

F.B.I. MAN ADMITS ROLE IN BREAK-INS

Agent Testifies to 50 to 90
Burglaries in 7 Years at
Socialist Workers Offices

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WASHINGTON, July 28 — An agent of the Federal Bureau of Investigation has testified under oath that he participated in "between 50 and 90" burglaries of the Socialist Workers Party headquarters in New York, according to a deposition made public today.

George P. Baxtrum Jr., a special agent since 1946, who is now attached to the bureau's Milwaukee office, said that between 1958 and 1965 he made "surreptitious entries" into the party's headquarters at 116 University Place in Manhattan to search desks, photograph documents and, on occasion, place microphones for electronic eavesdropping.

Admission Under Oath

Mr. Baxtrum, in a deposition taken in New York last June, said he had been told that each burglary and the placing of the microphones had been authorized by the bureau's headquarters in Washington. This is the first time an F.B.I. agent has admitted under oath participating in burglaries, though the bureau acknowledged the burglaries in the socialist party's case earlier this year.

Mr. Baxtrum also testified that he was presented commendations for the information he had obtained through the burglaries.

Mr. Baxtrum is one of the defendants in a \$37 million damage suit filed by the Socialist Workers against present and former Government officials. Other defendants include

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John F. Malone, who was special agent in charge of the New York office in the period of the burglaries, and Arthur J. Green Jr., an agent who along with Mr. Baxtrum was assigned to the S.W.P. case.

Meanwhile, the Society of Former Special Agents of the F.B.I. Inc., has created a fund to help pay for the legal defenses of present and former agents accused of burglaries in the line of duty. The society has retained Edward P. Morgan, a Washington lawyer and former chief inspector of the bureau, to organize the defense for any agent accused of burglaries in the current Justice Department investigation.

To Defend Agents

Mr. Morgan said in an interview that the society voted to take the action to help agents who had taken action in what were called national and domestic security investigations that they believed in "good faith" had been ordered by the proper authorities in the bureau's headquarters and the Justice Department.

The Justice Department is investigating allegations that bureau agents committed, as recently as last year, burglaries that would be within the statute of limitations and could result in felony indictments.

Mr. Baxtrum testified that the last entry he was involved in took place in 1965. He said that he had been assigned to investigate the Socialist Workers when he arrived in the New York field office in 1953 and was first asked to commit an illegal entry in November 1958. He said the first order was given orally by his "section chief" in New York.

"It is my recollection that I was told we would probably have access to national security

information which we did not have access through any other means, by the use of surreptitious entry," he said.

Mr. Baxtrum said that between his first entry, in November 1958 and 1965, he obtained individual authorization from his section chief in New York for every entry. He said they were performed at three-and-four-week intervals, when the agents determined the Socialist Workers might have made policy changes.

Mr. Baxtrum said the bulk of the burglaries he had been involved in occurred at the party's headquarters on University Place. But he added that he had also secretly entered the headquarters of the Young Socialist Alliance, a group associated with the party, on Fourth Avenue north of Greenwich Village. He said on several occasions the agents had placed electronic transmitting devices and microphones in the walls to listen to socialist meetings.

He said they once bugged Wurdemann's Hall, an auditorium the Socialist Workers rented on the East Side. In another instance, he said, the bureau bugged a hotel where the party was having a convention, but he said he could not remember the hotel's name.

Mr. Baxtrum said one of the few times he met Mr. Malone had been when he himself was given a commendation for information obtained by illegal entry.

"I was called to his office and presented with a commendation for the information of value to the United States which had been obtained. He congratulated me," Mr. Baxtrum said.

Mr. Baxtrum said teams of five or six agents entered Socialist Workers headquarters during the searches while five or so kept watch outside.