

NBC Covers Cointelpro Against Labor Committees

The following is a transcript of a TV news report by NBC reporter Carl Stern. The segment was aired July 5 on NBC Nightly News.

David Brinkley (NBC): Among the sensations in Washington in the last year or two was the discovery the FBI, the CIA and Internal Revenue had been snooping and spying on people in great numbers — often illegally and often without reason.

There were promises it would stop — that Congress would stay on top of it. Carl Stern reports that in at least one case, neither has happened.

Carl Stern (NBC): Fifteen months ago Attorney General Edward Levi issued guidelines limiting FBI surveillance and infiltration to groups breaking federal law and using force or violence, or about to do so. Since then, the number of domestic security investigations has dropped to 214.

But an investigation by NBC News shows that the government may still be doing far more than the facts warrant to surveil political fringe groups — and that Congress is not keeping watch though it promised to do so.

This building houses the Washington office of the National Caucus of Labor Committees, a left-wing organization with about one thousand members.

A recent report by Attorney General Griffin Bell described the group as a “violence-oriented Marxist revolutionary organization” involved in “beatings, kidnappings, and other forms of intimidation.”

But the group claims that information is just plain wrong:

Richard Cohen (NCLC): I’d simply tell the FBI that they are absolutely wrong in that — that they know they are wrong in that.

Stern: O.K. Do you have a potential for violence? Do you intend violence?

Cohen: Absolutely not.

Stern: Do you intend to break the federal criminal law?

Cohen: Absolutely not.

Stern: To find out why NCLC was being surveilled, we

asked the Justice Department whether it had prosecuted any member. The answer was “no.”

Department sources said the files showed violence by NCLC in eight cities —

But checking through police records only two arrests were found in Buffalo and two in Philadelphia — none more recent than four years ago.

The police departments said they regard NCLC as a nuisance, but not criminal.

These photos supposedly depict NCLC violence. But of four persons named as having been physically attacked, none said it was true, though one *did* say he’d received late night obscene phone calls from NCLC.

Government records show the group threatened to kill a Congressman but that is disputed and no charges were filed.

The records also suggest the group started a fight in Seattle — but Seattle police records show just the opposite occurred.

Nonetheless, NCLC is known, to those who have studied it, as very abrasive:

Harvey Kahn (Repression Information Project): NCLC has been attacking — I don’t know if violently is the most accurate word to describe it. Certainly they have been assaulting, disrupting — ah — using bullhorns to shout at people on picket lines. They’ve been involved in actually breaking into a meeting room and demanding the microphone. They’ve tried to take over organizations.

Stern: This panel — the Senate Intelligence Committee — is supposed to be the watchdog — to review FBI surveillances. Yet it says it hasn’t checked any in the year that the guidelines have been in effect.

The Justice Department says the surveillance is warranted because members of NCLC are “emotionally unstable” and pose “a potential for violence.”

But that does not seem to meet the guidelines *standard*...

Much of the file information seems stale or inaccurate...

Congress is *not* watching —

And the types of surveillances the guidelines supposedly ruled out, *still* seem to be going on.

Carl Stern, NBC News, Washington