

10/14/81

A Rights Group Says F.B.I. Made Up Data Presented in 2 Trials

LONDON, Wednesday, Oct. 14 (AP) — Amnesty International asserts that the Federal Bureau of Investigation fabricated evidence and used other means to put leaders of black, Indian and other American minority groups behind bars. The human rights organization made public its report today.

The London-based organization urged the Reagan Administration to set up an independent commission to inquire into its charges of misconduct by the F.B.I.

In Washington, Roger Young, a bureau spokesman, said, "Until we get a chance to review the report it would be impossible to comment on it."

Amnesty International, which campaigns for the release of political prisoners and regularly accuses authoritarian regimes of violations of human rights, said that the investigation should center on the trials of Elmer Pratt, a Black Panther Party leader, in 1972 and Richard Marshall, a leader of the American Indian Movement, in 1976.

Both were convicted of murder and sentenced to life prison terms. Amnesty International said that they were convicted "after being targeted for F.B.I. intelligence action."

Mr. Pratt and Mr. Marshall contend that they are political prisoners who were framed by the bureau through fabrication of evidence and the deliberate withholding of "vital information."

Ann Burley, an official of Amnesty International, who compiled the 144-page report charging abuses, said: "Over many years, we've had cases referred to us of alleged F.B.I. misconduct and we feel that in many of these cases the allegations have been substantiated."

The report charged that some of the abuses were carried out under the bureau's so-called Cointelpro program, a counter-intelligence effort directed against dissident organizations in the United States. That program officially ended in 1971.

They Say It Is Continuing

But the report alleged that "other misconduct took place long after that under investigation programs."

Mr. Pratt, a Black Panther leader in southern California, was convicted of killing a white woman in a holdup in Santa Monica. Mr. Marshall was convicted of killing an Indian in a bar in Scenic, S.D., in March 1975.

In these and other cases, the report said it had found "production of false evidence, misstatements about F.B.I. action, harassment, infiltration of defense teams and failure to make available information the defense might have used."

The report said "an independent inquiry is needed to determine whether the basis of fair trial was undermined."

Amnesty said that Mr. Pratt was a Cointelpro target for some years before the killing of which he was convicted.

The organization, which won the 1977 Nobel Peace Prize for its campaigns, asserted that cases of F.B.I. investigations into the American Indian Movement involved "irregularities" and "a background of misconduct and alleged abuses" in the agency's crackdown in South Dakota in 1975.

Among other factors, Amnesty contended that Myrtle Poor Bear, a key witness against Mr. Marshall and another Indian militant, Leonard Peltier, later said she and her daughter had been threatened with death by the F.B.I. if she did not testify against the dissidents.

The report concluded that the Pratt and Marshall cases "considered together, with examples from other cases, give enough cause for concern about the F.B.I.'s role and the effects of that role on trials to point to the need for a broad, independent examination."