

Movement Support Network

An Anti-Repression Project of the Center for Constitutional Rights in cooperation with the National Lawyers Guild

HARASSMENT UPDATE

Second Edition.

March 1989

INCIDENTS OF FBI VISITS

*1-10-89¹

An FBI agent attempted to interview a New York graduate student in Soviet studies who visited the Soviet Union in the summer of 1987.

`F `1210 `NY `EE

*1-9-89

FBI agents attempted to interview a woman who had travelled to Libya. An agent stated that U.S. Customs had informed them of the Libya trip and they needed to check out that the woman was not "a dupe of terrorists." `F `1200 `NY `L

1--89

A Californian active in anti-Klan work received several threats and anti-semitic and racist calls. `F `1250 `CA `NE

*11-18-88

An FBI agent attempted to interview a teacher at a Texas university who has published articles on Soviet society. She had recently hosted a Soviet scholar on tour of the United States. `F `1180 `TX
`EE

*11-9-88

FBI agents attempted to interview two staff members of a Washington, D.C., Central America refugee advocacy organization.

`F `1160 `DC `CA

11--88

An FBI agent visited a California activist and sought information about political "fugitives". When the activist declined to answer questions, agent threatened to report him to "superiors." `F `1250

`CA `NL

11--88

An FBI agent attempted to visit a New York woman active in Central America work who had social contact with a Cuban diplomat. `F `1320 `NY `C

*10-29-88

FBI agents attempted to interview a longtime New Jersey activist in order to "question him about fugitives". `F `1280 `NY `NL

*10-27-88

FBI agents attempted to interview a Korean activist. When he refused to answer questions they said it would affect his immigration status. `F `1150 `NY `FS

*10-24-88

A New Jersey man active in both Central America and Phillipine solidarity work was contacted by the FBI. `F `1290 `NJ `EE

10--88

The FBI attempted to interview a staff person of a New York city Nicaragua solidarity group who had recently returned from Central America. `F `1260 `NY `CA

9--88

FBI agents attempted to visit a Pennsylvania man and left a note in his mailbox when they did not find him home. `F `1230 `PA AW

*8-12-88

FBI agents interviewed a New York medical researcher on his professional collaboration with a Cuban scientist. `F `1130 `NY `CU

*8-11-88

A Korean organization reports FBI visits to three of their members in cities around the country. `F `1150 `NY `FS

*8-10-88

Two FBI agents visited the home of two New York women and asked them to identify fugitives from photos. The women are long-time Brooklyn activists and the agents claimed they may have known the fugitives in the past. `F `1110 `NY `NL

*7-28-88

FBI agents visited a Philadelphia man and showed him photographs of people in an attempt to secure information. The man is active in a local Pledge of Resistance. `F `1300 `PA `CA

*5-24-88

In separate incidents, FBI agents visited the homes of two activists of a New York-based progressive Korean organization, and questioned members of their families. The agents asked for immigration papers and noted the information while attempting to convey that the immigration status of the entire family was jeopardized by the ongoing exercise of the young peoples' First Amendment rights. `F `1150 `NY `FS

4-15-88

The employer of a Minneapolis woman who is a Central America solidarity activist was called by an FBI agent. The agent's message was that the FBI was looking for her and trying to track her down. The woman had recently been arrested for obstructing traffic in a demonstration sponsored by the Coalition to End the War and had recently spoken at a rally to raise funds for a lawsuit against the FBI. `F `1100 `MN `CA

3-30-88

The FBI visited the mother of a U.S. citizen who lives in Cuba and who is married to a Cuban citizen and questioned her about her daughter's husband. `F `1090 `CA `CU

3-22-88

An alternative newspaper in Mobile, Alabama reported that subsequent to carrying a story about FBI spying on Central America activists in the Mobile area, one of their advertisers was approached by an FBI agent who suggested that the advertiser withdraw his business from the paper. `F `1070 `AL `CA

