

# Arm The Spirit

For Revolutionary Resistance



June - July '92  
No. 13

## Puerto Rico Libre!

With this issue of Arm The Spirit we have focussed, somewhat, on the colonial situation of Puerto Rico, and the independence struggle being waged to free the island from U.S. imperialist control by the independentista movement and the armed clandestine organizations both inside Puerto Rico and on the U.S. mainland. As July 25 is celebrated in Puerto Rico as Independence Day and around the world as an International Day in Solidarity with the Puerto Rican Independence Struggle and with the Puerto Rican Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War, we are including in this issue interviews we have done with two Puerto Rican Prisoners of War, Edwin Cortés and Alberto Rodríguez imprisoned as members of the FALN (Armed Forces of National Liberation), as well as statements by two independentistas on trial for their involvement with Los Macheteros (The Machete-Wielders).

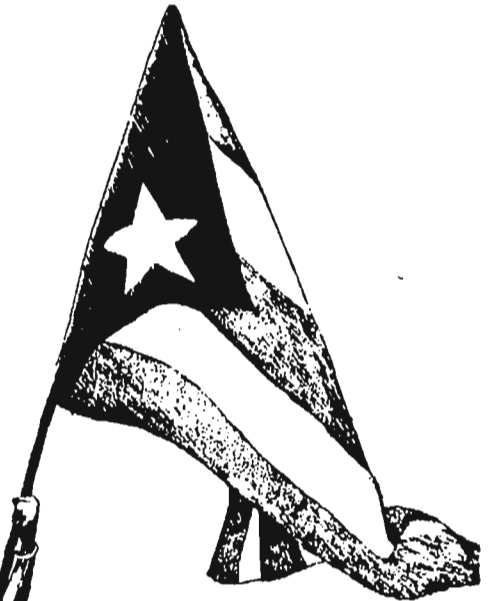
It is important to realize, as the world begins to celebrate the 500th anniversary of Christopher Columbus's arrival in the New World, that in 1493 he also 'discovered' Puerto Rico, then known as Boricuen. In the name of Spain, Columbus laid claim to the island and re-named it San Juan Bautista. In 1511, after gold was discovered, it received yet another name: Puerto Rico, or Rich Port. Since the days of Columbus, resistance to colonialist aggression and control has been strong. From the fierce resistance of the indigenous Arawaks and Tainos against the Spanish, to the FALN and Los Macheteros, Puerto Ricans have always struggled and organized to regain their land and sovereignty.

It was in the 1960s, that groups such as the CAL (Comandos Armados de Liberacion) and MIRA (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria en Armas) began to engage in military actions such as the bombings of U.S. businesses that exploited Puerto Rican workers and hotels in San Juan which catered to the U.S. tourist

trade. In the mid-1970's, the FALN emerged, calling for a strategy of uniting all the necessary forms of revolutionary struggle of the Puerto Rican people into an effort to overturn colonialism through a protracted people's war for independence. The FALN has carried out its actions within the borders of the United States; as its intent has been to operate within the metropolitan areas of the enemy colonial power, where millions of Puerto Ricans reside, facing conditions of colonial violence, exploitation and poverty. FALN actions were centered in New York City and Chicago and included attacks on banks, government offices, and police stations.

Likewise, the Macheteros emerged towards the end of the 1970's in Puerto Rico, and in the words of one of its founders: "Los Macheteros is a clandestine organization formed in 1976 that uses armed struggle to oppose U.S. repression in Puerto Rico." Its actions have included the 1981 bombing of nine National Guard planes which caused damage of \$50 million, rocket attacks aimed at U.S. courthouses, and in 1986, in a joint action with two other armed clandestine organizations; FARP (Armed Forces of Popular Resistance) and OVRP (Organization of Volunteers for the Puerto Rican Revolution), the bombing of military installations to protest the possible training of Nicaraguan contras in Puerto Rico and the beginning of commercial logging in the Puerto Rican National Rain Forest.

Although at the present time armed resistance is at a low ebb, there are 18 Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and political prisoners imprisoned for being part of these armed clandestine organizations and their support apparatuses. The United States government has repeatedly violated the human rights of these Puerto Rican political prisoners and POWs by subjecting them to brutal and



torturous prison conditions. These abuses include sexual and physical assaults, long periods in isolation cells and control units and the denial of medical care.

