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FBI Report on Investigations into Bern Porter

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Copy to:

Report of:

Office: SAN FRANCISCO

Date: May 26, 1959

File Number: Bureau (140-20103); San Francisco (140-3192)

Title: BERNARD HARDEN PORTER
Department of the Navy

Character: SECURITY OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES

Synopsis:

California Committee on Un-American Activities reported one BERNARD PORTER to be contacted by FAECT. Confidential Informants familiar with FAECT activities do not know Applicant. Person previously interviewed by CSC who described Applicant as homosexual denied making such statement. Interview with _____ set forth, as is information concerning this person's association with Un-American groups.

- RUC -

This report does not represent the results of a full field investigation and should not be construed as such in connection with Executive Order 10450.

BASIS FOR INVESTIGATION

This case was referred to the Federal Bureau of Investigation by the Civil Service Commission in view of information set forth in the Sixth Report of the Senate Fact-Finding Committee on Un-American Activities, California Legislature, 1951, wherein, on pages 228 and 229, it is set forth that on July 13, 1943, an Executive Board meeting of Chapter 25 of the Federation of Architects, Engineers, Chemists, and Technicians (FAECT) was held in the home of one [redacted]. At this meeting a discussion was held concerning important contacts to be made among scientific personnel who were engaged in atomic research and other critical work. Among those persons listed to be contacted was one BERNARD PORTER, not further identified.

Concerning the FAECT, on page 198 of this same Sixth Report published by the California State Legislature, in part it is set forth that, "The FAECT originated in the Lenin School of Espionage in Moscow and comprised a great many highly trained scientists who were also members of the Communist Party.... It was established beyond the slightest doubt that it was communist dominated from top to bottom and that it was primarily interested in infiltrating and organizing the personnel in the Radiation Laboratory at the University of California in Berkeley, where vital atomic research was carried on."

The Communist Party, USA, has been designated by the Attorney General of the United States pursuant to Executive Order 10450.

RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION

On May 25, 1959, the records of the University of California, Berkeley, California, were reviewed and reflected that the Applicant was employed by the University as a physicist from May 5, 1943 to July 9, 1944, and again from October 3, 1944 to August 21, 1945, as a Junior Research Engineer for the Institute of Engineering Research, University of California.

On May 25, 1959, San Francisco [redacted] who will not appear before a Security Hearing Board and who would not give a signed statement, advised that [redacted] had been acquainted with most of the

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members of the FAECT who had been active in the University of California Radiation Laboratory during World War II, including both Communist Party and non-Communist Party members affiliated with this organization. SF said that could not associate the Applicant as ever being a member of the FAECT or ever being affiliated with this organization in any manner whatsoever.

On May 26, 1959, San Francisco, who is unavailable for testimony and who would not give a signed statement, advised SF

SF could not recall the Applicant and could not connect his name in any manner whatsoever with this organization.

On May 25, 1959, San Francisco who is unavailable for testimony and who would not give a signed statement, advised the Applicant was unknown to SF

On May 25, 1959, San Francisco

advised his files reflect that in the October 8, 1948 issue of the now defunct "Marin Journal," a newspaper formerly published in Marin County, California, there is contained a political advertisement in which one "BERN PORTER, Sausalito," who was not further identified, but who was listed as one of the Marin Committee of 100 for in campaign for State Senator on the Independent Progressive Party ticket.

Relative to the Independent Progressive Party, the Eighth Report on Un-American Activities in the State of California, for the year 1955, as published by the California Legislature, on

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page 46, in part states, "The Independent Progressive Party in California was quickly captured by the Communists, and by the time the Wallace for President campaign had swung into high gear was being operated lock stock and barrel by the Communist Party of California. Time after time the committee in questioning witnesses throughout the State discovered that the leaders of the Communist Parties in various localities were identical with the leaders of the Independent Progressive Party in the same area. It is true, of course, that in the Independent Progressive Party there were many sincere liberals who, because of dissatisfaction with the two major political organizations registered as Independent Progressives and continued their affiliation until the true control of the I. P. P. became obvious."

