

NOV 17 1972

Historians Sue FBI, Pentagon

SFChronicle
Washington

The American Civil Liberties Union Foundation filed suits in federal court here yesterday to force the FBI to open files on its investigation of Alger Hiss and the Pentagon to release its records on "Operation Keelhaul" at the end of World War II.

The suits are part of a broad ACLU attack on what it calls "unwarranted government secrecy" in apparent violation of the 1966 freedom of information act.

Both suits were brought in the names of four prominent historians who are either researching or writing books about Hiss and "Operation Keelhaul."

The code-named "Operation Keelhaul" involved the forced repatriation after World War II of Russian and other East European citizens, most of them prisoners of war, by the U.S. and British governments.

In the suit, filed in U.S. district court against Secretary of the Army Robert E. Froehlke, three historians allege they have been trying unsuccessfully to get the Keelhaul documents for the past year and a half.

The Army does not claim the documents must be kept secret for national security reasons but only that the British government has not agreed to their release.

The Army's position is spelled out in letters from Froehlke to historians Lev. E. Dobriansky of Georgetown University; Bertram D. Wolfe, a Russian history professor and fellow at the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace in Stanford, Calif.; and Julius Epstein, professor of international law at Lincoln University in San Francisco.

The historians and the ACLU foundation — a separate affiliate of the ACLU — contend that is an insufficient reason and is not justified under the freedom of information act, the Constitution or for any reasons of national security.

The suit against the FBI and the Department of Justice, brought by Allen Weinstein, professor of history and chairman of the American studies program at Smith college, asks that all FBI documents concerning the Alger Hiss-Whittaker Chambers investigation from 1933 through 1952 be made public.

Washington Post Service