*2-17-88

A New York couple was surveilled and then questioned by the FBI after they showed up in photo surveillance of the Soviet consulate. The couple live near the consulate walk by it daily. `F `1310 `NY `EE

*12-8-87

A Philadelphia woman who had corresponded with a Cuban diplomat was visited at her workplace by FBI agents who identified themselves to her employer. `F `1270 `PA `C

*12--87

A woman who attended a Boston meeting on women's health issues identified herself as an FBI agent. Her revelation proved divisive to the group. `F `1130 `MA `WF

*11-27-87

Two film makers who have been working on a documentary on the Great Peace March and peace walks in the Soviet Union were visted by FBI agents who questioned them about contacts with Soviet citizens in the USSR. `F `1060 `CA `SU

*11-19-87

The FBI attempted to interview a Vermont woman active in a British feminist group that protests the presence of U.S. weapons and nuclear weapons in England. `F `1140 `VT `AW

11-2-87

The director of the Central America Peace Initiative in Austin, Texas was called by the FBI who pressed him for an interview. The director refused and two days later he began to have obvious interference on his telephone. `F `1030 `TX `CA

10-31-87

A Massachusetts man who spent two years in Nicaragua, was approached at his workplace by a friendly stranger who engaged him in conversation. In conclusion, the man said, "the FBI is looking for you and now they know where you work." A few weeks later, the man saw a car parked in front of his house and as he neared the entrance to his house, the driver of the car photographed him. `F `1040 `MA `CA `NP

10-20-87

A Middle East activist who works with the Resource Center for Nonviolence in Santa Cruz, was called by an FBI agent who said he wanted to talk about the Middle East and "ask questions about some people." The agent said he knew she had been to the Middle East, probably before she went. `F `1010 `CA `AA

9-20-87

A Salvadoran refugee who works with Comite de Refugiados in San Jose received a death threat from a man who identified himself as an FBI agent and spoke in broken Spanish. The caller knew details of the refugee's life including his California I.D. number and that he had been kidnapped in El Salvador; warning him that worse things would happen to him here. The caller also mentioned two

telephone calls that the refugee had made at the Mexican border in January 1987.

Early in September, the FBI had visited the refugee's friends in Los Angeles and shown them a photo of the man which had been taken in El Salvador before he came to the U.S. `F `1000 `CA `CA `2

9-15-87

A Pennsylvania woman who visited an East German Embassy abroad was called by the FBI who wanted to talk about "counter-intelligence" and "national security." `F `960 `PA

9-3-87

The FBI left a message for a university professor saying that they had to talk to him about a matter of national security. Eight days later, the same agent called the professor's office at the university and told him they wanted to talk about his contacts with people from countries the US considered "unfriendly," and mentioned Cuba. The man had visited the Cuban Mission to the U.N. earlier the same year. `F `950 `NY `CU `NP

8-18-87

An activist

A Central American solidarity activist received three calls from a female FBI agent, who said that she works with the bureau's counter-intelligence division and that she wanted to set up a meeting. The activist had visited the Cuban Mission to the UN a week before the first call. `F `870 `NY `CU

8-1-87

The FBI attempted to interview a man who works with the Central America Information Center in San Antonio, TX. `F `920 `TX `CA `2

7-2-87

An FBI agent visited the relative of a New Jersey woman who had helped to obtain speakers from SWAPO and ANC for African Liberation Day activities. The agent lied to the relative, saying that the woman had applied for a job at an embassy and proceeded to question her about the woman's life and associates. `F `830 `NJ `SA

7-87

The mother of a person who works with a Central America solidarity organization in Chicago was visited by an FBI agent, who questioned her about whether any Spanish-speaking persons lived in the house. He said the organization was suspected of violating

the Foreign Agents Registration Act, and that the mother should be concerned about her daughter. The agent also said the mother was on a list maintained by the INS. `F `850 `IL `CA `2

