

ADL Is Sued For Invasion Of Privacy

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Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO, April 16—The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith points proudly to its 80-year fight against antisemitism and other forms of racial and religious prejudice.

But critics say the ADL has a sinister side. They charge that the organization illegally gathers information on people and groups with opposing viewpoints and uses it to discredit them. The ADL vigorously denies this.

"The ADL has a very dark underbelly. They show one face to the world and one face to us," said Amal Barkouki-Winter, one of 19 Arab Americans and critics of Israel who filed an invasion-of-privacy lawsuit against the ADL.

"Nothing could be further from the truth," said Barbara S. Wahl, an ADL lawyer. "There appears to be an orchestration of misinformation that is painting a nasty picture of the ADL."

The suit, filed Wednesday in San Francisco, was the latest development in a case involving the ADL, a San Francisco art dealer and a former police officer.

The FBI and police are investigating allegations that art dealer and longtime ADL investigator Roy Bullock and former police officer Tom Gerard gathered confidential information from police and government files. The two developed files on thousands of groups across the political spectrum, from white supremacists to the environmental group Greenpeace, prosecutors said.

Authorities suspect much of the information was illegally obtained, according to court documents. But no charges have been filed, and all parties deny wrongdoing.

The ADL was founded in Chicago in 1913, dedicated to eliminating antisemitism and seeking justice for all people, said Melvin Salberg, ADL's national chairman. Now based in New York, the nonprofit organization has a staff of 400 and an an-

nual budget of \$32 million.

It also has sought to educate the public about Israel and has become an information resource on groups espousing racial and religious bigotry.

ADL officials freely acknowledge that they gather information, mostly from public sources such as news reports. Some, however, comes from anonymous tips and ADL investigators.

It keeps many files on racist groups or organizations seeking the destruction of Israel and business files on such organizations as the NAACP, with which the ADL has worked in civil rights causes, ADL officials said.

Plaintiffs agreed the ADL had a right to investigate and expose hate groups, if the information were gathered legally. But they charged the organization went too far, alleging in the suit that the ADL gathers private information from government records through "a massive spying operation" on those with opposing views.

The plaintiffs also accuse the ADL, Bullock, Gerard and league director Richard Hirschhaut of disclosing confidential information to "persons and entities" that had no need for such data.

Barkouki-Winter, a Los Gatos, Calif., psychologist and member of the Arab-American Leadership Council, says ADL members told her she "should get out of politics" when she successfully ran for a seat on a community college board and a Democratic Party post. The reason, she said, was her activity in Arab-American affairs and advocacy of Palestinian rights.

But Salberg and Wahl said the suit's allegations were untrue.

They insisted the ADL never knowingly received any illegally obtained information and always tells investigators such as like Bullock to operate strictly within the law.

Wahl and Salberg said the ADL opposes hate and terrorist groups and organizations that seek to destroy Israel, including the Palestine Liberation Organization.