

Kleindienst Sued For Mass Arrests

Washington

Acting Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst and 13 other defendants yesterday were accused in a civil complaint of conspiracy in the mass arrests of May Day last year in Washington.

In a suit filed in United States District Court here, the American Civil Liberties Union said the legal action "will serve as notice to Mr. Kleindienst, District Police Chief Wilson and other public officials that ours is a government of laws, that the Constitution is the supreme law of the land, and that it is not subject to suspension at the convenience or whim of any public official."

THREATS

On May 3, 1971, in response to threats by anti-war demonstrators to block traffic, the district police, U.S. Park Service police and the National Guard "swept some 7000 people off the streets and sidewalks of the District of Columbia — the vast majority of whom had committed no offense whatsoever — and herded them into detention camps and prison facilities," said Monroe H. Freedman, special ACLU counsel.

Most of those arrested were either not charged with violating the law or had their cases thrown out of court.

"It is not enough, how-

ever, to win vindication in defending innocent citizens from unwarranted criminal prosecutions," Freedman said.

"On the contrary, it is essential that those responsible for official lawlessness be subjected to constitutional restraints, and that they should respond in damages as any person who commits assault and battery, false imprisonment and other civil wrongs against other people."

DOLLARS

The suit asks the court for a declaration of constitutional rights, an injunction against "any future official lawlessness of this kind," and for compensatory damages "that will undoubtedly reach into millions of dollars."

Freedman said no figure was set for damages "because we don't know how much should be awarded for being penned up without food, shelter or toilet facilities for 27, 48 or 72 hours."

Besides Kleindienst, other defendants named in the class action suit include former Attorney General John N. Mitchell; Will Wilson, former assistant attorney general; District Mayor Walter E. Washington; Chief Jerry Wilson; the District of Columbia and members of the Justice Department, the U.S. Park Police and the Metropolitan District Police.

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