

Agent Takes 5th on Role In Break-ins

By Warren Brown

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An FBI agent being questioned about alleged harassment of the Socialist Workers Party yesterday invoked the Fifth Amendment privilege against self-incrimination during the taking of a deposition in New York City.

An FBI spokesman in Washington said Joseph Furrer, special agent in the bureau's New York field office, "took the Fifth 80 times on the advice of his attorney, in connection with a deposition" related to a \$37 million SWP civil damage suit against the federal government.

Furrer's action marked the second time in less than two weeks that he used his Fifth Amendment rights in connection with the case.

Furrer, along with New York FBI agents Art Green and George Braxtrum, are charged in the suit with conducting illegal break-ins, electronic surveillance, and with intimidating party members in an attempt to disrupt the political activities of the socialist group.

The FBI has admitted con-

ducting as many as 94 break-ins at the party's offices, 92 of which occurred in New York between 1960 and 1966.

Furrer initially invoked the Fifth Amendment in a closed session last week when Herbert Jordan, one of the SWP lawyers handling the suit, asked him to give his occupation and to tell whether or not he was employed by the FBI.

Furrer answered those questions in another closed session yesterday after being ordered to do so last week by U.S. District Judge Thomas P. Griesa.

However, according to an SWP spokesman, the agent refused to answer any questions about his role in investigating the party between 1971 and the present. Furrer also declined to say if he had knowledge of FBI break-ins, electronic surveillance, interviews with SWP members or other official actions against the party during that period, the spokesman said.

Furrer is represented in the case by New York City lawyer Andrew Schaffer, a private attorney who is being paid by the Department of Justice, according to the FBI spokesman.

Schaffer could not be reached for comment.