

OUR 41 YEARS OF HISTORY AS A TESTAMENT TO OUR FUTURE

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Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression

When The National Alliance was founded in 1973, 41 years ago, our nation was confronted with a new era of racist and political repression. In the decade leading up to our founding convention in Chicago in 1973 all the various strands of the peoples' movement had come under attack. We were founded at a time when, coming hot on the heels of the Civil Rights Revolution, our movement was beleaguered but unbowed by the so-called white backlash and covert, clandestine government repression. The constitutionally guaranteed right of the people to organize and protest was being illegally undermined. We were born in a crucible of struggle when a dark cloud, like an ominous warning of an oncoming storm, hung low on the horizon and the dusk of twilight was followed by a long night of racist and political repression. First there was a whole train of assassinations of civil rights workers in Alabama and Mississippi; then the murders of leaders such as Medgar Evers, Minister Malcolm X and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., quickly followed by the blatant murders of members of the Black Panther Party. Today we know that these vicious attacks on our movements were more often than not the work of local police, state sovereignty commissions and the FBI.

The revelations started in 1971 when "the Citizens Committee to Investigate the FBI" removed secret files from an FBI office and released them to the press. As a result of this courageous act FBI agents started resigning and blowing the whistle on illegal covert actions against people who were simply exercising their rights to organize and protests. This plus the congressional investigation led by Senator Frank Church made the American public aware for the first time that agencies of government, the FBI and state and local police had moved outside the laws they were sworn to uphold. They created secret and systematic methods of fraud, surveillance, violent force and yes, even methods of assassination (as is documented in the case of the murder of Fred Hampton). The entire operation was known as the Counter Intelligence Program or COINTELPRO; its founder and author was none other than the FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover.

In the words of Hoover the purpose of COINTELPRO was to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit and otherwise neutralize" groups and individuals who were engaged in constitutionally protected political activity. All strands of the peoples movement were attacked from the NAACP to the National Lawyers Guild, to Black Nationalist groups like the Republic of New Africa, to peace and solidarity movements, from Martin Luther King to Caesar Chavez , from feminist to gay-lesbian to countless human rights groups and organizations we don't have the space to name. No one was spared.

In spite of all the various turns of events where the government used agents, hired provocateurs, stool pigeons and carefully shielded assassins to destroy our movements we still continued to fight back. A remarkable example of the resilience of the people was the movement to Free the Soledad Brothers.

The Soledad Brothers were George Jackson, Fletta Drumgo and John Wesley Clutchette. They were accused of killing a white prison guard who had murdered three Black prisoners. Fay Stender, an attorney and activist organized the Soledad Brothers Defense Committee (SBDC). The SBDC organized a wide variety of political activists and celebrities such as Jane Fonda, Marlon Brando, Julian Bond, Tom Hayden, William Kunstler and Angela Davis. Angela emerged as the leader of the movement, in 1970, when the California Legislative Black Caucus initiated an investigation of the Soledad Prison.

Shortly thereafter, on August 7, 1970, Jonathan Jackson, 17 year old brother of George Jackson held up the court room at Marin County Civic Center and temporarily liberated three San Quentin prisoners, and in an attempt to bid for the freedom of the Soledad Brothers he took Superior Court Judge Harold Haley and three female jurors hostage. During the attempted getaway everyone was killed except Ruchell Magee and one of the jurors.

Because Angela Davis had purchased one of the guns she was charged with “aggravated kidnapping and first degree murder in the death of Judge Harold Haley.” Aware of the trumped up nature of these charges and the fact that she was already a target of a vicious anti-communist campaign in the state of California Angela decided not to surrender to the authorities. Thus she became a fugitive and the third woman in U.S. history to be placed on the FBI’s most wanted list.

Angela later wrote, in her autobiography, that while she was a so-called “fugitive” she hid in friends' homes and moved from place to place at night. On October 13, 1970, FBI agents found her at the Howard Johnson Motor Lodge in New York City. Upon her capture President Richard M. Nixon congratulated the FBI and called Angela a “...dangerous terrorist....”.



Angela Davis with [Valentina Tereshkova](#)

On January 5, 1971, after several months in jail, Davis appeared at the Marin County Superior Court and declared her innocence before the court and nation: "I now declare publicly before the

court, before the people of this country that I am innocent of all charges which have been leveled against me by the state of California."