7-87

FBI agents called or visited persons affiliated with the Central America Information Center (CAIC) in San Antonio, Texas. One individual was asked to visit the FBI office where he was questioned about CAIC's activities and then given a 20-minute speech and slide presentation on the evils of communism. Another person was asked if he was teaching CAIC members guerilla warfare tactics and use of explosives. `F `860 `TX `CA `2

5-28-87

The director of an international student program at an Ohio university was questioned by the FBI about a professor and his wife. The agents said they were working in conjunction with the CIA, that they were concerned with subversive elements at the school and the danger of terrorist activity. They said the professor was involved in the sanctuary movement which was a danger to US foreign policy. `F `900 `OH `CA `NP

5-21-87

A New York elementary school teacher was visited at her workplace by FBI agents who wanted to talk to her because she had visited the Cuban Embassy. `F `780 `NY `CU

5-20-87

A N.Y. woman, active in Central America solidarity work was called at her workplace by an FBI agent who said he understood that she could provide information about Cuban officials at the U.N. When the woman told the agent to call the U.N. instead of her, he said the U.N. wouldn't give him the type of information he was looking for. `F `800 `NY `CU

*5-12-87

The mother of a six year old boy reports that FBI agents attempted to interview her and the child after he sent a letter to Michael Gorbachev in a plea for world peace. `F `1170 `NY `EE

5-6-87

The mother of a Colorado peace activist, was visited by an FBI agent and questioned about her daughter's activities. The agent also called the daughter at work. Two days later the same agent tried to question the activist's former roommate. `F `770 `CO `CA

4-1-87

In a nationwide sweep, FBI agents visited eleven people in four cities. Most of those visited had traveled to Nicaragua to share their skills under the auspices of TecNica, a Berkeley-based organization that recruits and places volunteers in development projects in Nicaragua. The majority of the FBI visits were to workplaces where agents made their presence known to employers. `F `610 `WA `CA `F `620 `CA `CA `NP `F `640 `IL `CA `NP `F `650 `CA `CA `NP `F `660 `IL `CA `NP `F `670 `IL `CA `F `680 `IL `CA `F `690 `DC `CA `NP `F `700 `IL `CA `NP `F `710 `IL `CA `NP

4-1 & 2-87

As part of the surveillance and harassment of TecNica, FBI agents telephoned and attempted to interrogate three other persons in New York and California. `F `630 `NY `CA `F `720 `CA `CA `NP `F `730 `CA `CA `NP

3-31-87

Two FBI agents visited a San Diego man while he was at his doctor's office. They showed him surveillance photographs and told him he had been surveilled since 1948. Half-an-hour later, two agents went to his home where they tried to interrogate his wife. The visits by the four agents were part of the three-day nationwide sweep aimed at gathering information about TecNica. `F `600 `CA `CA

1-29-87

A Florida man, who planned a trip to Nicaragua with the Interreligious Foundation for Community Organization (IFCO) went to pick up his passport in Miami. He was told to return twice on the same day and when he went back for the third time, he was told that the FBI wanted to talk to him. He was questioned about his birth certificate, which was genuine; his arrest record, in which he was found innocent; his marriage and the reasons for his forthcoming trip. The agents knew his history in advance. He felt very intimidated. `F `560 `FL `CA

1-26-87

Two female FBI agents in the Portland, Or. area, were reported to be contacting "peace activists," ostensibly to warn them that they might be approached by Soviet agents seeking access to "high tech" information. `F `580 `OR `AW

10-22-86

The home and the place of work of a New York man, who works with the Nicaragua Construction Brigade was visited by a FBI agent. `F `290 `NY `CA `NP

10-86

In October 1986, two FBI agents visited the head of personnel at Columbia University Institute and reported that a graduate student, who is active in Central America solidarity work and who was arrested in an anti-racist demonstration at Columbia, was a potential security risk. No classified material is kept at the institute. `F `760 `NY `CA