Dr. Luis Nieves-Falcon, coordinator of Ofensiva '92 - a campaign to free the political prisoners and Prisoners of War - has captured the spirit of the POW's when he writes that they "are fueled by the fact that they are people who have faith in the valiant men and women who will never be anyone's slaves. They believe in human valour and have faith in the right to freedom, in the recuperation of our homeland's sovereignty and in the conscious men and women of Puerto Rico. The POW's are fully aware of the empire's size, but are convinced that Puerto Rico's right to independence is much greater. The POW's are also convinced that in the near future, we will all be together in a free homeland that, in spite of its current colonial status, will proclaim their innocence."

We at ATS join in the just demands for independence for Puerto Rico and freedom for all Puerto Rican political prisoners and Prisoners of War.

### Alan Berkman Is Free!

On Friday July 10, political prisoner Alan Berkman was released from prison. Alan, who was in prison since 1985 serving a sentence relating to a series of armed political actions carried out by the Red Guerrilla Resistance against U.S. military installations and corporations which support imperialist world policies, and the 1983 Capitol bombing by the Armed Resistance Unit in response to the U.S. invasion of Grenada. Alan was also one of the six comrades involved in the Resistance Conspiracy Case. During this trial, Alan was seriously ill with Hodgkins' Disease, and he nearly died from the adverse effects of chemotherapy.

Alan has been an active anti-imperialist for over twenty years, serving the movement both as an activist and in his role as an experienced physician. Alan helped treat wounded prisoners after the Attica Rebellion in 1971, and he helped aid Native Americans at Wounded Knee in 1973.

We send our warmest greetings to comrade Alan Berkman! Free all political prisoners and prisoners of war!

## Victory For The Mohawks!

Thirty-four Mohawks charged in the 1990 Oka crisis were acquitted on July 3 by a Quebec Superior Court jury after five days of deliberation.

In a statement, those charged stated that "the verdict is seen by the Mohawks and their allies as an admission by the jury that the issues involving land and jurisdiction must be addressed, not in the criminal courts, but by negotiation." Bob Skidders, a Mohawk leader who went under the nickname Mad Jap during the crisis, said that the decision was one that had been due for 300 years: "If our people had been given consideration at the beginning then there would be no fight today."

"I didn't have any faith in a system like this, but I'm glad that the truth was really told," said Joe David, another of the accused Mohawks. "I feel really good about the verdict."

With the exception of three who were charged with

assaulting a peace officer and interfering with an arrest, all the accused had been charged with participating in a riot and obstructing police and the military. In addition, 18 were accused of possession of firearms for a dangerous purpose.

The crisis began when the police stormed a Mohawk barricade set up to protest a golf course expansion onto sacred burial land that was part of the Mohawk's traditional land base. A police officer was killed in the raid, although no one has been charged in his death. After the police attack, a stand-off which lasted 78 days resulted in the capture of a number of Mohawks - many of whom were in this recent trial.

Crown prosecutor Jean-Pierre Boyer, calling for a guilty verdict had said that anything less would send a message to the world that taking up arms is permissible and Canada's image (!) could suffer as a result.

# Interview With Alberto Rodríguez

In an article you wrote in 1988 entitled 'The Right to Fight is Non-negotiable' you stated that "The armed struggle in Puerto Rico is not simply a movement dedicated to violence. It is neither militaristic nor inclined towards violence." What is your conception of armed struggle in Puerto Rico; what kind of movement do you see it as being?

I envision the struggle as being a political-military struggle in which the political aspect of the struggle would be more dominant. Particularly in the situation of Puerto Rico, for a lot of different historical and political reasons, I don't see the classic models of people's war as seen in predominantly agricultural places like China or Vietnam working. I think it has to be a political-military struggle in which the political aspects of the struggle would dominate. The politico-military aspect of the struggle would always be in support of and in solidarity with, and hopefully in certain situations even leading, the strictly political forces of the movement.

The political-military organizations that would lead the struggle would have to be clandestine in order that they can operate free and clear of the U.S. government that has, since the invasion of 1898, maintained a large intelligence and spying network in Puerto Rico that makes any attempt to organize publicly and openly suicidal. The history of Puerto Rico has shown that every time the independence movement has grown and it began to challenge U.S. imperialism, the independence movement has been smashed, with the leaders jailed, and many of them murdered.

We would have armed propaganda in which the armed struggle would educate and raise consciousness. The armed struggle would be used as a form of identifying and bringing to the struggle the most conscious element, the most dedicated and committed elements of the independence movement to the struggle. So I see the armed struggle as being an integral part of a public movement, of an independence movement that operates on many different levels; in the unions, in the universities, in the communities, it would be an integral part of a political struggle.

