legitimate interest in campus goings-on."

A spokesman for the Army Department said in Washington that "none of this is going on at the present time, except where intelligence believes the Army may be damaged."

Inquiry by Pentagon

The spokesman said the Army could not comment further since the entire field of military intelligence units was under investigation by the Pentagon.

Col. David C. Miller, commanding officer of the unit in New York said that "all this was news to me—nothing like that is going on at the present time." He said that he took over the unit only a month ago, and that "nothing of this sort" was going on then.

The unit is supposed to conduct security investigations of Army personnel and Army-employed civilians in the New York area, Colonel Miller said.

Mr. Levan said none of the agents took their spying tasks "very seriously."

"We used to joke about such nonsense," he said. "Most of us were college graduates, not professional soldiers, and we thought the whole thing laughable."

"I didn't then look upon it as a constitutional thing, even though I was a lawyer, but just as something very silly—except I was seriously disturbed about infiltrating the black-studies program and the fact that this went on daily."

He said that the men were assigned to spy on student activities at Columbia, New York University, City College and Fordham, but that once, when welfare mothers were protesting outside City Hall, they were assigned to report on that demonstration also.

The universities all denied knowledge of any such spying. Mr. Levan said that the intelligence unit received help from members of the administration at City College, but a spokesman there denied this, saying: "We have a policy of never giving reports to outside agencies on individual students or student groups."

Mr. Levan said each intelli-

gence agent was assigned a section of the city in which to make routine investigations of soldiers and Army-employed civilians. He said the men were also told to go to the universities in their area every day.

"I was supposed to go to Fordham and City College," he said. "I was under instructions to pick up any propaganda that was distributed in my territory and report on any student activity."

"The Army thought this was well within the scope of its mission to protect itself, but most of us thought it was a little out of line."

Mr. Levan said the agents would give written or oral reports to their superiors, "then joke about the work and go back and do it again the next day."

"We were in civilian clothes and some of us had long hair and we were all enjoying New York at the time, so it was easy enough duty."

He added that "we spent a considerable amount of time checking into speeches by students and speeches being given to students."

Ralph M. Stein, of Flushing, Queens, said that when he was a sergeant in Army intelligence in Washington in 1967 he helped organize a "left-wing desk" at the Pentagon and that hundreds of people were put under surveillance.

He said they included some folk singers; the actress Jane Fonda; the Rev. Ralph David Abernathy, head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference; his associate, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, and Julius Hobson, a former member of the Washington school board and now a leader in the District of Columbia Statehood party.

In Washington, nine House members from New York City signed a letter to Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird deploring the Army's reported monitoring of student activities at city-area universities.

Newburgh Visits Recalled

NEWBURGH, N.Y., Dec. 22 (AP)—Two men who identified themselves as Army intelligence agents visited The Newburgh Evening News during civil disturbances here in 1967 and 1968, Hillard Gordon, the paper's managing editor, said today. They asked for pictures and information on the outbreaks, he said.

Javits Queries Pentagon

WASHINGTON (UPI)—Senator Jacob K. Javits of New York has asked the Pentagon to send him copies of any secret files it may have on him.