Across the nation, thousands of people who agreed with her declaration began organizing a Free Angela Davis movement. In New York City, black writers formed a committee called the Black People in Defense of Angela Davis. By February 1971 more than 200 local committees in the United States, and 67 in foreign countries worked to liberate Angela Davis from prison. At this time Angela insisted that the movement should not be about just freeing her but all political prisoners and so our battle cry became Free Angela Davis and All Political Prisoners. Solidarity movements sprung up everywhere and not only in the Eastern block of socialist countries and Cuba but in Canada, England, France, Chile, Jamaica, Vietnam and in the liberation movements in Africa the demand to Free Angela Davis and All Political Prisoners was persistently raised.

While we don't have the time to chronicle this, perhaps most massive social movement of the twentieth century we must not neglect to point out that this very movement coming in the wake of one of the most repressive and murderous acts of government against the peoples' movement showed us our future in how to build mass movements in defense of the rights of the people to organize and protest against injustice.

Thanks to the mass movement to Free Angela Davis and All Political Prisoners Angela was found not guilty by an all-white jury. Her experience as a political prisoner and a person whom the state was prepared to execute because of her political beliefs has been an inexhaustible source of strength for our struggle and is one of the foundation stones of our movement to end racist and political repression.

When Angela was freed she posed to us this challenge: Now we need to free all political prisoners; stop the Crimes of Government against our movement and abolish prisons. Thus the stage was set founding the National Alliance Against Racist and Political (NAARPR).

In the Spring of 1973 nearly 700 grass roots organizers, leaders and rank and filers called for the formation of a national organization of organizations, groups and individuals based on united, organized struggle. Following is the list of sponsors on our Call for the founding conference of NAARPR:

- Rev. [Ralph D. Abernathy](#) - Reverend, [SCLC](#)
- [John J. Abt](#) - Attorney, NY – for Angela Davis
- [Eqbal Ahmed](#) - "former political prisoner", [IPS](#)
- [Hursel Alexander](#), President, [Local 1108 AFSCME](#)
- [Herbert Aptheker](#) - [American Institute for Marxist Studies AIMS](#),
- [Max Aragan](#) - V.P., [Local 26, ILWU](#)
- [Ramon Arbona](#) - [Puerto Rican Socialist Party PRSP](#),
- [Fred Bell](#) - political prisoner
- [Jane Benedict](#) - [Metropolitan Council on Housing](#) ,
- Rev. [Daniel Berrigan](#) - former political prisoner, [Catonsville 9](#),
- Rev. [Philip Berrigan](#) - former political prisoner - [Catonsville 9](#),

- [Julian Bond](#) - Georgia State Legislature
- [Anne Braden](#) - [Southern Patriot](#), [SCEF](#) which publishes [Southern Patriot](#)
- [Carl Braden](#) - Kentucky, [SCEF](#)
- [Allan Brotsky](#) - attorney, San Francisco [NLG](#)
- [Margaret Burnham](#) - attorney, on Angela Davis' defense team
- [Haywood Burns](#) - [National Conference of Black Lawyers NCBL](#),
- Rev. [Ben Chavis](#) - political prisoner (i.e. [Charlotte 10](#)), Reverend, later to become the leader of the NAARPR
- Prof. [Noam Chomsky](#) - Professor, [academia](#)
- [Robert Chrisman](#) - [Black Scholar](#)
- [Virginia Collins](#) - V.P., [Republic of New Africa RNA](#),
- [Walter Collins](#) - former political prisoner, [SCEF](#) -
- Rep. [John Conyers, Jr](#) - [Representative D-MICH](#) -
- [Marvel Cooke](#) - [National Legal Defense Fund](#) -
- [Bert Corona](#) - Executive Secretary, [Casa Hermanidad](#),
- [Richard Criley](#) - Exec. Director, [Chicago Committee to Defend the Bill of Rights](#), [National Committee to Abolish HUAC](#)
- [Ricardo Cruz](#) - [Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund](#) L.A.
- [Margo Dashielle](#) - Berkley, California [Black Caucus](#)
- [Angela Y. Davis](#) - former political prisoner, [Communist Party USA CPUSA](#)
- [Sallye B. Davis](#) - Birmingham, mother of [Angela Davis](#)
- Rep [Ronald V. Dellums](#) - [Representative D-CA](#),
- [Dave Dellinger](#) - [Liberation](#) magazine
- [Ethel Dotson](#) - Richmond, California [Welfare Rights](#)
- [Armida Duran](#) - Director, [Clinica Familiar del Barrio](#), L.A.
- Rev. [Alvin Dortch](#) - Exec. Dir., [SCLC West SCLC](#),
- Rev. [Edgar Edwards](#) - Minister, Reverend, [Immanuel United Church of Christ UCC](#)
- [Chuck Eppinette, Jr](#) - [North Carolina Resistance Resistance](#)
- [Alicia Escalante](#) - Director, [National Chicano Welfare Rights Organization](#)
- [Al Evanoff](#) - V.P. [Distributive Workers](#) i.e. [District 65 Distributive Workers of America](#)
- [Arthur O. Eve](#) - [N.Y. State Legislature](#)
- [Stanley Faulkner](#) - attorney, N.Y.
- [Abe Feinglass](#) - [Amalgamated Meatcutters and Butchers Amalgamated Meatcutters & Butcher Workmens Union](#), and the [World Peace Council WPC](#)
- [Carlos Feliciano](#) - political prisoner, Puerto Rican terrorist
- Rev. [Richard Fernandez](#) - Exec. Director, [Clergy and Laity Concerned CALC](#), a leader of the [Hanoi Lobby](#), Reverend
- Rev. [W.W. Finlator](#) - Raleigh, N.C., Reverend
- Rev. [Allen Fisher](#) - [Committee for Racial Justice United Church of Christ](#), [Committee for Racial Justice, United Church of Christ, UCC](#)
- [Harold Ford](#) - [Tennessee State Legislature](#), soon to be a member of the U.S. House of Representatives [Representative](#)
- [Odell Franklin](#) - Secretary-Treasurer, [Local 10 ILWU](#)
- [Corky Gonzalez](#) - [Crusade for Social Justice](#)
- [Pat Gorman](#) - [Amalgamated Meatcutters and Butchers](#),