You were arrested in 1983, allegedly as a member of the FALN. In many of the FALN communiqués there is significant discussion of how elections in Puerto Rico are an attempt to force the Puerto Rican struggle to take place within the legal apparatus of imperialism. With this in mind could you tell us about the Puerto Rican independence movement's opposition to colonial elections, and could you tell us something about the Principle of Reatramiento on which this opposition is based?

The Puerto Rican independence movement has always had an electoral aspect to it. In the beginning, in the 1900's, the independence movement as a whole, through different parties, participated in elections. In the 1930's Don Pedros Campos, President of the Nationalist Party, ran in the elections of 1932 and saw firsthand how elections controlled by U.S. colonialism only led to divide the people. He saw a situation in which Puerto Ricans were fighting Puerto Ricans over some position which really did not challenge the status of Puerto Rico, which did not bring into question U.S. colonial rule over Puerto Rico. Basically Puerto Ricans were fighting Puerto Ricans over a position or an office. So Campos laid out the program, or the concept, of Reatramiento, which basically means 'boycott' and non-recognition of colonial life.

The concept of the electoral boycott is based on the fact that the U.S. invaded Puerto Rico in 1898 and for two years there was a military government. In 1900, the

military government was turned into a civilian government which continued to be controlled by Washington D.C. To this day the essential elements of this relationship have not changed. Even though now we have a Puerto Rican Governor and a Puerto Rican Senate, Puerto Rican sovereignty continues to lie in the U.S. congress, and control of Puerto Rico; real economic and political control, lies in Washington D.C.

Reatramiento sees elections as a political device created by the U.S. to perpetuate their control. We in the independence movement who are opposed to U.S. colonialism in Puerto Rico, should not participate in these elections because it is to negate the very things that we are struggling for. Now the independence movement as a whole is very divided on the question of elections, and I would say personally that my opinion is that this participation is based on a lack of vision, a lack of faith in revolution, a feeling that since nothing else is really going on, well, we'll just go to elections every four years. I feel that for us to participate in elections is for us to every four years enter into a process in which we are going to lose. Everything is against us, the whole electoral system, and the whole educational and political system is set up to equate independence with terrorism and criminality, and we cannot win in that kind of environment.

So, really, it is the revolutionary independence movement that opposes elections and that sees elections as a fraud, a scam, and a conspiracy to keep Puerto Ricans arguing amongst themselves over issues and meaningless political positions while the true power stays in Washington. So the FALN and other political-military organizations, and several public organizations have attempted to organize fronts against electoral participation, and this also includes participation in plebiscites and referendums created by the U.S. whose purpose is not to decolonize the island, but to create a new situation or a new set up where they can continue their control.

Reatramiento, then, to me, continues, over sixty years later, to be a reality, to be something that I feel is a principle that can rally the Puerto Rican people together. It is a revolutionary program which can challenge people to break with U.S. imperialist control and begin to think about developing a political project which exists independently of the U.S., and only then will the Puerto Rican independence movement no longer be a movement of opposition but a national liberation struggle. I believe that one of our great flaws and weaknesses has been our inability to develop a true national liberation struggle. Instead we for the most part act as a left opposition to U.S. government and U.S. imperialism. Puerto Rico is a colony, it is a classical colony. It is controlled by the U.S. through military and repressive means, and for us to have a movement in opposition which is simply a legal, political opposition, then we are not going to go anywhere in the long run.

I see Reatramiento as being an important concept to raise revolutionary consciousness, to challenge U.S. imperialism, to create an independence project, to create a revolutionary strategy which the U.S. cannot control, that the U.S. cannot dictate the terms of. This Reatramiento, along with a political-military struggle, like the one I outlined earlier, would be a winnable strategy.

The point has been made that the Puerto Rican struggle for independence and socialism is part of the revolution of the exploited and oppressed masses of Latin America against the oligarchies, capitalism, and imperialism. However, in some of the countries of Latin America we are seeing the discontinuation of

## National Committee To Free Puerto Rican Prisoners Of War

In the United States -

National Office  
P.O. Box 476698  
Chicago, Illinois 60647, U.S.A.

Box 613  
Dorchester, Massachusetts 02124, U.S.A.

