

brutality of prison life (but not his case) were to have been aired monthly to their seven million listeners. Jamal's pleasure at feeling as though he was "returning home" was short lived, however, as NPR, in a craven act of political censorship, canceled the commentaries under intense pressure from the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police in a campaign keyed off a tough anti-crime speech by President Clinton.

In response to NPR's ban on Jamal's voice, a "Speak Out for Mumia Abu-Jamal!" event in New York City on June 3, hosted by Ossie Davis, featured a reading of Jamal's works by Ossie Davis, Bernard White of WBAI and the Honorable Bruce Wright. Speakers included Jamal's wife, Wadiya Abu-Jamal, Paul Cooperstein of the Partisan Defense Committee and Leonard Weinglass, Jamal's lead attorney. Statements from Edward Asner, Mike Farrell, and Raymond Martinez and organizations such as Amnesty International were presented as well.

The national press coverage of NPR's decision has raised Jamal's profile, but at the same time has made him more vulnerable. The growing lynch-mob hysteria in Pennsylvania, prompted by the Philadelphia Fraternal Order of Police campaign for his execution, has created a climate wherein the Senate only narrowly defeated an attempt to override the veto of a bill which would have forced the hand of the governor to sign death warrants within 60 days of the denial by the State of a final appeal. Clearly there are forces at work who do not want Jamal to survive to see a new trial.

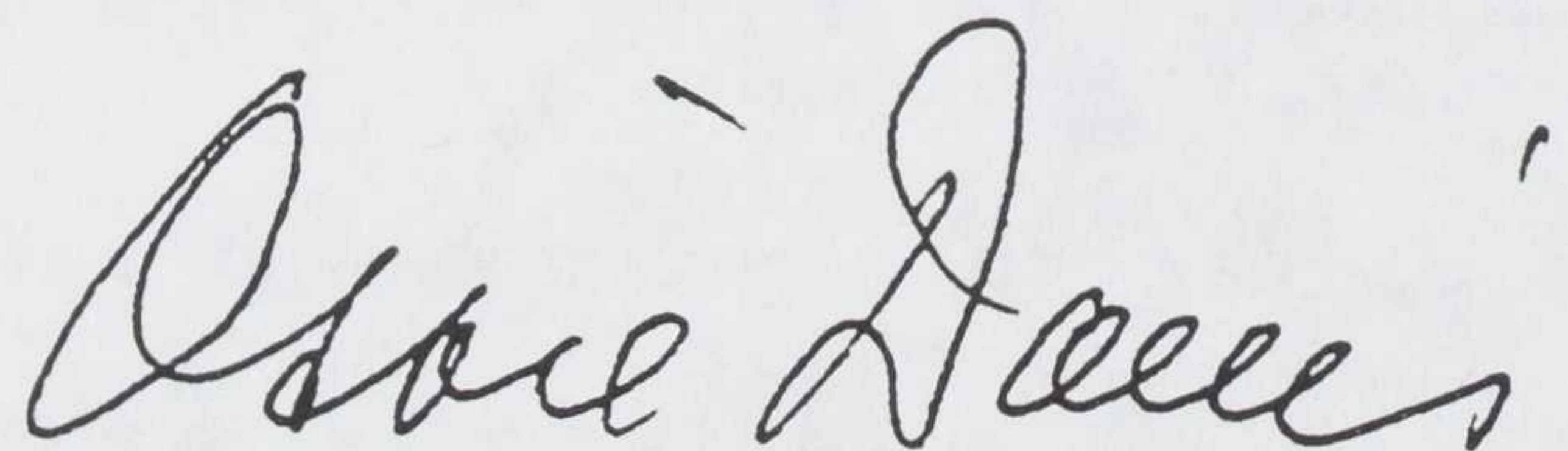
Jamal's lawyers, which include the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, have been working long and hard examining the many volumes of the trial record, investigating events that occurred over a decade ago and locating witnesses. In several months they plan to file for post-conviction relief in state court and, if denied, for habeas corpus relief in federal court. With the help of the Center for Constitutional Rights, a suit will soon be filed against the FBI for failure to comply with a 1992 FOIA request for some 600 pages of documents which contain information critical to Jamal's defense, and may possibly reveal the participation of the FBI itself.