9-86

An attorney for Big Mountain Legal Defense Committee in Arizona, received death threats on the telephone which he reported to the police. In the course of making the report, he was informed by a policeman that there are regular "intelligence reports" on Big Mountain activists which are sent to the Relocation Commission and that the FBI and the Bureau of Indian Affairs are surveilling "two terrorist safehouses in Flagstaff," and a "terrorist camp" on Big Mountain. `F `280 `AZ `NA

8-7-86

The head of an organization, located on a New York State university campus, who is involved in Central America solidarity work, received a call from an FBI agent who wanted to talk to her about the organization. A week earlier the agent had called to request literature without identifying himself as an agent. The agent wanted to know if the organization was receiving information from any Nicaraguans in Washington D.C. and if it was taking direction from the Nicaraguans on how to run their organization. `F `340 `NY `CA

7-15-86

An Arizona woman, who wrote to the Soviet Embassy to be referred to a cultural pen pal in the USSR, was contacted by the FBI. The conversation revealed that they had intercepted and read her mail. `F `840 `AZ `SU

6-27-86

An FBI agent in San Francisco, called the workplace of a woman who had visited Nicaragua in January and April 1986. The agent asked if the firm did business with Nicaragua. Later he and a female agent visited the workplace and asked that the receptionist summon the employee. The receptionist refused. The female agent then called the employee over the telephone and after getting nowhere, called the receptionist to ask for the employee's title. `F `270 `CA `CA

6-11-86

The telephone toll records of the District of Columbia home of political activists involved in sanctuary were subpoenaed by a grand jury. `F `260 `DC `S

5-86

A few days before "Broken Rainbow" (a documentary about Big Mountain), was to be shown at the Latin American Cultural Center on May 17, in a church center in Eugene, Oregon, an FBI agent came to the church center seeking information about the cultural center. He also asserted that the FBI expected violence at Big Mountain this summer. `F `250 `OR `NA

4-14-86

On April 14, 1986, 150 persons participated in a rally and act of civil disobedience in opposition to Contra aid at 26 Federal Plaza in NYC. One of the persons arrested recognized a member of the Joint Terrorist Task Force (JTTF), who had been pointed out to him about a year ago at a John Brown Anti-Klan demonstration also in New York City. The agent was watching the participants. The arrestee said to the agent, "I know you're part of JTTF. Do you think we are all terrorists?" The agent replied, "You may not all be terrorists yet, but I'm sure there is some Soviet infiltration here." `F `240 `NY `CA

4-6-86

On April 6, 1986, the Dallas Morning News released a story told to it by Frank Varelli, a Salvadoran who became a U.S. citizen and was hired by the FBI in 1981 to analyze information received from other FBI offices and the CIA about El Salvador. In 1982 he went to El Salvador to make contact with the intelligence unit of the National Guard. Then, assuming the identity of a refugee named Gilberto Mendoza, he infiltrated Dallas CISPES as part of an FBI covert operation designed to uncover the "terrorist activities" of a number of Dallas organizations. Varelli, who had resigned in 1984, decided to tell his story because he was angry that the FBI had refused to give him back pay. `F `230 `TX `CA `2

1-16-86

Two FBI agents questioned the wife of a building superintendent about a tenant who is an activist in the Central America solidarity movement. They said she'd been to Central America and Cuba, asked where her money came from, insinuated that the tenant was part of an international communist conspiracy and warned the superintendent's wife not to tell the tenant they had been there. `F `210 `NY `CA

1-2-86

A Puerto Rican activist and member of an anti-repression committee in New York City was called by the FBI, who had also visited and questioned her mother a few weeks earlier. `F `200 `NY `PR