138 Jefferson Street  
Hartford, Connecticut 06106, U.S.A.

263 E. 115th Street  
New York, New York 10029, U.S.A.

3604 N. 7th Avenue  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19140, U.S.A.

3543 18th Street, Box 12  
San Francisco, California 94110, U.S.A.

In Puerto Rico -

OFENSIVA '92  
Apartado Postal 20190  
Rio Piedras, Puerto Rico 00928

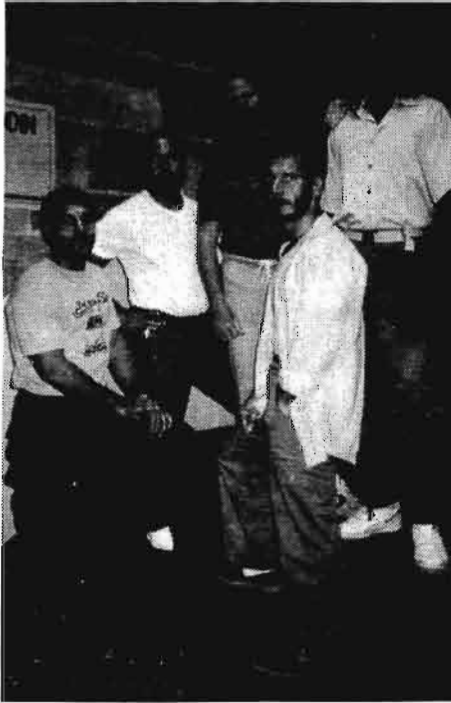
the armed struggle for national liberation. Many of the guerrilla groups are entering into negotiation with the state and oligarchies or are surrendering their weapons and entering the electoral arena, as we have seen most recently with El Salvador and Columbia. How do you feel about this turn of events, and how does it affect the Puerto Rican struggle?

Without question, this is something that affects us very deeply. We have always seen ourselves as part of an overall Latin American strategy to defeat U.S. imperialism through the use of people's war and armed struggle.

The question to be asked honestly is the question of whether armed struggle is a winnable strategy in Latin America. I continue to believe that it is, even though many guerrilla groups and armed organizations have begun to lose faith in their ability to win and



¡HASTA  
LA  
VICTORIA  
SIEMPRE!



(L-R) Edwin Cortés, Alberto Rodríguez, Joe Doherty (recently extradited to Northern Ireland), Ricardo Jiménez and Kazi Toure (no longer imprisoned).

feel that with the fall of the Soviet Union and the Socialist bloc that it is time to cut and run; to try to make the best deal possible. I do not feel that the fundamental conditions in Latin America have changed, in which organizations should enter into negotiations with the state, with U.S. imperialism and its puppet states, because the conditions are such that they cannot be resolved by some type of political accommodation with imperialism. So I really don't know where it is going to end up and I feel that it is different in each country. I think in El Salvador, because of the strength of the guerrilla movement that they will be in a much better situation to guarantee some democracy and some improvement in the lives of the masses, while in Columbia the guerrilla movements are much weaker and will be in a worse situation. You have in Peru the continuation of the armed struggle, and so I don't see El Salvador or Columbia as being the only future.

**How do you view the rapid changes which have been occurring in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and what effect do you feel these changes will have for the developing world and national liberation struggles?**

As a Puerto Rican who has felt U.S. colonialism since the first beginnings of my political consciousness back in the early 70's, I have identified with the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc because of their anti-colonial stand. As I developed politically and began to see the contradictions of the Soviet and Chinese system; the way communism and socialism had been practised, I still identified with it and supported it in the sense that the enemy of my enemy is my friend. Now with the fall of the Soviet Union there is still an emotional side, a certain sadness while as I think about it and as I see what good could come of it I feel each day less and less sad about it. I think that a lot of people in the left found ourselves defending the Soviet Union even when the Soviet Union was not defensible. Some of the positions they took in Eritrea, some of the things they did in Afghanistan; how they attempted to hold together a system based on repression, how they attempted to develop a system in which they ended politics, they ended democracy, and in a sense they became everything they were ideologically opposed

to. Now that it is gone we no longer feel burdened by that. We no longer feel the need to defend that system. And I think that we can learn from it. I think that it gives us an opportunity to learn from that experiment and see that we cannot develop a system fundamentally based on repression. As pretty as we can make it sound, we cannot build a new world order based on repression; it must be based on democracy. So I think it is a time of challenge. I think it is a time for us to put away all these conceptions. Many of us in this generation who came out of the Vietnam war and the struggles of the 70's developed a very romantic and idealistic obsession with the struggle. And now that the romanticism and idealism has been destroyed and we see the end of that experience, it challenges us, in a sense, to be much more radical than we were because instead of accepting ideas, we now have to be challenged to create our own ideas, to develop ideas that are not based, really, on lies.

