

PR Political Rights DF Defense Fund

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February 19, 1975

Dear Friend,

Enclosed is some material distributed by the American Association of University Professors in which the AAUP president condemns the FBI harassment of Dr. Morris Starsky and demands that the FBI agents involved in the harassment be fired. The AAUP has expressed its intention to help finance Prof. Starsky's continuing legal battles against the FBI and Arizona State U.

The AAUP support to Dr. Starsky is very important. Supporters of the Political Rights Defense Fund can work closely with local AAUP chapters and members to publicize and raise funds for the PRDF case.

The PRDF is arranging speaking engagements with honoraria for Prof. Starsky on campuses across the country. The money raised in this way will help finance the PRDF's efforts to win release of other COINTELPRO documents.

Professors, especially members of the AAUP, would be interested in helping to secure honoraria to bring Dr. Starsky to speak on campus. His topic is "The FBI Threat to Academic Freedom." Dr. Starsky is available to speak for honoraria of at least \$500 above travel expenses from Los Angeles and back.

Securing honoraria for Dr. Starsky, a Watergate victim, might be especially easy at campuses that are paying or are refusing to pay high speaking fees for one of the many Watergate criminals currently on tour.

AAUP professors -- and others -- may be able to give personal contributions to the PRDF in addition to helping raise honoraria.

Please let us know soon of any speaking engagement you have arranged for Prof. Starsky.

Sincerely,



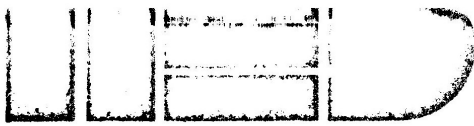
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AAUP CONDEMNS FBI HARASSMENT OF PROFESSOR AS "SLEAZY" The Association of University Professors has condemned the Federal Bureau of Investigation's attempts to destroy the academic career of an Arizona State University professor through "sleazy and surreptitious campaigns of FBI harassment" that subvert academic liberties.

"The deliberate effort of an unidentified FBI agent to destroy the academic career of Professor Morris Starsky at Arizona State University was a thoroughly contemptible act," said William Van Alstyne, president of the AAUP, in a statement issued last week. "When a member of the FBI can come to believe (and to be encouraged in that belief by the Agency's own Director) that the national security will be advanced by posing anonymously as a 'concerned alumnus,' to slip in furtive accusations against a teacher and thereby to try to influence against that person the judgment of those to whom he depends for his whole career and livelihood, the least reaction called for is one of utter disgust," Van Alstyne continued.

"A Concerned ASU Alumnus" Dr. Morris Starsky, an associate professor of philosophy at Arizona State University from 1964 to 1970, took part in anti-war demonstrations at the school and was a member of the Young Socialist Alliance and the Socialist Workers Party. Dr. Starsky's teaching contract was being reviewed by a five-member faculty committee in 1970. In April the committee members received a letter allegedly from Dr. Starsky had committed certain acts that "Hitler or Beria could accept," such as threatening the life of one of his "close campus co-workers..." The letter, which two members of the faculty committee recalled receiving, was signed "A Concerned ASU Alumnus."

Didn't Help It is uncertain what effect the letter had on the committee's recommendations. One member told the New York Times the letter probably had no direct effect on the final decision, but added: "I don't think it helped him." The committee eventually not to recommend Dr. Starsky's dismissal, but the Board of Regents ruled it and arranged for a one-year sabbatical with the understanding that "he will not return." Dr. Starsky is now working as a researcher.

Hoover Said OK The letter, Dr. Starsky learned recently, was sent by an unidentified FBI agent with the direct approval of the director of the FBI, the late J. Edgar Hoover. Dr. Starsky learned of the FBI harassment through documents released to him by former Attorney General William B. Saxbe after the professor appealed under the Freedom of Information Act. The FBI action was part of its Counterintelligence Program (Cointelpro), according to the documents.

AAUP CONDEMNS FBI HARASSMENT OF PROFESSOR AS "SLEAZY" The Phoenix, Arizona, FBI field office had been keeping an eye on Dr. Starsky as early as May 1968. Two years later a request was filled by a senior FBI agent in the office asking Hoover's approval of the anonymous letter to the faculty committee reviewing Dr. Starsky's contract. The reply from Hoover arrived the same day, and noted that "authority is granted to make the anonymous mailing as suggested..." The documents released to Dr. Starsky indicate the letter was sent soon after Hoover's approval.

AAUP Urges FBI Dismissals In his statement on the incident Van Alstyne urged the Justice Department "to take every step necessary to insure that dismissal proceedings are brought against any person still within the FBI connected with this reprehensible episode, to provide enforceable assurances that the FBI will be corrected in a manner precluding the possibility of such abuses in the future, and to provide by public statement the basis upon which the people of this country can believe that they are genuinely protected from the abuse of their liberties by their own national police."

A spokesman for the FBI office in Washington declined to comment on the AAUP's statement because of pending litigation. Dr. Starsky has filed suit against the FBI.