11-85

A Nicaraguan-born woman, who is a University of California student was recently subjected to repeated phone calls, a visit and lengthy interrogation by two FBI agents who implied that she was involved in smuggling arms to El Salvador. Soon after, she received two anonymous phone calls threatening that she would "pay" if she attended a Nicaraguan band concert in San Diego. A bag of decapitated hamsters appeared on her doorstep and a neighbor told her that a Latin man in a blue Pinto had watched her apartment all day. These events occurred a week after this woman joined 150 picketers at a speech given by contra leader, Arturo Cruz, at the university and her participation was publicized in a newspaper. `F `220 `CA `CA `2

10-7 thru 15-85

FBI agents visited the homes and worksites of at least nine Salvadoran refugees in Houston. The agents, some posing as real estate brokers, were inquiring about alleged participation in "terrorist" organizations and the refugees' alleged involvement in collecting money and/or arms to send to El Salvador. Threats were made that unless the refugees cooperated in providing information they would be turned over to the INS. Two refugees were turned over to the INS and detained. Threatening phone calls have also been left on the answering machine of the refugees. `F `190 `TX `S `2

7-30-85

A Houston apartment manager, active in the Central American solidarity movement, received a visit from an FBI agent looking for a woman friend who is also involved in solidarity work. The agent said he could not say why he was looking for the woman because it was a matter of national security. `F `180 `TX `CA

7-25-85

A US citizen living in Chicago, who was born in Central America, was visited by an FBI agent who said he was seeking information about Casa El Salvador, and about bombing and terrorist activities. The man's lawyer called the agent who informed her that he was with counter-intelligence and was interested in information about El Salvador. `F `170 `IL `CA `2

5-85

The job of a Toledo, Ohio high school teacher was threatened when the Superintendent of Schools received an anonymous phone call about the teacher's participation in the convention of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (see above). The teacher had been fired from a previous job in Ohio, in 1981, after the FBI made him the target of an investigation for "possible connection with a foreign government." FBI files released under the Freedom of Information Act bear this out. `F `160 `OH `CA

4-5-85

A N.Y. woman was visited by the FBI and was questioned about the law student who was the subject of a 3-24-85 incident. `F `150 `NY `CA `NP

4-2-85

An FBI agent attempted to interview a man in Puerto Rico who had visited Cuba. `F `390 `PR `CU

4-85

The former head of Atlanta Gay Task force wrote to the Nicaraguan and Salvadoran embassies for visas, to investigate treatment of gays. He received permission from Nicaragua and was thereafter visited by two FBI agents. `F `140 `GA `CA

3-25-85

A New York video journalist was called at home by FBI agent who said he understood that the journalist had recently traveled to Nicaragua and wanted to talk to him about it. `F `130 `NY `CA

3-24-85

An FBI agent left a card for a New York law student. The card had a note saying, "Please call me, I'd like to talk about Nicaragua. This will be a friendly chat." The student has never been to Nicaragua, but had recently attended a meeting about Nicaragua at City University of N.Y. `F `120 `NY `CA

3-21-85

After returning from fact-finding trip to Nicaragua, a Santa Cruz man was called by the FBI and asked about the trip. When the man declined to meet the agent, the agent commented that the man "sounded guilty." `F `110 `CA `CA

3-20-85

Two FBI agents attempted to interview a Detroit women active in CISPES who had visited Nicaragua with Witness for Peace. When questioned by a CCR attorney, the Detroit FBI agent said he wanted to talk to the woman about her trip to Nicaragua. The agent stated: "We try to interview everyone who takes a trip to Nicaragua, we do it for positive intelligence gathering." `F `100
`MI `CA

3-14-85

The Sysack, N.Y. office of the FBI called a New York woman and asked if she could help find a man who had apparently given them her address the previous year, when he stayed at her home. (The man is active in groups giving humanitarian aid to Nicaragua.) They said he was not in trouble, they just needed some information from him. They asked her where he was born and where he was from.
`F `090 `NY `CA