**The Puerto Rican independence movement has always faced severe repression from the U.S. government. The FBI in particular has been instrumental in pursuing the U.S. policy of attempting to crush the struggle for national liberation in Puerto Rico. Recently, revelations have come to light concerning the role of the FBI and an organization called 'Defenders of Democracy' in the assassination of two Puerto Rican patriots at Cerro Maravilla. Could you tell us what originally happened at Cerro Maravilla, and what was the FBI's involvement?**

We in the Puerto Rican independence movement have been saying for many years that the F.B.I. headed a death-squad type unit in Puerto Rico and that it has maintained control of the Puerto Rican police since the 1930's, since the Puerto Rican police were mobilized along with the National Guard to smash and destroy the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party.

For years, many of our detractors attacked us and said we were paranoid and that this death-squad did not exist and there did not exist this F.B.I. controlled police force that was against the Puerto Rican independence movement. Now we have been vindicated because the whole Cerro Maravilla situation has shown that there has existed a death-squad in Puerto Rico made up of elements of the Puerto Rican police, the F.B.I., and other Federal government officials, particularly people in the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Marshall service.

In the Cerro Maravilla case, two young Puerto Rican independentistas were organized and mobilized into an organization which was a government created organization. They were put into a situation of carrying out armed attacks against the U.S. which had been totally set up and then they were lured to a communications tower where they were surrounded by the police and murdered in cold blood. The U.S. and Puerto Rican police attempted to cover it up, but they failed because certain witnesses, certain people in the Puerto Rican independence movement have not allowed it to go away, and have pushed and pushed it. And to this day new revelations come up about the intensity of the U.S. role in this whole affair and the fact that the F.B.I. was actually there.

Thus for us, the importance that the F.B.I. was there and that there exists a death-squad made up of U.S. government officials and the Puerto Rican police is that it shows that Puerto Rico is a colony despite the fact that we have a certain status known as Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and that the U.S. refers to us as a democracy. This shows that Puerto Rico is no different than the rest of Latin America where you have governments that stay in power by force, that create extra-legal means to stay in power.

The Cerro Maravilla case has gone to the highest levels of government in Puerto Rico and it has gone to the highest levels of government in the U.S. Where it will end up is hard to say, because it is the government investigat-

ing itself. Elements of the Autonomist wing of Puerto Rican colonialism that are presently in power feel that they can gain something from investigating this conspiracy to kill the two comrades at Cerro Maravilla. At the time of the murders the government in power was the Statehooders. So they are attempting to use this as an opportunity to down the Statehooders and hopefully win the election at the end of this year. It is not clear how far they are willing to go, and the fact is they may end up cutting their own throats because they have been junior partners, for 5 decades, in maintaining U.S. control in Puerto Rico. If this investigation continues and it keeps on going to the very heart of the U.S. role in Puerto Rico many of their party members will be questioning their own policies and their own thoughts.

So it is hard to say how far they will go and I do not believe that the Puerto Rican independence movement is strong enough to force the government to continue the investigations. So the investigation could end at any moment and whatever has been discovered has been discovered and there will be nothing more to it. The U.S. government obviously has an interest in trying to stop it and they are doing everything possible to stop the investigation. But without question it has exposed to the masses of Puerto Rican people the fact that there is a death squad, that the government has no qualms about using violence against its own people to stay in power, and that the U.S. is the master of Puerto Rico without question, they are the ones who pull all the strings and whatever happens in Puerto Rico comes from Washington D.C..

So, for us it has been a vindication. It vindicated many of the things we have been saying for years and it has been good for us. We have been able to bring to us many new people, and it's been a very positive thing. I don't know how much more we can gain from it, but up to now it's been very good for us.

**Puerto Rican women have always played an important role in the Puerto Rican liberation struggle, but in your words, sexism runs rampant in the independence movement. Do you see the struggle against sexism as an integral part of the independence struggle?**

The Puerto Rican independence movement, coming from a society which is patriarchal, has been a chauvinistic and sexist movement, without question. While we have examples of Puerto Rican women who have stood up and fought and died for Puerto Rican independence, for the most part women have been shut out. Women have forced themselves onto the scene and have forced men to recognize them and to accept them as equal partners in the struggle for Puerto Rican independence. But it has not been because we have opened up the ranks and allowed them to enter the movement. It has been in spite of men, and not because of them.