- [Jesse Gray](#) - [N.Y. State Legislature](#) , group, [National Tenants Organization NTO](#)
- Father [James E. Groppi](#) -
- [Gene Guerrero](#) - [Georgia ACLU](#) [ACLU](#),
- Rev. [Edward Guinan](#) - [CSP](#), Washington, D.C.
- [Larry Gurley](#) - [National Black Caucus AFT](#)
- [Jose Gutierrez](#) - National Chairman, [La Raza Unida La Raza](#)
- [Fannie Lou Hamer](#) - (no. id.) a leader of the leftist [Mississippi Freedom Democrats](#)
- [James Haughton](#) - [Fightback](#) i.e. [Harlen Fightback](#),
- [Leamon Hood](#) - Southeastern Director, [AFSCME](#)
- [Al Hubbard](#) - [Vietnam Veterans Against the War VVAW](#)
- [Nancy Jefferson](#) - [Midwest Community Services](#), Chicago
- Rev. [Irv Joyner](#) - Reverend, [Commission for Racial Justice, United Church of Christ, Commission for Racial Justice United Church of Christ UCC](#)
- [Ola Kennedy](#) - Chairwoman, [Ad Hoc Committee of Concerned Steelworkers](#)
- Rev. [Muhammad Kenyatta](#) - [Black Economic Development Conference BEDC](#)
- Rev. [Charles Koen](#) - [United Front of Cairo](#), Illinois
- Prof. [Frederick W. Kraus](#) - [Professor, University of Alabama](#)
- [William Kunstler](#) - attorney, NY, [NLG](#)
- [Anna Langford](#) --[Chicago City Council](#)
- [Sidney Lens](#) - [PCPJ](#).
- [John Lewis](#) - [Southern Voters Education Project](#) and future member of the [U.S. House of Representatives](#), Representative, [D-GA](#)
- [John Line](#) - political prisoner. [Young Workers Liberation League YWLL](#),
- [Alfredo Lopez](#) - [Puerto Rican Socialist Party PRSP](#)
- [Walter Lowenfels](#) - poet,
- Prof. [Beatrice Lumpkin](#) - [Professor Malcolm X University](#), Chicago, IL.
- Fr. [Lawrence Lucas](#) - [Church of the Resurrection](#)
- Prof. [Salvador Luria](#) - [Professor MIT](#)
- [Bradford Lytle](#) - [War Tax Resistance](#) also [War Resisters League](#) .
- [Conrad Lynn](#) - attorney, NY
- [Sister Elizabeth McAllister](#) - [Sister](#) former political prisoner
- [Al McSurely](#) - [Local 2352 AFT](#), and leader of [SCEF](#) in Kentucky
- [Margaret McSurely](#) - wife of [Al McSurely](#), [1199 D.C. Drug and Hospital Workers Union](#)
- Rev. [Richard McSorley](#) - Reverend, S.H. (sic), [Georgetown University American University](#)
- [John McTernan](#) - attorney, Los Angeles,
- [Mako](#) - [East and West Players](#), Los Angeles, actor
- [Peggy Smith Martin](#), [Illinois State Legislature](#)
- Rev. [Paul Mayer](#) - Reverend, [N.Y. Theological Seminary](#), Hanoi traveler and key member of the [Hanoi Lobby](#), [Mobes PCPC](#)
- Rev. [William Howard Melish](#) – New York
- [George Merritt](#) - political prisoner, [Plainfield 3](#),
- [Kate Millett](#) - writer
- [Howard Moore, Jr.](#) - attorney, Berkeley, head counsel for Angela Davis legal defense team.

