

# Committee for the Suit Against Government Misconduct

P.O. Box 254 · Peter Stuyvesant Station · New York, N.Y. 10009

September 17, 1979

Dear Friends,

We are writing to ask your political and financial support for the Committee for the Suit Against Government Misconduct, a group which we believe is doing vital work to build the movement to expose and stop illegal government counter-intelligence activities.

COINTELPRO (the code name for counter-intelligence program) adapted for domestic use the wartime techniques used by the United States in Vietnam. It included wiretaps and break-ins, false arrests and police attacks. Tens of thousands of people now have FBI dossiers maintained on them -- people who signed anti-war petitions, attended meetings or marched in Washington, D.C.; people who struggled against university expansion policies, ROTC, or Dow Chemical recruiters; people who went South to help voter registration drives or supported Black leaders who were arrested. Through the COINTELPRO program, thousands of Third World activists have been jailed, and many murdered -- among them Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, killed by the Chicago Police Department and the FBI in 1969; Malcolm X assassinated in 1965; and Anna Mae Aquash, a Native American woman murdered on the Pine Ridge Reservation in 1973. Now, while many activists continue to be imprisoned because of COINTELPRO operations against them, the government would like to close the books on COINTELPRO. We cannot let this happen.

The Committee for the Suit Against Government Misconduct is a key front in the battle against COINTELPRO. The major focus of the Committee's work is a massive civil law suit, Clark, et al. v. USA, brought by eight anti-imperialist activists. The suit charges Richard Nixon, past and present officials of the FBI, the Department of Justice and others with having "harassed plaintiffs, disrupted their private lives, and [having] taken punitive measures, outside of due process of law, against the plaintiffs." (quoted from the Complaint). The suit demands \$100 million in damages and an end to all such illegal government counter-intelligence operations. Damages won will be used to help the many targets of COINTELPRO activities.

The plaintiffs in Clark, et al. v. USA have been the targets of illegal surveillance and harassment for over ten years -- they were all named as the targets of the illegal activities for which ex-FBI Director Gray, ex-Assistant Directors Felt and Miller, and ex-Agent Kearney were indicted on criminal charges. Their phones were tapped, their homes broken into, and their mail opened because they were activists in the anti-Vietnam war movement, the anti-imperialist women's movement, and in solidarity with the Black liberation struggle. The attacks on them were a part of the FBI's hunt for the Weather Underground Organization; more fundamentally, however, those attacks were designed to undermine any support by white people for the struggles of Third World peoples here and around the world.

The Committee for the Suit Against Government Misconduct bases its work on the understanding that it is the fight to free political prisoners who have been jailed as a result of government counter-insurgency attacks that strikes at the heart of COINTELPRO. The struggles of those who have been the targets of the most secretive and violent counter-intelligence operations can most clearly expose the full breadth of the government's crimes. The Committee does its work under the leadership of the National Task Force for COINTELPRO Litigation and Research, a group which is coordinating law suits brought by many Black prisoners of war, including Geronimo Pratt, the Republic of New Afrika 11, and Assata Shakur.

The U.S. Congress is currently considering a new charter for the Federal Bureau of Investigation. FBI Director William Webster is waging a major public relations campaign to convince the public that the new charter will end, once and for all, the past "excesses" of that agency. But illegal activities by the FBI, the CIA and other intelligence agencies are not things of the past, they are continuing to this day. They were never "excesses" but rather a calculated strategy to destroy the movements for liberation of Black, Puerto Rican, Native American and Chicano/Mexicano people within the U.S., and to smash the rising tide of protest that shook this country in the late 60's and early 70's. Under the guise of curbing the powers of the FBI, this new charter strengthens the FBI's ability to continue its illegal activities, and its ability to continue to cover up its crimes. This situation demands the attention and action of all progressive people.

Since the Committee filed Clark v. USA, the plaintiffs have continued to experience COINTELPRO attacks. On the day the suit was filed in May, 1978, Ms. Biberman's house in Brooklyn was broken into and ransacked, with little or nothing taken. And on June 23rd, 1978, when Ms. Clark was speaking at a public forum at Columbia University organized to expose COINTELPRO, her upper west side Manhattan apartment was totally destroyed in a fire that left numerous families, as well as herself and her roommates, homeless. The law suit's legal team has experienced wiretaps and break-ins as well during the last year.

The work of groups like the Committee for the Suit Against Government Misconduct challenges the government's continuing cover-up of the true nature of its activities -- not a few cases of illegal surveillance carried out by a handful of overzealous agents, but a systematic strategy to destroy movements for social change within this country.

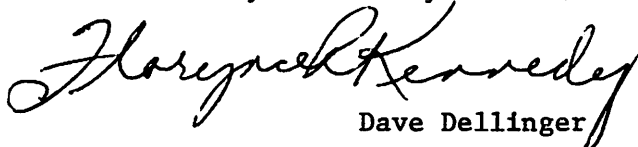
The success or failure of this lawsuit, Clark v. USA, will set the terms for future litigation against government counter-intelligence programs. We cannot allow limited financial resources to determine how far it can be pursued. The defendants raised over half a million dollars to defend themselves and their actions! As the legal fight heightens, so do the expenses. It requires tens of thousands of dollars -- each deposition costs a minimum of \$500; a transcript for one day of hearings costs over \$500; appeals on different issues will run into the thousands. Your help and the help of other progressive people like yourselves is necessary.

Participate in the campaign to expose COINTELPRO. Send money today to the Committee for the Suit Against Government Misconduct. Return the enclosed card today; tax deductible contributions can be arranged. Please contact the Committee.

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Florynce Kennedy



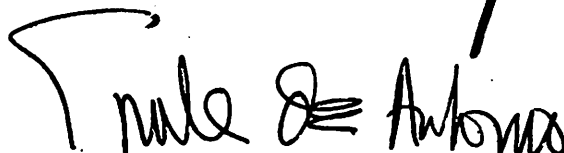
Dave Dellinger



Grace Paley



Emile de Antonio



Enclosures