Without question, if we are to be serious about developing a new society and a new way to thinking, then we can't say we are going to change some aspect of ourselves and of our society and not other aspects. We have to be willing and able to open up to discussion and to the struggle all aspects of Puerto Rican society and the struggle for independence. I think the struggle against sexism has to be an integral part of the struggle of the Puerto Rican people to develop a new way of thinking and a new society.

In Puerto Rico you have a situation where the main cause of death among Puerto Rican women is domestic violence. We have a terrible situation of battered women and of incest and rape. This is aggravated by the deteriorating economic conditions in Puerto Rico and by a colonial ideology that condones and even encourages such violence against women. The Puerto Rican independence movement has not been immune from these things. Some have attempted to raise these issues and to raise consciousness, but we have a long way to go. Puerto

*continued on the back page...*

# Interview With Edwin Cortés

On June 29, 1983, you and three others were arrested in Chicago and accused of being members of the FALN (Fuerzas Armadas de Liberación Nacional), a revolutionary clandestine organization active in the United States which has assumed responsibility for over 100 armed actions carried out in support of Puerto Rican independence. Could you tell us something of the history behind the FALN, within the context of the history of the armed struggle for Puerto Rican independence?

The FALN has been a natural extension of the Puerto Rican struggle for independence and socialism. The armed struggle was initiated September 23, 1868 in what is known as the Grito de Lares (Cry of Lares) occurred, led by Dr. Ramon Emeterio Betances. This set a course in Puerto Rican history for armed struggle. Secret Societies and revolutionary activity continued when the United States militarily invaded Puerto Rico on July 25, 1898. The armed guerrillas declared the Republic of Ciales in August of 1898. The armed struggle continued developing in Puerto Rico in the 1930's up until the 1950's with the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party; and with the experience of the Nationalist Party and the previous movements, the armed clandestine movement really began to function around 1967 with the development of the Commandos Armados de Liberación and other organizations, some of which embraced the strategy of Prolonged People's War. And in 1974, the FALN came about, attacking United States governmental, military, and corporate structures; perpetrators of colonialism in Puerto Rico. The FALN developed clandestine methods of organization in order to neutralize U.S. governmental repression and to further the struggle for Puerto Rican independence and socialism.

**Are there at the present time any organizations carrying out armed actions in Puerto Rico?**

The Ejército Popular Boricua-Macheteros led by Filberto Ojeda, as well as the Fuerzas Armadas Don Pedro Albizu Campos have claimed credit for various actions and there has been many acts of sabotage, many of which no one has claimed credit for, in relation to worker's strikes and other movements. Overall, the armed revolutionary activity in Puerto Rico is at a low ebb.

**In your opening statement to the court in August of 1985 you stated that "In keeping with my principles, with the tradition of our heroic freedom fighters and in accordance with international law, the only law which has a right to try me, it is my obligation to declare myself a Prisoner of War." Could you explain the reasoning behind the Prisoner of War position?**

The POW position that we assumed was developed by Guillermo Morales in 1978 and in 1980 by Carmen Valentin, Alicia Rodríguez, Luis Rosa, Lucy Rodríguez, Ricardo Jiménez, Carlos Torres, Haydee Beltrán, Elizam Escobar, Adolfo Matos, and Dylcia Pagán as well as Oscar López in 1981, and it was due to the intensification of the armed struggle in Puerto Rico and the United States as well as an ideological and political debate going on within the independence movement as to whether or not the armed struggle was even necessary, and questioning it vis-a-vis a tactic or a strategy. The POWs embraced the armed struggle within the strategy of a Prolonged People's War. We assumed the position in order to further the struggle for Puerto Rican independence because we felt that armed struggle was a necessary component of the independence movement, and was necessary at that time; and it is still essential today in order to combat U.S. plans

to destroy the independence movement and annex our homeland. We also challenged the legality of the Treaty of Paris of 1898 which was signed between the U.S. and Spain. Spain gave Puerto Rico to the U.S. as a piece of property, which did not belong to Spain. Spain had already granted Puerto Rico its autonomy under the Charter of Autonomy of 1897. The United States invades Puerto Rico in July, 1898 and a "State of War" exists between the Puerto Rican people and the U.S. government. Regardless of the state of that war, it still continues today. And finally, our POW position is rooted in international law, particularly resolution 1514 which recognizes the right of colonial people to self-determination and independence, and other various resolutions of the UN which recognize armed struggle as a means to achieve independence and which confer a Prisoner of War status to those captured in colonial armed conflicts.