- [Claudia Morcom](#) - [Angela Davis Michigan Committee to Free All Political Prisoners](#)
- Rev. [H.C. Mulholland](#) - Greenville, N.C.
- [George Murphy Jr](#) - [National Legal Defend Fund](#)
- [Charlene Mitchell](#) - [National United Committee to Free All Political Prisoners NUCFPP](#), and soon to be leader of the [NAARPR](#)
- [Ernie MacMillan](#) - political prisoner
- [Adrienne Nelson](#) -- [United Farm Workers UFW](#), Houston
- Fr. [Joseph O'Rourke](#) - Reverend, N.Y.
- [Nareshimah Osel](#) - [United Defense Against Repression](#) L.A.
- Dr. [Helen Chavis Othow](#) - [The Ben Chavis Wilmington 9 Legal Defense Committee](#)
[Wilmington 9](#) [Wilmington 10](#) [Ben Chavis](#)
- Prof. [John Pappademos](#) - [Professor](#) President [Chicago Teachers Union](#)
- [Sidney Peck](#) - National Coordinator, [PCPJ](#),
- [Don Perdue](#) - political prisoner [Gainesville 8](#), [Vietnam Veterans Against the War VVAW](#)
- [Seymour Posner](#) - [N.Y. State Legislature](#)
- [Jesse Prosten](#) - [Packinghouse Division, Meatcutters and Butcherworkmens Union](#),
- [Susanne Post](#) - [Kentucky Civil Liberties Union](#) [Civil Liberties Union](#)
- Rev. [Harold Quigley](#) - Reverend, [Ethical Humanistic Society](#)
- Rev. [George Reddick](#) - [Operation PUSH](#)
- [Anton Refrigier](#) - artists- [Rockwell Kent](#), [Anthony Toney](#)
- [Antonio Rodriquez](#) - attorney, L.A.
- [Javier Rodriquez](#) - [Los Tres del Barrio Defense Committee](#)
- [Carlos Russell](#) - Dean of School of Contemporary Studies, [Brooklyn College](#), [NCNP](#)
[W.E.B. DuBois Clubs of America](#)^[7]
- [Irving Sarnoff](#) - [L.A. Peace Action Council](#), part of the [Mobes](#), [Hanoi Lobby](#), id. CPUSA member
- [David Scribner](#) - attorney, N.Y. National Lawyers Guild [NLG](#)
- [Pete Seeger](#) – Folk singer and cultural activist
- [Judi Simmons](#) - [Kentucky Political Prisoners Committee](#)
- [Modjeska Simkins](#) - President, [SCEF](#)
- [Billy Dean Smith](#) - former political prisoner, military protester
- [Joseph "Mongo" Smith](#) - political prisoner
- [Martin Sostre](#) - political prisoner
- [Jack D. Spiegel](#) - [Chicago Peace Council](#),
- Dr. [Benjamin Spock](#) - N.Y. and later the presidential candidate for the [People's Party](#)
- Rev. [Henry Starks](#) – Memphis, TN

- [Amy Swerdlow](#) - [Women Strike for Peace WSP](#) and member of the [Hanoi Lobby](#), [Mobes](#)
- [William Tate](#) - V.P. [District 65 Distributive Workers](#)
- [Jarvis Tyner](#) - [Young Workers Liberation League YWLL](#),
- [Jackie Vaughn, III](#) - [Michigan State Legislature](#)
- [Joe Walker](#) - [Muhammed Speaks](#), the official publication of the [National of Islam NOI](#), and a member of the [International Organization of Journalists IOJ](#)