The report of prior investigation in the San Francisco area dated August 5, 1958, as conducted by the Civil Service Commission on pages 2 and 3 contains an interview with a one

On May 25, 1959,

said recalled the Applicant and his wife as in the said would not recommend the Applicant for employment with the federal government and that would not "hire him for dog catcher." When asked to be specific, said "I just didn't like his looks." said both the Applicant and his wife worked and were not around the too much during the day and that the Applicant was supposedly a poet, "but he didn't wear a beard or sandals" and therefore, questioned whether he was a poet. remarked that

commented was unaware of any information reflecting unfavorably upon his loyalty or his moral conduct. said had no information as to his having associated with male persons who were effeminate and had never referred to him as a homosexual. Regarding having previously referred to the Applicant as a homosexual emphatically replied, "it's a lie."

During the interview made continual reference to own heritage and that of and referred to "the foreigners" who populate the neighborhood and the fact that these "foreigners" are the cause of so much crime and delinquency in this city. made continual reference to the Applicant and his wife as being "foreigners."

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In concluding the interview, _____ commented that "it seems to me you can find better people than me to talk to" regarding the Applicant.

AT SAUSALITO, CALIFORNIA

In its report of prior investigation at Sausalito, California, dated August 5, 1958, on pages 12 and 13, the Civil Service Commission sets forth the results of interviews with

On May 25, 1959, _____ City of Sausalito, and _____ City of Sausalito, advised that they recall the Applicant. _____ recalled that in about 1949 the Applicant operated the Seagull Studio located at approximately 559 Bridgeway, that this studio displayed art and antique objects, and that in his capacity as operator of this studio, the Applicant associated with the "artist group" and "Bohemian group" in Sausalito. They further believed that these groups of persons included individuals who were either communist or communist sympathizers and, therefore, it was their opinion that the Applicant would have been influenced in some way by the thinking and actions of the persons with whom he associated.

_____ could not specifically name any of the individuals whom they believed to be communist or communist sympathizers and they could not furnish any specific information which would indicate that the Applicant had actually been influenced through the association with members of the aforementioned group.

_____ further recalled that in 1949 the Applicant endeavored to have the City of Sausalito purchase a portion of the old Yacht Club located at 558 Bridgeway which could be turned over to those interested in art and culture in the City of Sausalito. It was their recollection that this was an attempt on the part of the Applicant to obtain a central location in the city which could be used as a cultural center for the artist colony in Sausalito.

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advised that to their recollection the City of Sausalito took no positive action on the recommendation of the Applicant.

On May 25, 1959, [redacted] Sausalito, California, advised that [redacted] which was next door to the Seagul Studio. [redacted] advised that [redacted] recalled the name of the Applicant, but could furnish no information concerning the activities of the Applicant.

[redacted] Sausalito, advised on May 25, 1959, that [redacted] is currently the [redacted] Sausalito. [redacted] advised that [redacted] is well acquainted with the Applicant, but stated that [redacted] has no information concerning the Applicant having formerly resided at 415 Litho.

[redacted] described the studio as a place where objects of art and antiques were exhibited for purposes of display and sale. [redacted] stated further that the Applicant in the operation of the Seagul Studio operated this as a cultural center. [redacted] stated that the purpose of visiting the studio was to hear lectures, which included lectures by priests concerning Catholicism, and lectures and films by representatives of European, Canadian, and South American Governments. [redacted] stated that at the conclusion of the lectures and showing of the films the individuals present were permitted to ask questions concerning the things which they had heard and seen.

[redacted] stated that [redacted] had no information concerning any communist or communist front group activity on the part of the Applicant and stated that [redacted] believed the Applicant to be an honest individual and one who could be trusted.

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MISCELLANEOUS

Other Confidential Informants familiar with some phases of Communist Party and Un-American activities in the San Francisco Bay area advised the Applicant was unknown to them and they had no information concerning him.