**How then does the 'Prisoner of War' position contrast with the 'political prisoner' position?**

Both positions complement each other. The only difference between a political prisoner and a prisoner of war is that a POW acknowledges his participation in the armed struggle, whereas a political prisoner usually has been arrested for some political crime, and not necessarily an armed action.

**You were found guilty in 1985 of seditious conspiracy. What is seditious conspiracy and why is it an impossible crime for Puerto Ricans?**

During our trial, Don Juan Antonio Corretjer, who was the national poet of Puerto Rico and was one of Puerto Rico's greatest independentist and socialist thinkers, attended our trial, and he developed the concept of sedition being the impossible crime. Unfortunately, Don Juan died in 1985 with full military honours and bestowed with the rank of Commander. Sedition is for us an impossible crime because, first of all, the U.S. accuses us of conspiring to overthrow the U.S. government by force and violence in order to obtain the political independence of Puerto Rico. And the authority that we are challenging is an illegal and colonial authority, the U.S. has no lawful authority in Puerto Rico. Colonialism is a crime against humanity. We also challenged the U.S. military intervention in our homeland in 1898, and the illegality of the Treaty of Paris.

Also, for us sedition is a crime of thought; because for Puerto Rican independentistas, just advocating armed revolution, or support for armed organizations is enough for the U.S. government to charge them with sedition. Somewhere in the future, if the Puerto Rican struggle does reach a high level of struggle, it is my opinion that the U.S. will not hesitate to charge other independentistas with sedition. This was shown in 1937, with Don Pedro Albizu Campos, a Harvard educated lawyer, and leader of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party, who was charged with sedition for just merely advocating Puerto Rican independence. He was never accused of carrying out any armed actions.

During our trial, Jose Rodríguez, who took a political prisoner defense, also challenged sedition and it became obvious during the trial that he was accused of sedition for only merely supporting Puerto Rican independence, and not for participating in any armed actions.

So, the U.S. government really does not need for people to be involved in armed acts to charge them with sedition. It's merely a political statute that they use to incarcerate Puerto Ricans.

Also, in 1922, the U.S. Supreme Court passed a decision that Puerto Rico belongs to, but is not a part of, the United States. And we used this decision to demon-

## Puerto Rican Prisoners Of War And Political Prisoners

Luis Rosa #NO2743  
Box 711  
Menard, Illinois 62259 U.S.A.

Alicia Rodríguez #N07157  
P.O. Box 5007  
Dwight, Illinois 60420, U.S.A.

Alberto Rodríguez #92150-024(B-3)  
Edwin Cortés #92153-024 (B-2)  
Ricardo Jiménez #88967-024(A-2)  
P.O. Box 1000  
Lewisburg, Pennsylvania 17837, U.S.A.

Elizam Escobar #88969-024  
FCI Colorado Unit  
P.O. Box 1500  
El Reno, Oklahoma 73036, U.S.A.

Oscar López-Rivera #87651-024  
P.O. Box 1000  
Marion, Illinois 62959, U.S.A.

Adolfo Matos #88968-024  
3901 Klein Blvd (Unit J)  
Lompoc, California 93436, U.S.A.

Carlos Alberto Torres #88976-024  
Woodhouse, P.O. Box 1000  
Oxford, Wisconsin 53952-1000, U.S.A.

Dylcia Pagán #88971-024  
Ida Luz Rodríguez #88973-024  
Haydee Beltrán #88462-024  
Carmen Valentin #88974-024  
Alejandrina Torres #92152-024  
FCI Pleasanton  
5701 8th Street, Camp Parks  
Dublin, California 94568, U.S.A.

Juan Segarra Palmer #15357-077  
100 FCI Road  
Marianna, Florida 32446, U.S.A.

Antonio Camacho-Negrón #03587-069  
FCI McKean (Unit 2)  
P.O. Box 8000  
Bradford, Pennsylvania 16701, U.S.A.

Norman Ramirez Talavera #03171-069  
FCI Danbury  
Pembroke Station  
Danbury, Connecticut 06811, U.S.A.

Roberto José Maldonado #03588-069  
Federal Medical Facility  
3150 Horton Road  
Fort Worth, Texas 76119, U.S.A.