- [Paul Walker](#) - [Operation Push](#)
- Prof. [James Warf](#) - [Professor](#), [Federation of American Scientists FAS](#), L.A.
- [George Webber](#) - Reverend, President, [N.Y. Theological Seminary](#), [Hanoi Lobby](#)
- [Charles White](#) - artist,
- [Dave White](#) - V.P. [Local 1199 Drug and Hospital Workers Union](#)
- Prof. [Fred Whitehead](#) - [Professor](#), [University of Southern Illinois](#),
- [Frank Wilkinson](#) - [National Committee Against Repressive Legislation NCARL](#),
- Rev. [Cecil Williams](#) - Reverend, [National Committee Against Repressive Legislation NCARL](#), also in [NCAHUAC/HISC](#), [Glide Memorial Methodist Church](#),
- [Ronnie Williams](#) - political prisoner, [Alabama Black Liberation Front](#)
- [Henry Winston](#) - Chairman, [Communist Party USA](#)
- [Barbara Aiken](#) - [NLG National Lawyers Guild](#), Atlanta, GA

As you can see from this list of sponsors we were not born in the drawing room of contemplation but in the dirt and blood of battle. Many of the political prisoners listed here as sponsors were freed within ten years after our founding conference, for example, Rev. Ben Chavis, George Merrit and many others. As a mass defense organization we accomplished many things, following is a partial list:

- We filed the first petition with the United Nations calling attention to the plight of political prisoners, particularly the victims of COINTELPRO in the Black Panther Party, Dhoruba bin Wahad, Geronimo ji-Jaga, Assata Shakur and others. Dhoruba's conviction was reversed March 15, 1990 and he was released without bail. Geronimo's conviction was vacated June 10, 1997 and he eventually received a \$4.5 million settlement for false imprisonment from the City of Los Angeles and the U.S. Department of Justice. Geronimo died in Tanzania at age 63, June 2, 2011; he spent 27 years in prison. Assata Shakur, and Pete O'Neal, also COINTELPRO victims have been in forced exile for over two decades and there are many other Panthers mentioned in our U.N. petition who are still languishing in prison, some have died in prison. There is much that remains to be done here.
- We launched a massive campaign that freed Johnny Imani Harris from death row and prison.
- We stopped attempts by the state of Mississippi to execute Mayor Eddie James Carthan on trumped up murder charges.
- We were a part of the successful campaign that stopped the ultra right from turning Missouri into a right to work state in 1978.
- We were a part of the movement led by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union boycott of J.P. Stevens products. This boycott was successful in forcing the J.P. Stevens owned textile mills to recognize the union in North Carolina.
- We successfully campaigned for extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1964 in 1984 by submitting tens of thousands of petitions, by demonstrations and lobbying Congress.
- In alliance with the National Committee Against Repressive Legislation, the Center for Constitutional Rights, the National Conference of Black Lawyers, the National Lawyers Guild, the Amalgamated Meat Cutters Union, the Southern Organizing Committee,

Clergy and Laity Concerned and others we successfully campaigned against several omnibus crimes bills that were designed to criminalize the peoples movement.

- We called and held the first National Peoples Hearing on Police Crimes in Los Angeles, CA, in 1981 with Congresswoman Maxine Waters addressing our forum. Out of the hearing we developed our first model legislation for civilian control of the police.

Since we were founded 41 years ago new and even bigger forces of repression have emerged and police crimes have become the cutting edge of mass incarceration and political repression. Today, and since 9/11, the Patriot Act has by legislative fiat legitimized many of the illegal practices of COINTELPRO. Under the guise of fighting terrorism thousands of people have been denied the most basic of human rights by being tortured and falsely imprisoned without any benefits of due process afforded by the U.S. Constitution.

Since we were founded millions have been given excessive sentences under the draconian anti-drug laws, and African American and Latino families and communities have been decimated.

Since we were founded we have seen an ever expanding system of immigrant prisons added to the prison industrial complex run by greedy, profit driven corporations.

We recognize today that we have a Supreme Court that has rendered the Voting Rights Act virtually unenforceable, thus denying millions of people the right to vote based on color. Filling the prisons up with people of color while at the same time rolling back the gains of the civil rights movement is the reactionary formula used today to maintain the status quo.

The people will fight-back, in fact we have already started, particularly in the South with up to 100,000 people putting feet in the street demanding justice on every front.

We must learn from our history or the same people who perpetrated police crimes in the past to try and stamp out our movements will do so again and with a murderous viciousness that we are already starting to witness in the African American communities across this country.

In the past we demanded community control of the police in response to police brutality and the unwarranted use of deadly force. But today we know that our Alliance must take up the task of waging a massive political struggle for civilian control of the police in order to stop the quick goose step into a police state. This is the challenge we face now in our 41st anniversary.