

File # 4/31/76

Threat to us all

It is a little over three years since the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) filed a \$27 million damage suit against the FBI and other agencies and officers of the U.S. government. The suit charges the bureau with carrying out a systematic campaign of harassment and illegal acts against the party, ranging from poison pen letters to planting informers and provocateurs inside the party to burglary.

The case was most recently set for trial in U.S. District Court in Manhattan July 2; it is now scheduled for early next year.

One reason for the long delay is that since the suit was filed, a continuing string of revelations — many of them documented by court-ordered disclosures of the FBI's own files — have been forthcoming to support the party's allegations. Last March, for example, it was revealed that in a six-year period, FBI "black bag" experts had burglarized the SWP's New York office at least 94 times, or an average of once every three weeks.

Unbelievably, and as if enough damage had not already been done to its once proud reputation, the FBI has apparently learned nothing, changed nothing, reformed nothing.

In the latest bombshell, it has been revealed that an FBI informant named Timothy Redfearn stole documents from the Denver office of the SWP on July 7. That is, only five days after the party's suit against the FBI went to trial, the party was again the target of an FBI break-in.

The FBI says that it did not authorize the burglary and that it refused to accept the documents from Redfearn. However, it did not report the burglary to Denver police for three weeks. In the meantime, copies of the documents somehow found their way into its files, and correspondence

deceived him) into believing that the bureau had gotten out of the burglary business in 1966. He later found out that others had taken place as recently as 1973.

In light of the Denver affair, it would seem that somebody is still being deceived.

It might be one thing if the taxpayers were getting something for their money. But Redfearn's report on the Denver branch of the SWP over a period of five years contain nothing but useless gossip and rumors and such data as the smoking and eating habits of party members. For this he was paid \$400 a month, and despite a record of trouble with the law and of psychiatric treatment, was rated stable and dependable by the FBI.

Not only that, but in all the years that the Socialist Workers Party has been under surveillance — since 1945, according to the FBI; since it was founded in 1938, the SWP claims — neither the party nor any of its members has ever been charged with breaking any law. Would that the same could be said of the Democrats and Republicans.

To be sure, the SWP hopes to replace the nation's capitalistic system with a socialist one, and this may be disturbing, even frightening, to many Americans. But it seeks to do so through legal, electoral means. The 2,500-member party, however, has never received much more than 100,000 votes in a presidential election. That is the extent of its "threat."

The FBI admits that all this is true, but it argues that it has to keep on watching the SWP because sometime in the future, somebody belonging to it might commit a subversive act.

Perhaps we ought to rename it the Federal Bureau of Perpetual Investigation of the Socialist Workers Party.

This is not funny. It is deadly serious. In fighting to vindicate its right to exist as a legally constituted, legally behaving political party, free of official intimidation and harassment, the SWP is defending the political liberties of all Americans.

between Denver and Washington suggests a pattern we came to know so well during Watergate — a decision to "stonewall" the whole matter.

Just a few days ago on television, FBI director Clarence Kelley stated that he had been deceived (he doesn't know who