

# National Task Force For Cointelpro Litigation & Research

POST OFFICE BOX 65  
BRONX, NEW YORK 10473  
(212) 868-9858

## STAFF

Randolph Simms  
*Executive Director*

Jeannine Smith  
*Administrative Assistant*

Afeni Shakur  
*National Coordinator*

Mutulu Shakur  
*National Coordinator*

## STAFF ATTORNEYS

Lewis Myers  
*Chief Counsel*

Jeffrey Haas  
Chicago, Illinois

Jonathan Lubell  
New York, New York

Susan Tippograph  
New York, New York

Cheyenne Bell  
San Francisco, California

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For 15 years, the FBI coordinated a program of infiltration, distortion, slanderous propaganda and subversive warfare. This program sanctioned vigilante terrorism against dissidents and non-whites who dared to challenge the policies of the United States government and/or any of its agencies.

In 1958, COINTELPRO was unleashed against the Communist Party U.S.A. In 1961 it focused on the Socialist Workers Party. In 1964, this program was enlisted against so-called white-hate groups. In 1967, its target was the Black Liberation Movement. In 1968, the New Left fell victim to these violent conspiracies.

COINTELPRO has done us all a great disservice. We have been constantly put on the defensive, our rhetoric has been challenged, our movements have been monitored, and our sincere efforts to effect change in our common lives have been subverted by government officials and spies. These criminals who instigated, planned and perpetrated disruption, distrust and acts which split the Black Liberation Movement also succeeded in retarding the growth of progressive forces.

In 1978 we find ourselves still trying to regroup after a decade of intensive fighting -- physically, morally and materially. A casual glance at the casualty list shows that the forces of resistance have suffered heavy and irreparable damages. Weapons which were used against us make us shudder and rejoice at the same time. For in spite of the awesome fury we have encountered our continued presence here in America attests to the fact that we are still in existence, and that we are still ready and willing to resist.

Our organizations have been disrupted and bitter disputes have developed within our perimeters. Internal squabbles, mostly fanned by enemy forces, have dissipated our organized defense mechanisms. Distrust and paranoia prevent us from taking bold actions together. I do not want you to think that we should not be distrustful. Our distrust should, however, be logical and rationally directed. This can only happen when we have developed intelligence systems that serve our own interests and not those of our enemies.

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COINTELPRO was successful in many of its efforts. Jobs were lost, homes were broken up, reputations were ruined, organizations were crippled and destroyed, and people were jailed and/or killed. For many Blacks, the government's program meant much more than psychological warfare against them and their organizations. For some, like Bunchy Carter and John Huggins, Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, for Martin Luther King, Jr., for Malcolm X, for George Jackson, and many more, it meant a signed and delivered death warrant with no repercussions for their executioners.

For Elmer Geronimo Pratt, it has meant seven years in solitary confinement on charges which the State and Federal agencies helped to fabricate. Only last month the State of California conceded he was held there on groundless charges stemming from intelligence files.

For Assata Shakur, it has meant being a virtual kidnap victim for four years while two states attempted to concoct enough of a case to convict her and finally succeeding in not convicting her of a single violent act. Despite these facts, Assata was given a life sentence and is presently confined in Alderson Prison.

For the Republic of New Africa 11, it has meant six years of imprisonment on charges instigated by agents of the Mississippi government who admitted to the press in 1971, just prior to their arrest, that they had exhausted all legal means to rid their state of the scourge of revolutionary nationalism.

To the Black community, it has meant the sabotage and total destruction of the most powerful movement for Black self-determination -- since at least the days of Marcus Garvey, and possibly in the history of this country. It is perhaps appropriate to mention here, that the United States Government was also responsible for the dissipation of the Garvey movement, utilizing some of the same tricks then as it put into effect in the '60s and '70s.

For the African Peoples Party, and earlier the Black Panther Party, it has been an invading army of criminals, seeking to curb the tide of revolutionary nationalist resistance by breaking into homes and brandishing guns in the faces of women and children alike.

Although the U.S. government purportedly disbanded the official program designated COINTELPRO, weeks after its

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public discovery in 1971, officials admit the functions of the program are still being carried out through other government functions under the label of "intensive investigation."

However, a cursory glance at history shows us that these tactics of government subversion will never be abandoned by the enemy. As far back as the various slave rebellions, we find the same tactics being used, in less sophisticated fashions, against Blacks organizing for self-determination. It has never been in this country's stated interest to allow Blacks to organize or educate themselves on any scale, especially under banners which called for Black unity.

Today the situation has only changed in that the counterintelligence programs and techniques used against us are more technologically advanced. The government maintains files on each of us who at any given time has been publically and sometimes privately outraged by the wanton killings of our young children -- the Birmingham children, Clifford Glover, Emmet Till, Tyrone Gupton, Raymond Evan -- by white nationalists who care nothing for our lives, and are less concerned by our deaths.

Files are kept on all of us who are incensed over the debasement of our men and our women routinely thrown into prison and charged with crimes, for which their accusers should be accused.

Our intelligence is insulted by ignoramuses who want to believe Black people are inately criminal in character. Many Black prisoners today began their sentences in the days of the Civil Rights era or the days of the Black Panther Party. In other words, there is a great relationship between the influx of Black prisoners and the rise of Black resistance. This is not because Black resistance flushed out Black criminals. It is because the state, federal and local government agencies have found it much more expedient to 1) label Black resisters criminals, 2) jail them and 3) isolate them from their families, friends and community. In this way any unity being bred would be desolated.

We can see that these campaigns of sabotage against Black national resistance are not now, nor are they liable to go away in the near future. A primary consequence of these attacks is the growing number of African prisoners of war crowding jails across the country. These prisoners are products of oppression and are the direct result of American

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violence; descendants of Emmet Till, the four little girls in the Birmingham church, Medgar Evers, and the Scottsboro Brothers. They are eye-witnesses to the America which invited and arrogantly orchestrated the murders of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Malcolm X.

We must support our prisoners of war because they are our consciences. They are the part of us that cannot turn out the light and forget our goals. They are the part of us that must be battle ready 24 hours a day; for they are constantly fighting for their lives, whether in Parchment, Attica, Green Haven or other prisons throughout the land.

It is important to remember that Black people have not always been the major occupants of U.S. prisons. Prisons, like drugs, were pushed into prominence in our lives at exactly the same period of history that Black resistance began its major upsurge. It would seem that every time Blacks demonstrate unity against lawless acts, they become the targets of overt, bureaucratic and repressive tactics. Whenever groups or individuals move to give direction and mobility to Black people to solve their day-to-day and national problems, they are singled out for attack and extermination. We can help prevent this by aggressively lending aid to those people who are victims of this abuse, and by giving our support to those who are assisting them in securing redress.

LET US WORK to free the Wilmington 10, Assata Shakur, Geronimo Pratt, Sundiata Acoli, the RNA 11, and all of the many brothers and sisters who still languish in jail as a result of COINTELPRO.