

FBI's dirty tricks on left uncovered

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — Atty. Gen. William Saxbe will release a report tomorrow which labels "abhorrent" parts of a secret program which the late FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover utilized to disrupt radical organizations in the United States.

Saxbe's office had no immediate comment yesterday, and an FBI spokesman referred all queries to the Justice Department.

A committee headed by Asst. Atty. General Henry Petersen spent months searching FBI files for details of seven operations conducted for 15 years under the code name "Cointelpro." Justice Department sources said.

The Department has already made public Hoover directives aiming Cointelpro — through infiltration and tricks — at New Left groups across the country.

Also released last summer was a 1971 Hoover directive

canceling Cointelpro operations without explanation. There was speculation that Hoover became concerned about the FBI's public image during the last of his 48 years at the helm before his death at 77 in 1972.

The Washington Star-News published a 21-page draft copy of the new report yesterday. It outlined some of the Cointelpro operations which it said "can only be considered abhorrent in a free society."

But the report added that much of the Cointelpro project was justified and legitimate and said a "fair, accurate and comprehensive

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understanding" of all the activity should be made with due consideration to the problems with which Hoover was dealing.

One section of the draft report covers 2,337 operations of FBI agents in five programs, starting with one directed against the Communist Party U.S.A.

The Socialist Workers Party, the Ku Klux Klan, Soviet espionage, black extremists and New Left groups became successive targets.

The draft report charged that some of the Cointelpro activities resembled "dirty tricks" in political campaigns and included:

- Sending anonymous communications to families of individuals advising them of "immoral or radical" activities of the individual.

- Informing employers, credit bureaus, and creditors of alleged immoral or radical activities of members of the Communist Party U.S.A.

- Leaking information to civic and religious leaders to gain their support in opposition to the targeted groups and promoting pressure on state and local governments and employers and landlords to disrupt them.

- Leaking information to newspapers and reporters considered friendly to the FBI about arrest records of individuals in the targeted groups.

Sending out anonymous letters about suspected individuals who campaigned for election to local office.

The draft report said the committee could find no evidence that any attorney general or anyone else outside the FBI in position to approve such a program was ever consulted or even informed of its existence.

"Knowledge of the programs was closely held within the Bureau and the documents authorizing at least three of these programs — New Left, Black Extremists, and white hate groups — specifically instructed all responsible Bureau personnel that 'under no circumstances should the existence of the program be made known outside the Bureau,'" it said.