

U.S. Grand Jury Called Inquisition

The Nixon administration was attacked here yesterday for allegedly using Federal grand juries to intimidate Americans sympathetic to left-wing philosophies.

The charges came from two separate quarters within the legal profession — the National Lawyers Guild's Grand Jury Defense Office here and the American Civil Liberties Union of Northern

California.

The attack against "grand jury inquisitions" came as 11 witnesses, subpoenaed from seven cities across the country, were scheduled to start appearances today before the grand jury at the Federal building here.

Government officials have refused to describe the subject of the grand jury probe or say what kind of questions will be asked.

JUSTICE

It is known that the Grand Jury's questioning will be directed by the Internal Security Division of the Justice Department.

"The involvement of the Internal Security Division makes clear the political motivation of this investigation," said Barbara Hyland of the National Lawyers Guild in a press conference yesterday.

The ACLU made similar charges at a different press conference.

"The concern we have is that the grand jury network is emerging as the new instrument of the administration to curb dissent," said Jay A. Miller, the ACLU's executive director here.

"The traditional grand jury system of protecting people from the power of the government is now being twisted around and used against them," Miller declared.

ATTORNEYS

Meanwhile in the court of U.S. District Judge Robert F. Peckham, attorneys for the prospective witnesses filed a number of motions to cancel or postpone the grand jury investigation.

Only one was successful. Peckham agreed to delay

the start of the session — scheduled for yesterday afternoon — until 10 a.m. today to give attorneys more time to consult with their clients.

Attorneys for the witnesses believe — based on previous questions asked by the Federal Bureau of Investigation — that the quiz may concern the Weatherman, a splinter faction of the Students for a Democratic society.

Observers have speculated that the FBI lost contact some time ago with members of the Weatherman as they went completely underground. Now, according to observers, the government wants to find the whereabouts of Weatherman by questioning persons who may have known them.

Another Lawyers Guild spokesman, Marty Fassler, said witnesses may face contempt charges — and possible prison sentences — if they fail to appear for questioning, or refuse to answer.

PROSPECT

It is this prospect which many feel "intimidates and creates a climate of fear that discourages people from talking to each other, from thinking with each other and from trusting each other," said Fassler.

Nine of the witnesses subpoenaed to testify are James Bosworth of Alameda; David Grabill of Venice; Mark Alter of Portland, Ore.; Howard Berg of Minneapolis, Minn.; Dr. Phillip Craven and his wife, Karen, of San Juan, Puerto Rico; Robert L. Susmann of Redwing, Colo.; Stuart V. Widgerson of Hackensack, N.J.; and David Rosenberg, no address given. Two others were not named.

All were described as having some left-oriented political beliefs, though none are known to have been members of the Weathermen, according to their attorneys.

Fassler said the "timing and location of the inquiry is not accidental."

"It is one month before an election and in the midst of an intensified American bombing campaign in Indochina."