

Senate Will Probe Some FBI Tactics

Washington

The FBI has continued some of the questionable practices that it undertook as part of its counterintelligence program (COINTELPRO) even after officially abandoning the program, investigators for the Senate intelligence committee said yesterday.

John Elliff, the head of the committee's task force on domestic intelligence gathering, said the techniques, which the bureau evidently considers legitimate investigative tools, will be aired at public hearings before the Senate committee starting today.

He said the inquiry will document "massive surveillance of law-abiding American citizens" by the FBI over the past 20 years.

The FBI will also be the target of separate hearings this morning before the House Intelligence Committee headed by Otis G. Pike (Dem-N.Y.) and the House government information subcommittee headed by Bella Abzug (Dem-N.Y.).

The Pike committee will concentrate on the FBI's 30-year surveillance and harassment of the Socialist Workers party.

The Abzug subcommittee will scrutinize the FBI's record-keeping procedures, including its "do not file" system for hiding illegal activities. Abzug said the subcommittee also wants "to find out what happened to the mysterious 'Hoover files' — the papers rumored to have been kept in J. Edgar Hoover's office — and where they are now."

COINTELPRO, whose targets ranged from the Communist party to white hate groups, was actually "a series of disruptive techniques that were authorized" under that acronym. The FBI announced in April, 1971, shortly after the theft of secret papers from the FBI's Media, Pa., office, that it was terminating all COINTELPRO programs for "security reasons," but said it would reserve the right to initiate counterintelligence action "on a highly selective individual basis."

Since then, Elliff said yesterday, the FBI has changed many of its practices.

Mark Gitenstein, head of the committee's FBI task force, added that the questionable activities that remain are "not nearly as horrendous as what went on before." They declined to elaborate.

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