

FBI Used 1,616 To Spy on Party Of 2,500 Leftists

By JOSEPH VOLZ *NY News 9/5/76*

Washington, Sept. 4 (News Bureau)—FBI officials said in court papers made available today that they had paid 1,616 part-time informers to spy on the Socialist Workers Party at various times since 1960.

Special FBI agent Martin Lauer said in a sworn deposition in a \$40 million civil suit filed by the party against the government that the bureau had used 66 informers this year to check on the Socialist Workers. The documents did not reveal what threat the left-wing party allegedly poses. No members have been charged with any crimes in this 16-year period.

The latest revelations, following an FBI admission last March that agents had burglarized the Socialist Workers Party's headquarters in New York 90 times between 1960 and 1966, show an intensive FBI campaign, which cost millions of dollars, against a small political party that has about 2,500 members.

"Free-Floating" Spies

The FBI said that 316 of the 1,616 informers had posed as party members. Some served on local or national executive committees of the party. Most of the spies, however, were termed "free-floating," meaning that the Socialist Workers were just one of a number of dissident political groups that were watched.

There is no indication in any FBI documents made public that the Socialist Workers advocated or used violence.

The records show, however, that FBI informers burglarized the party's offices within the last three years. FBI Director Clarence Kelley has since barred burglaries by agents for purposes of domestic intelligence and has said that the same rules apply to informers.

The informants, who each received some payment monthly based on the value of the material supplied, acted like vacuum cleaners, picking up brochures, bank statements, telephone records and anything else readily available.

Timothy Redfearn, paid \$400 a month to spy on the party offices in Denver, was graded "very good" by special FBI agent Boyd Adsit after two 1973 burglaries according to the documents.

Justice Department sources re-

cently conceded that Redfearn had burglarized the Denver party offices as late as last July 7. The Justice Department is investigating the case as part of a probe of more than 30 FBI agents who allegedly burglarized the homes or offices of Weather Underground supporters in 1972 and 1973.

The Socialist Workers are suing the government for harassing them. The party also wants a permanent injunction against the use of informers.