

F.B.I. MALIGNED DR. KING IN DEATH

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Bureau Also Weighed Plan
to Harass His Widow,
Senate Study Reports
NYTimes

WASHINGTON, May 5 (UPI)—The Federal Bureau of Investigation tried to smear the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. even after his death, treating him much like a Soviet agent, and had a plan to harass his widow as well, the staff of the Senate Select Committee and Intelligence Activities reported today.

"The F.B.I.'s attempts to discredit Dr. King did not end with his death" by murder in 1968, the staff said in one of a series of final reports on what it calls the agency "secret war" against American citizens.

The staff also said, however, it had found no evidence that the bureau had been involved in Dr. King's murder. A Justice Department group is investigating that matter separately.

But the report, prepared by the intelligence panel's investigative staff and not signed by committee members, said that under J. Edgar Hoover, the F.B.I. pursued a "vicious vendetta" against Dr. King from 1963 until sometime after his death, trying to discredit his memory and to stop Congress from making his birthday a national holiday.

It said that William Sullivan, Mr. Hoover's former deputy, described the overall campaign against Dr. King and thousands of other suspected radicals as "a rough, tough, dirty business and dangerous."

"No holds were barred," Mr. Sullivan testified at committee hearings. "We have used [similar] techniques against Soviet agents. We did not differentiate. This is a rough, tough business."

Repeating conclusions the committee has published before, the report said that Mr. Hoover had considered Dr. King "no good" and a dangerous force for dissent in America.

Communist Leak Sought

It said he had directed his agents to prove Dr. King was communist-influenced by tapping his telephones, bugging his hotel rooms and harassing him. One move was the anonymous letter, already publicized, that suggested that Dr. King commit suicide or face disclosure of an extra marital affair.

But today's report also included new disclosures about the smear campaign that followed Dr. King's death.

When Congress was considering declaring his birthday a national holiday, it said, the F.B.I.'s crime records division "recommended briefing Congressmen" who might keep the bill bottled up in committee if "they realize King was a scoundrel."

Congress has yet to vote on the birthday bill.

The report also said the F.B.I. Atlanta field office proposed in April 1969 a "counterintelligence operation" against Dr. King's memory and his widow.

It said it did not know details of the plan or whether it had been carried out, but quoted a bureau memorandum as saying that the program might be used "in the event the bureau is inclined to entertain counterintelligence action against Coretta Scott King and/or the continuous projection of the public image of Martin Luther King."

Black Panthers Affected

WASHINGTON, May 5 (AP)—F.B.I. headquarters approved more than 2,300 actions in a campaign to disrupt and discredit American organizations ranging from the Black Panthers to Antioch College, according to the report released today on the bureau's Cointelpro program.

The report, by the staff of the Senate intelligence committee, said that many of the actions approved in the 15 years ending in 1971 "may have violated specific criminal statutes," while others "involved risk of serious bodily injury or death to the targets."

Senator Frank Church, chairman of the intelligence committee, coupled release of the report with a renewed call for creation of a Congressional panel to oversee intelligence operations and for a special prosecutor to investigate possible criminal charges against officials involved in intelligence abuses.

The 77-page report outlined Cointelpro, or counter intelligence program, operations against "a staggering range of targets," beginning in 1956 with the Communist Party U.S.A. and ending in 1971 with "students demonstrating against anything."

The bureau's use of "dangerous, degrading or blatantly unconstitutional techniques appears to have become less restrained with each subsequent program," the report said.

Most cointelpro tactics described in the report, such as mailing anonymous letters accusing spouses of infidelity or encouraging warfare between rival groups, have been previously reported.

The report quoted internal Justice Department documents as saying that cointelpro activities may have violated the civil rights laws—as well as Federal laws against mail fraud and extortion.

Although F.B.I. witnesses testified that cointelpro had been intended to protect the national security and prevent violence, the report said, "The unexpressed major premise of much of cointelpro is that the bureau has a role in maintaining the existing social order and combating those who threaten that order."

As an example, the report quoted F.B.I. memos showing that two students who participated in a free-speech demonstration were made cointelpro targets because of their "obvious disregard for decency and established morality."