Jamal needs the best possible legal defense, which obviously costs a great deal of money. It can run up to a million dollars to overturn a death penalty verdict and less than one tenth of this has been raised so far. We are up against the vast resources of the government, the Fraternal Order of Police and those, like NPR, who can be cowed into doing their bidding. Please dig deep because now is when it really counts.

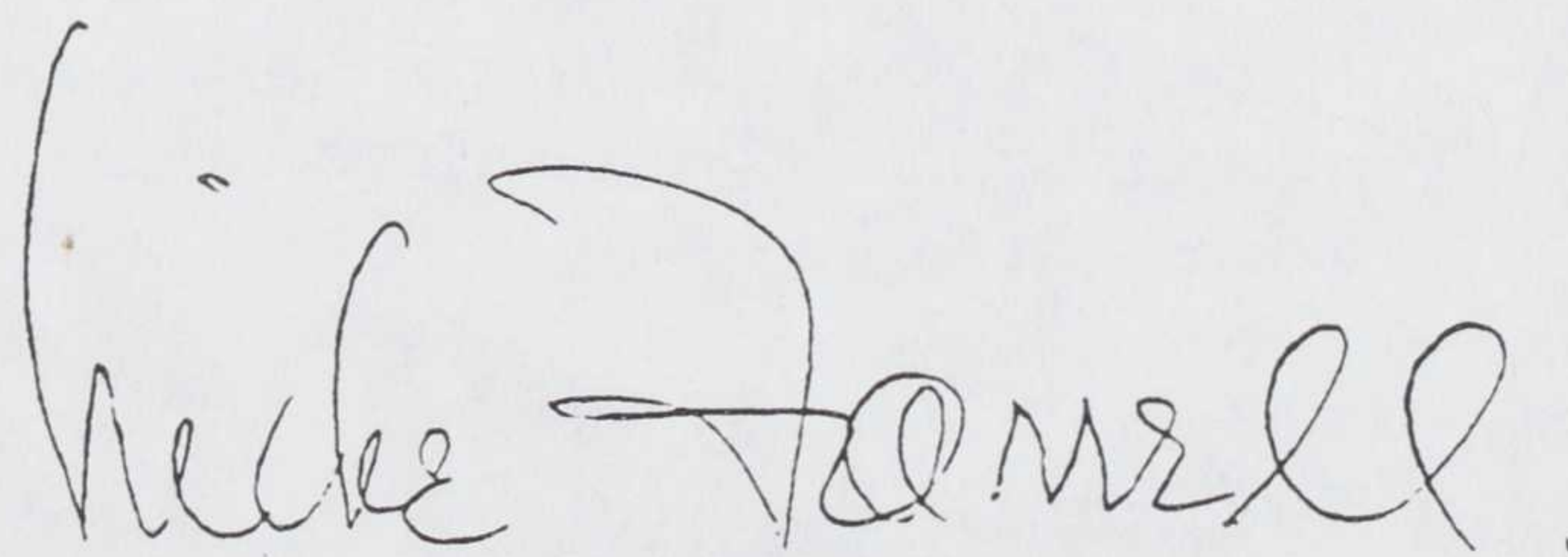
Mumia Abu-Jamal is both a person and a symbol of enormous importance to many in Philadelphia, around the country and around the world. Many have taken up his cause. Tens of thousands have signed petitions and written letters on his behalf. His case could be key for other victims to expose what was clearly an execution machine in Philadelphia. When one thinks about Jamal, one cannot help but consider what the death penalty is really about; who truly has free speech; what race means in this country; what prisons are really for; what happens to African-American youth on the streets every day; what the price of political opposition truly is. And one who knows him thinks about the enormous depth and compassion of this precious human being.

The Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal has been uniquely set up and authorized by Jamal to raise funds for his legal defense. Tax-deductible contributions should be made payable to the Bill of Rights Foundation--earmarked "Jamal"--and sent to the Committee to Save Mumia Abu-Jamal, 163 Amsterdam Ave., No. 115, New York, NY 10023-5001.

Sincerely yours,



Ossie Davis



Mike Farrell