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A.C.L.U. Says F.B.I. Funded 'Army' To Terrorize Antiwar Protesters

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SAN DIEGO, June 26—The American Civil Liberties Union completed today a report for Senate investigators alleging that the Federal Bureau of Investigation recruited a band of right-wing terrorists and supplied them with money and weapons to attack young antiwar demonstrators.

The 5,000-word account prepared for the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence contains what A.C.L.U. lawyers described as "newly established evidence" purportedly linking the F.B.I. to at least two assassination plots here.

The lawyers, H. Peter Young and Mark D. Rosenbaum of the A.C.L.U. Foundation of Southern California, said the allegations to be sent, probably tomorrow, to the Senate committee "document in detail the F.B.I.'s sponsorship in 1971 and 1972 of a San Diego group calling itself "the Secret Army Organization."

Told of the A.C.L.U.'s assertions, a spokesman for the F.B.I. said that the bureau had had "nothing to do" with the establishment of the so-called secret army organization, "nor did we have anything to do with the direction of its activities."

According to the A.C.L.U. report, the Secret Army Organization was set up "on instructions of F.B.I. officials" to serve as agents provocateurs, inciting disorders as a means of exposing "domestic radicals," particularly campus leaders of the New Left protesting the war in Southeast Asia.

The paramilitary extremist organization, consisting of about a dozen members locally with others scattered throughout southern California, was described by the A.C.L.U. as an outgrowth of an elaborate interagency espionage apparatus "at the direction of Richard M. Nixon" early in his Administration to intimidate and silence domestic critics.

Assassination Alleged

The group's acts of terrorism, allegedly carried out in San Diego on instructions from the F.B.I., range from espionage, vandalism and mail theft to bombings, assassination plots and shootings, according to the report.

The A.C.L.U. charges followed by two days the F.B.I.'s acknowledgement, in a 256-page document, that it conducted

counterintelligence operations between May, 1968, and April, 1971, under the code name, Cointelpro. These were aimed at the New Left and designed to harass and discredit campus antiwar and leftist groups.

The A.C.L.U. maintained, however, that F.B.I. sponsorship of the "Secret Army" terrorism continued into 1972.

The accusations contained in the report to the Senate committee go considerably beyond those of a \$10.6-million damage suit filed by A.C.L.U. attorneys in Federal District Court here last Jan. 6 on behalf of Peter G. Bohmer, a discharged economics professor at San Diego State University, and Paula Tharp, a companion.

Miss Tharp was wounded on Jan. 6, 1972, when shots were fired into Mr. Bohmer's Ocean Beach home here from an automobile carrying several members of the so-called Secret Army.

In subsequent court proceedings, it was brought out that Steven L. Christiansen, an F.B.I. agent who was identified by court witnesses as the "control" for the Secret Army Organization for nearly six months the automatic pistol used in the attack while the police were searching for evidence to bring Miss Tharp's assailant to trial.

Mr. Bohmer, an avowed Marxist, and Miss Tharp, formerly employed by an underground newspaper twice wracked in nighttime Secret Army raids, organized the San Diego convention coalition in mid-1971. The coalition was formed to bring thousands of youthful demonstrators to San Diego to disrupt the 1972 Republican National Convention before the convention site was switched to Miami Beach.

Instructed to Open Mail

The A.C.L.U. report says that John Rasperry, whom it identified as an F.B.I. informer, has admitted that, in the winter of 1971-1972, the bureau instructed him to assassinate Mr. Bohmer, but that the attempt was never carried out.

Mr. Rasperry is also quoted as saying that he was instructed to intercept and open Mr. Bohmer's mail and to plant several M-16 rifles in the former professor's possessions to facilitate his arrest.

Another F.B.I.-directed plot to assassinate Mr. Bohmer was allegedly set up in April, 1972, with Gil Romero, a member

of the San Diego Police Department's antisubversive "Red Squad," also described as an F.B.I. undercover agent.

According to the report, Mr. Bohmer and Linco Bueno, a member of the Brown Berets, a left-wing Chicano organization, were to be lured across the Mexican border to a desolate area near Tijuana. There, they were to be killed by the Mexican Federal police for possession of a cache of smuggled weapons.

The plot was abandoned, Mr. Young reported, presumably when the Republican convention was moved to Miami Beach.

The A.C.L.U. lawyers said that Mr. Romero was also offered \$4,000 by his F.B.I. "control" if he would implicate Mr. Bohmer in the shooting of a San Diego police officer in the city's Ocean Beach section.

In the \$10.6-million lawsuit pending in Federal District Court here, former President Nixon's name heads a list of 58 defendants, including officials of the F.B.I., the Central Intelligence Agency, the National Security Council and a half-dozen other Government agencies, as well as most of the defendants in the Watergate case.

Daily Reports to Airtel

Mr. Nixon, according to Federal court records, accepted a summons at his home in San Clemente on Jan. 14.

The F.B.I.'s creation of the Secret Army Organization here, as a successor to the paramilitary Minutemen broken up by the local authorities in 1970, was said by the A.C.L.U. to have been an extension of earlier espionage activities by the bureau, including a 1969 operation with the code name "Inlet."

Under "Inlet," the F.B.I. allegedly made daily intelligence reports involving "demonstrators and domestic radicals" to John N. Mitchell, then the Attorney General, and to Mr. Nixon by way of H. R. Haldeman, the former White House Chief of Staff, and John D. Ehrlichman, the former Chief Adviser on Domestic Affairs in the Nixon White House.

The A.C.L.U. alleged that when the F.B.I. set up the Secret Army Organization here in 1971, in advance of the Republican convention, it chose as one of its two leaders Howard B. Godfrey, a former San Diego fireman, elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and, for three

years, an F.B.I. informer of the Minutemen.

Mr. Godfrey testified at the 1973 trial of another member of the Secret Army Organization who was convicted of bombing a motion picture theater that the F.B.I. furnished him or paid for \$10,000 to \$20,000 worth of weapons and explosives for the so-called Secret Army Organization over a period of five years. As a member of the Minutemen and later the Secret Army Organization, he said he was paid about \$250 a month by the bureau.

In addition to the F.B.I.'s direct control over the Secret Army, the White House allegedly maintained contact with the group through Donald H. Segretti, who was later convicted for directing a campaign of political espionage and sabotage against the Democrats in 1972.

Mr. Segretti was quoted by the A.C.L.U. as having told the Secret Army that any potential troublemakers at the November 1972 Republican would be "gotten rid of," an apparent reference to the so-called Liddy plan alluded to during the Senate Watergate hearings, whereby the leaders of anti-Nixon elements would be kidnapped and taken to Mexico.

The plan was devised by G. Gordon Liddy, former counsel of the Committee for the Re-election of the President, who was convicted of conspiracy, burglary and wiretapping in the Watergate case.

Original filed FBI-II.

See this file, 8-18 Sep 72, Los Angeles Free Press, "Secret Army on Trial," by Ron Ridenour.

Later clippings on this will be filed FBI-II.