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Front Page

## Documents Disclose F.B.I. Investigations Of Some Librarians

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 6 — The Federal Bureau of Investigation conducted inquiries earlier this year on librarians and others who were asked to aid the bureau's effort to identify Soviet spies, according to internal bureau documents.

The investigations followed the bureau's effort to determine whether Soviet agents were using libraries to obtain technical or scientific data. In the effort, the "Library Awareness Program," F.B.I. agents interviewed librarians at institutions, primarily in the New York area, and asked the librarians to report contacts with people who identified themselves as Soviet-bloc nationals or as people assigned to Soviet-bloc organizations.

New documents show that librarians and others with whom the F.B.I. made contact during the surveillance program were themselves subjected to bureau scrutiny. After a number of librarians criticized the surveillance program, the bureau conducted inquiries to determine whether they were being influenced by a Soviet-backed effort to discredit the program.

### Checked for Soviet Links

The documents were made public last weekend by the National Security Archive, a nonprofit Washington research group. The F.B.I. examination involved cross-checking the names of those the bureau had been in contact with in the surveillance program to see if they appeared in F.B.I. files with links to the Soviet bloc.

Today the bureau issued a statement denying that it had conducted extensive inquiries into the activities of librarians or others who had been interviewed in the library program. But a spokesman conceded that it had con-

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# Documents Disclose F.B.I. Investigated Librarians

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ducted "minimal" checks.

"The F.B.I. at no time conducted any investigation regarding the critics or anyone in opposition to the Library Awareness Program," said Greg Jones, a spokesman for the agency. "The F.B.I. did, however, conduct indices checks relating to individuals who had been in contact with us."

## Information Called 'Dismaying'

He said the bureau had not sent agents into the field to pursue the inquiry.

A member of Congress today called the documents "dismaying" because they suggest that the bureau suspected that criticism of the Library Awareness Program resulted from a Soviet-backed effort to discredit the program.

"The F.B.I. never understood why people were upset with the Library Awareness Program," said Representative Don Edwards, Democrat of California, who is chairman of the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights. The panel held hearings on the program last year.

"The F.B.I. never understood that the librarians and other Americans think that libraries are sacred," said Mr. Edwards. "It's very dismaying that the F.B.I. so failed to understand what was the source of this criticism."

The National Security Archive, which maintains a collection of declassified Government documents, obtained the F.B.I. material through a lawsuit filed under the Freedom of Information Act. Among the 1,200 pages of documents turned over to the Archive was a Feb. 6, 1989, memo to the F.B.I. Director, William S. Sessions, from the head of the F.B.I.'s New York field office.

## Names of 266 Were Checked

The memo said the names of 266 people "connected in any way to the investigation" were checked against the agency's files "to determine whether a Soviet active-measures campaign had been initiated to discredit the Library Awareness Program."

An active measures campaign, is intelligence jargon for an effort mounted by a hostile security agency, sometimes using a front group, to influence a specific target population using false information.

The names fed into the F.B.I.'s sys-

'Libraries are sacred,' a Congressman says.

tem of files included a number of librarians and representatives of library-affiliated groups had publicly criticized the program, Archive officials said.

Tom Blanton, deputy director of the Archive, said the group determined from an analysis of the bureau's search that more than 100 of the 266 people were either librarians or people affiliated with library organizations.

While the identities of these people were withheld by the Bureau, many of the librarians under scrutiny were thought likely to be those who had criticized the surveillance program, Mr. Blanton said. That, he said, was based on the admission by the Bureau that it reviewed only those people who came in contact with the agency after the program was disclosed in October 1987.

## Eight References Found

The memo said the search of F.B.I.'s files turned up eight references to people contacted in the course of the library surveillance program.

Mr. Edwards said his subcommittee had found no evidence to confirm the F.B.I.'s suspicions about the existence of a Soviet influence campaign. "There is absolutely no evidence to support this theory either in any of our private briefings or public testimony by the F.B.I. on this program."

A September 1987 memo to the F.B.I. concerned an interview conducted at the Brooklyn public library. The memo complained that library employees resisted the bureau's surveillance effort. "This attitude has increasingly been encountered," the memo said, adding, "and it should not remain unchallenged."

As a result, the F.B.I.'s New York office recommended that Washington F.B.I. headquarters send a representative to address conferences of librarians in an effort to protect libraries from hostile intelligence agencies.

After the existence of the program was made public by a librarian at Co-

lumbia University who had been contacted by Federal agents, Mr. Sessions held a meeting in 1988 with members of library groups, like the American Library Association.

The group was unaware of it at the time, but the documents disclose that Mr. Sessions later sent a memo to all F.B.I. agents setting forth ground rules of the surveillance program and declaring that only experienced agents should contact chief librarians and that agents "should not ask librarians to report suspicious or anomalous activity or to report on persons with foreign sounding names or accents."

Many librarians were highly critical of the surveillance program because it sought to use library circulation records, which list the users of library information, as part of the investigation. "We consider circulation records to be private," said Judith F. Krug, director of the office of intellectual freedom for the American Library Association. "It's nobody's business what you read but your's."

The library surveillance program began in the early 1960s. It was primarily centered in New York because of the many technical libraries in the area and the large Soviet bloc population among whom are believed to be espionage agents. While it is believed that the program was curtailed after its existence was disclosed in 1987, the Bureau declined to comment on the current status of the program.