3-13-85

An Atlanta FBI Special Agent called the Chicago Lawyers Guild office to ask questions about a Cuban scheduled to speak at a Guild convention in Atlanta. When the call was returned to him, he explained that he had made a mistake in calling -- he was a new agent. `F `080 `Il `CU

3-12-85

A Maryland furniture salesman was visited by the FBI after he went to the Nicaraguan Embassy to find out about importing furniture. The agents told him, "Anyone who pays visits to Iron Curtain country embassies gets visited by the FBI." `F `070 `MD `CA

2-27-85

A Washington, D.C. journalist, writing an article in the form of a debate between the Nicaraguan Ambassador and Jesse Helms, went to the Nicaraguan Embassy two or three times. He received a call and then a visit from two FBI agents, wanting to know what he was doing at the embassy. `F `060 `DC `CA

2-21-85

A union organizer from Pennsylvania, went on a brigade to Nicaragua, December 18, 1983. After he returned, the FBI called twice on the same day to make arrangements to question him about his trip. `F `050 `PA `CA

2-85

A New York man went on a construction brigade to Nicaragua. The brigade was sponsored by Westchester Peoples Action Coalition. The FBI visited his landlord three times: the week of Dec. 22, 1984; week of Dec. 25, 1984; and in early February 1985. `F `040
`NY `CA

1-15-85

Two FBI agents went to a house in New Orleans where a woman used to live and asked her former room-mate about her. On 2-4-85, FBI agents left a card for the woman at her present address; they returned on 2-6-85. The woman is active in the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) and notes that other CISPES people were contacted by FBI during summer. `F `030
`LA `CA

1-3-85

A Milwaukee woman who works with a refugee organization, was visited once at home and twice at her job by FBI agents after she had made visits to Nicaragua. `F `020 `WI `S `2

1-85

A USOCA activist was harassed on his job by FBI agents who also interviewed his co-workers. `F `310 `CA `CA

12-84

A USOCA activist was visited by the FBI after traveling to Nicaragua. `F `320 `CA `CA

7 & 8-84

A New York City woman, active in both the Puerto Rican Independence struggle and in Central America solidarity work, began to experience problems with her landlord. She suddenly received several eviction notices and was told by her landlord to remove her car from her assigned parking space or face a possible lawsuit and eviction because she had out-of-state license plates. She received a notice that she was not properly disposing of her garbage. When she inquired, the landlord pulled several letters from her file which he alleged had been strewn about the incinerator. The letters were unopened and had never been received by her. In September 1984, the landlord finally informed her that his treatment of her was brought about by pressure from FBI and IRS agents and a Special Task Force of the New York City Police Department. He told her that he had spent some 12 hours discussing her and her file with these agents. `F `010 `NY `CA

6-1-84

A Utica, Michigan woman who went to Nicaragua on a work brigade, was called by a Detroit FBI agent who said he wanted to meet with her to discuss her trip. A follow up letter indicates that the contact was an attempt to "meet our responsibilities under the Attorney General's guidelines for FBI Foreign Intelligence Collection and Foreign Counter Intelligence investigations..." `F `520 `MI `CA

6-84

A U.S. Out of Central America (USOCA) activist was visited by the FBI after visiting Nicaragua. `F `330 `CA `CA

5-14-84

A Florida man who visited Cuba was visited by an FBI agent for a second time. `F `540 `FL `CU

12-83

Twelve of thirteen members of the Central American Solidarity Coalition in Wisconsin, were visited by the FBI. In one instance, the agents read a list of names of CASC members and implied terrorist links. The agents asked questions about the Milwaukee Interfaith delegation that traveled to Nicaragua in December 1983. An attorney for one of the CASC members wrote to the Milwaukee FBI and they declined to state the reasons for the investigation. The visits continued in January 1984. `F `750 `WI `CA

1. Asterisk before date indicates that incident did not appear in the First Edition. Asterisk appearing within date indicates that the day of the month upon which incident occurred is not available.