

SUIT CHARGES F.B.I. WITH HARASSMENT

Two Antiwar Groups and 18
Persons Ask an Injunction

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Special to The New York Times

PHILADELPHIA, July 15—Two antiwar groups and 18 individuals sued the Federal Bureau of Investigation today, asking the Federal District Court here to enjoin as unconstitutional "continuous and malicious harassment" by agents since the theft of F.B.I. files at nearby Media in March.

In attempting to solve the case, the F.B.I. has concentrated much of its attention on the Powelton Village section of Philadelphia, where several members of Philadelphia Resistance and the American Friends Service Committee live.

The plaintiffs said in the suit that F.B.I. tactics included physical violence, bribery, threats, illegal searches and seizures, illegal electronic surveillance and wiretapping, denial of the right to counsel during raids and interrogation, and intimidation not only of themselves but also of friends and relatives and employers.

Besides an injunction, they asked for \$390,000 in damages and destruction of all newly compiled dossiers on them that the court finds to violate their rights and "to bear no reasonable relationship" to legitimate F.B.I. activities.

Named as defendants are Attorney General John N. Mitchell, F.B.I. Director J. Edgar Hoover and Joe D. Jamieson, agent in charge of the bureau's regional office here.

The suit contends that the "harassment," carried out while the bureau was "allegedly investigating the theft of files from the Media, Pa., office of the F.B.I.," has been "part of a policy to intimidate political and social activists."

The anonymous Citizens Commission to Investigate the F.B.I. took more than 800 documents from the Media office on March 8 and released many of them piecemeal to news outlets, including a memorandum urging agents to watch the New Left closely enough to "enhance the paranoia" in it to the extent that members would fear "there is an F.B.I. agent behind every mailbox."

The plaintiffs said illegal harassment violates their rights to free speech, association, press, assembly, petition, counsel, privacy and political activity.

The suit was filed by the National Emergency Civil Liberties on behalf of the plaintiffs. Many of the individual plaintiffs worked for one or the other of the plaintiff organizations. Several live in the resistance commune in Powelton or in neighboring apartment houses.

Knowledge is Denied

At a news conference at the Friends Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting House, Judith Chomsky of Resistance said the plaintiffs knew no more about the Media case than they had read in newspapers.

She said the F.B.I. appeared to be seeking to create a climate of fear that would stop the plaintiffs and others from continuing to criticize domestic and foreign policy. She is the sister-in-law of Noam Chomsky, professor of linguistics at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

David Rudovsky, the attorney who filed the suit, said more than 25 witnesses to "illegal harassment" would testify when the case was tried. Instances of alleged harassment cited in the suit ranged from the following of plaintiffs about Philadelphia afoot and in cars, to the grabbing of Jim B. Hart "around his neck," taking the bearded Powelton Quaker to the F.B.I. office here and interrogating him for an hour and a half "about his political and social beliefs and associations" without informing him of his right to counsel and without then or later filing any criminal charges against him.

Other Allegations

Other allegations included:

¶The threatening of Francis Femia of the Friends Service Committee, on parole after conviction for refusing induction and destroying draft records in Boston, with revocation of parole and a return to prison for two years unless he answered questions about the Media case.

¶The threatening of David Nirenberg with revocation of probation in a marijuana possession case if he did not report on his associates in Resistance.

¶The raiding of the apartment of Anne Flitcraft of the Friends Service Committee "without probable cause," reading and passing around her personal letters in an effort to "humiliate" her, physically threatening her and her attorney when they asserted her rights, and seizing her notes for a book recently published by the Service Committee on law enforcement practices of the police and the F.B.I.

It is also alleged that Mrs. Barbara Gold, a friend of Eva Gold, a member of Resistance who is one of the plaintiffs, was asked to become an informer.