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CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION
February 10, 1975

FBI Letter Hit

'Contemptible,' says AAUP Chief

WASHINGTON
A reported attempt by the Federal Bureau of Investigation to discredit an Arizona State University professor was assailed last week by William W. Van Alstyne, president of the American Association of University Professors.

Mr. Van Alstyne said it was a "thoroughly contemptible act" for the F.B.I. to send a derogatory, anonymous letter to members of a faculty committee who were considering the renewal of Morris J. Starsky's teaching contract.

In a letter to Attorney General William Saxbe, the A.A.U.P. president called for "appropriate and enforceable assurances" that the F.B.I. will be "controlled in a manner precluding the possibility of such abuses in the future."

Mr. Starsky, an assistant professor of philosophy, organized anti-war teach-ins at Arizona State. A faculty committee recommended in 1970 that he not be dismissed, but

the board of regents overruled the committee.

F.B.I. documents obtained by Mr. Starsky and made public last month indicated that the anonymous letter had been sent with approval of the office of J. Edgar Hoover, then F.B.I. director.

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General Secretary

JOSEPH DUFFEY
Washington Office

February 3, 1975

(Statement by William Van Alstyne, President of the American Association of University Professors, in response to a confirmed report that an authorized agent of the F.B.I. furtively attempted to secure the dismissal of an American professor of philosophy from his university post by means of anonymous letters to discredit him, pursuant to a plan of deliberate political harassment.)

The deliberate effort of an unidentified F.B.I. agent to destroy the academic career of Professor Morris Starsky at Arizona State University was a thoroughly contemptible act. That the Phoenix office of the F.B.I. has declined to comment on the facts (which came to light only because of Professor Starsky's own efforts under the Freedom of Information Act and on order of the Attorney General) cannot possibly end the matter.

When a member of the F.B.I. can come to believe (and to be encouraged in that belief by the Agency's own Director) that the national security will be advanced by posing anonymously as "a concerned alumnus," to slip in his furtive accusations against a teacher and thereby to try to influence against that person the judgment of those upon whom he depends for his whole career and livelihood, the least reaction called for is one of utter disgust. It was to protect our civil liberties, rather than to have them subverted by sleazy and surreptitious campaigns of F.B.I. harassment, that the taxpayers and citizens of this country accepted the expense and intrinsic hazard of this national police agency. If we are to have an F.B.I. at all, clearly we cannot have it this way.

As President of the American Association of University Professors, I am asking the Attorney General at once to take every step necessary to insure that dismissal proceedings are brought against any person still within the F.B.I. connected with this reprehensible episode, to provide enforceable assurances that the F.B.I. will be controlled in a manner precluding the possibility of such abuses in the future, and to provide by public statement the basis upon which the people of this country can believe that they are genuinely protected from the abuse of their liberties by their own national police. I would hope that Congress will itself also insist upon the same course on its own behalf, as indeed it has the right and power to do, most especially in the duty it holds that money shall not be appropriated for agencies that corrupt, rather than secure, our rights. Unless firm steps are taken to provide a far better basis for greater confidence than can now be maintained in the operation of the F.B.I., that agency itself cannot expect the cooperation of people who must, in conscience, have reason to doubt the purposes to which their help and information may be turned.

William W. Van Alstyne

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WILLIAM W. VAN ALSTYNE
Duke University

General Secretary

JOSEPH DUFFEY
Washington Office

February 2, 1975

Mr. William Saxbe, Attorney General
United States Department of Justice
Constitution Avenue and 10th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

The enclosed news story from the New York Times Service, the essential facts of which have evidently been confirmed by the current Director of the F.B.I., provides the occasion of this letter and of the enclosed statement which I have released today as President of the American Association of University Professors. Following on the criminal conviction of two immediate past Attorneys General for involvement in Water-gate-related offenses, and recent confirmation of former Director Hoover's personal practice of utilizing F.B.I. files in near blackmail fashion to intimidate those whose political views he disliked, this latest revelation of authorized and anonymous accusation calculated to encourage the dismissal of an American philosophy professor by influencing his colleagues against him at Arizona State University comes simply as a confirming outrage. The current Director of the F.B.I. is quoted as declaring that the particular practice involved in the Starsky case "can only be considered abhorrent in a free society." That is obviously correct -- but far from sufficient.

Expressions of anguish long after the fact do little by themselves to provide any assurance that our national police will be required to respect the rights of citizens, that those who fail to do so will be at once dismissed and treated as any other wrongdoer, or that steps will be taken to insure that means will not be employed by the F.B.I. which generate an ever-present and intolerable likelihood of abuse. I respect your personal decision facilitating discovery of the documents in this case which brought this matter to light, but in behalf of the 85,000 members of the AAUP I cannot escape my own responsibility as President of that Association -- to ask you directly to advise us of appropriate and enforceable assurances that have been (or will be) taken that the F.B.I. will be controlled in a manner precluding the possibility of such abuses in the future. I earnestly request that you respond to our concern, as I am confident that you will understand the basis and legitimacy of that concern.

Sincerely,

William Van Alstyne, President
American Association of University
Professors

WVA:ac

Enclosures

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