

January 31, 1983

OPEN LETTER AGAINST U.S. GOVERNMENT REPRESSION

We are deeply concerned by and condemn steps being taken by the U.S. government to utilize the legal system to suppress political activity and develop mechanisms for unofficial political internment. As has been true in many countries, increased institutional repression is first directed at those movements, organizations, and individuals who promote revolutionary social change.

In particular, the use of the FBI's 15-month-long "investigation", aimed at destroying the Black Liberation Army and suppressing the revolutionary Black liberation movement and white anti-imperialist movement, has, in fact, been precedent-setting in this regard. The federal grand jury has been used to coercively gather intelligence for the FBI and imprison ten people for refusing to collaborate. Recently, the grand jury issued a RICO (Racketeering influenced and Corrupt Organizations) conspiracy indictment in order to criminalize and discredit the building of a movement among Black people that will win their national liberation. The RICO Act was designed for use against organized crime. This is the first time the government has used this conspiracy law, which carries penalties of 20 years and up, against revolutionary movements. The indictment includes Sekou Odinga, New Afrikan freedom fighter and Prisoner of War, Dr. Mutulu Shakur, Nehanda Abiodun, Bilal Sunni-Ali, Chui Ferguson, Jamat, Iliana Robinson, Nilse Cobeo, Susan Rosenberg, Silvia Baraldini and Dr. Alan Berkman. Of these eleven people, four are still free.

Silvia Baraldini and Dr. Alan Berkman, both members of the May 19th Communist Organization, were released on bail. From the outside, they have continued to build support for New Afrikan freedom fighters and their anti-imperialist allies, to expose government counterinsurgency, and to build a resistance movement based on non-collaboration. The government put in a motion requiring their hair, handwriting and voice exemplars as part of pre-trial discovery. These physical exemplars were requested as part of the on-going investigation being conducted by the grand jury. In essence, these requests are a grand jury subpoena in another form. For this reason, Silvia Baraldini and Alan Berkman will not turn over the exemplars. To do so, given that this is a counterinsurgency investigation, not a routine legal proceeding, would undermine the principled stand of non-collaboration taken by them and others before the grand jury. This is a blatant attempt on the part of the government at political internment because they will be held in contempt and imprisoned as soon as they refuse to turn over their exemplars. The government is making it clear that it will not allow political people to function when they are out on bail.

When the U.S. government tried to legalize repressive counterinsurgency programs through strengthening criminal codes such as the S-1 Bill, it was defeated by a huge public outcry. Now, the government's strategy is to institute repressive legislation and set legal precedents bit by bit. Each one of those efforts needs to be exposed and condemned. We condemn these precedents and support people's right to be part of revolutionary movements.

Honorable Bruce McM. Wright
Leonard Weinglass, Esq.
Arthur Kinoy
Fred Brooks, Attorney,
United Church of Christ,
Commission for Racial Justice
William Kunstler, Esq.
Charles Garry, Esq.
Doron Weinberg, Esq., Past Pres.,
Natl. Lawyers Guild
Martin Sastre, Elizabeth Sastre
Fufani Sunni-Ali
Akil Al-Jundi
Ti-Grace Atkinson
Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional
Pan Africanist Congress
National Committee to Free
Puerto Rican POW's
Comite Contra la Repression
Congolese National Liberation Front
Iranian Students Asso., Austin, TX
Black Citizens Task Force, Austin
Southern Africa Liberation Action
Committee, Austin
National Lawyers Guild, Dallas
Communist Workers Party, Houston
Ernie McMillian, Chairman, Houston
Black United Front
Billie Stoner, Sababu, Dallas
Tayoba Ngenge, Asst. Instructor, UT
Michael Deutsch, Esq., People's Law
Office, Chicago

Melinda Power, Esq., Westtown
Community Law Office, Chicago
Jose Lopez, Puerto Rican
Cultural Center, M.L.N., Chicago
Jeff Blackburn, NLG, Houston
Dr. John Warfield, Univ. of Texas
Professor Tom Philpott, UT
Donny Usery, Instructor, Austin
Community College
T.A. Laughlin, Instructor, Austin
Community College
Oran McMichael, CWP Houston
Joe Crews, Esq., Dallas
Brody Colmen, Esq., Austin
Jim Simons, Esq., Austin
Cary Cohen, Esq., Austin
Vivian Laskes Ward
Catherine Shatcher
Andrea Wolfe
David Goshen
Peter Stradinski
Raymond B. Emerson
Sally O'Brien, WBAI
Donald E. Davis, Professor
Hunter College
Gustin L. Reichbach, Esq.
Judith L. Holmes, Esq.
Tom Somarelli
Viola Somarelli
Stephanie Safran
Rev. Frank Morales
Farnad Dehdanzaden

Lean Horton
Rebecca Lurie
Maria Rivera
Sonia Pigott
Michael Lashley
Sue Herschaft
Mananne J. DeCesare
Giennie Thomas
Jeanne Ketchel
Cathleen Meyers
Edward Montgomery
Beverly C. Haynes
Sue Cuccia
Frank Sheed
Marty Beas
Rose Inman
Miriam Minkowitz, Ph.D.
Andy Shand
Tony Miller
Emily M. Bass, Esq.
Susan DeJesus
Robert J. Boyle, Esq.
Constance A. Blair
Susan Yeats
Claudia Steinkoenig
Dare Dozier
Rhonda Valert
Kathy Knight
Paul Barth
Meie Franklin
Ty Romice
Robert C. Nash

Elaine H. Streeter
Julie Turngston
Michael Charley
Jeff Tylvonski
John Pugh
Herbert H. Alter
Anthony Trice
Ann Hackler
Sarah Breeden
Oscar Scott
Stuart Hanlon, Esq.
Irying Feinstein
Wim Rosenber
Catherine A. Rutgers
Robin Lewis
Jane Segal
Jaylene Mullin
Dolores Bisceglia
Peter Schmitz
Eric A. Stocn
Chris Milleaves
Joseph Pamarowskis
Lee W. Nyberry
Mari Gadin
Victoria A. Suttory
Nancy Stolof
Jeffrey Cohen
Michael Lehman
Elizabeth Camp
Barbara Rary
Evelyn Rodriguez
Kwame Kalimara

Madeline Todet
Jame Beck
Teodora Anderson
John Flynn
Adam Stern
Sharon Flood, Esq.
Ed Robertson
Denise Windt
Walter Jonsson
David Black
Kathy Marcel
David Kennedy
Susan Borner
Marie Chauvin
Mike Long
Alan Jones
Elijah Brush
Tim Carlson
Cindy Burke
Howard Wright
N. Marish
Forrest Fox
Sharon Davidson
P. Frauznt
D. Rutherford
Billy Rae King
John Slack
Michael Bishop
Bob Roberts
Rubin Fuentes
Jonathan Oberman
Michael Shen, Esq.
and many others too numerous to list