Luis A. Colón Osorio #03172-069  
FCI Otisville  
Box 1000, Unit 5  
Otisville, New York 10963 U.S.A.



strate that Puerto Rico is a Latin American country in the Caribbean and that it is fighting for its national independence.

Could you tell us about the campaign known as 'Ofensiva 92'?

Ofensiva 92 began in July 1991, and in Puerto Rico and the U.S. they are organizing local committees in different parts of the island, thus far they have organized about 30 local committees. In the United States, the National Committee to Free All Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners, in Philadelphia, Chicago, Hartford, New York, and other cities have been restructured to embrace the wide support we have received from different sectors. The campaign is aimed at 1992 because we will be commemorating the 500th anniversary of the discovery of the Americas, and so it's appropriate for Puerto Ricans to intensify the struggle for Puerto Rican independence and the ex-carceration of its political prisoners and POWs. Also, the UN has declared the 1990's as the decade for the elimination of colonialism, and this resolution gives further ammunition to our valiant cause.

I think Ofensiva 92 has the potential of organizing and mobilizing the Puerto Rican people around support for POWs and political prisoners, and that we can be a unifying force within the independence movement today. This campaign is similar to the campaign waged in the early 1970s for the Five Puerto Rican Nationalists who were in the United States prisons for over 25 years.

What can be done to support the struggle for Puerto Rican independence and the struggle to free the Prisoners of War and political prisoners?

I think a committee in support of Puerto Rican independence and POWs and political prisoners would be in order. I think such a committee could take up the work of educating people around the colonial case of Puerto Rico as well as why we have been imprisoned and mistreated. The committee can expose the hypocritical posture of the U.S. human rights policy; it goes around the world talking about human rights and freedom for political prisoners, while it negates its own human rights violations and denies the existence of political prisoners here in the U.S. The U.S. also alleges that Puerto Rico is its own internal affair and refuses to recognize the jurisdiction of the United Nations. It is the responsibility of all peace loving and progressive peoples of the world to be involved in the struggle to free Puerto Rico. A committee in Canada would help to internationalize the colonial case of Puerto Rico.

How do you see this struggle to free the imprisoned fighters in relation to similar struggles around the world?

The last few years we have been able to make contact with various movements in support of freedom for political prisoners - the Irish struggle, the Palestinian struggle, the struggle of GRAPO and PCE(r) prisoners in Spain, and various other movements. And we are trying to set some kind of agenda where we could talk about the incarceration of political prisoners and prisoners of war and the repressive nature of the state. Through the work in support for political prisoners we have also been able to understand and support the struggles against imperialism, racism, zionism, etc.. We have very much in common with people who are fighting for national independence and social change throughout the world. Together we can make the 1990s the decade for the ex-carceration of all political prisoners and prisoners of war.

For further information contact the Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional, 1671 N. Claremont, Chicago, IL, 60647 USA

## Statement To The Court - Luis Colón Osorio

I, Luis Alfredo Colon Osorio,

Declare and clarify to the press and the people of Puerto Rico in general the following:

- I do not recognize U.S. Federal jurisdiction in Puerto Rico, nor the courts imposed on this land by the power of armed force.

- I denounce the campaign of lies that the FBI is carrying out in relation to my arrest and the supposed controlled substances they allegedly found on me at the time of my arrest. The enemy practices such tactics in order to tarnish and demoralize the independence movement.

Nevertheless, I declare that the drug problem in this country is not, as they allege, the main cause of crime in our country. Although I recognize that a great number of people in our country, children, to youngsters and adults from all social spheres, use drugs as a form of escape and survival. They are not, nor will they ever be, the main cause of our problems.

The real cause is nothing but the socio-political situation produced by a Machiavellian plan directed and orchestrated by the U.S. government in order to sustain a relationship of political control over all aspects of our development as a free and sovereign nation.

- Today, before our country and all the countries of the world, the U.S. government is guilty of and responsible for all the deaths that occur on a daily basis in our country.

- I denounce any intent of the FBI to repress, terrorize or pressure humble and good Puerto Rican people, such

as the members of the PNP, Populares, Independentistas and people that are not affiliated with any political party for merely having given a fellow Puerto Rican a plate of rice and beans.

- The only court with the power, the global mandate and the right to judge me is the Hague International Court.

- I have been arrested due to the conflict between the Puerto Rican nation and the U.S. government; therefore I take a stand according to the Geneva Convention and claim all the rights that are guaranteed any Prisoner of War.

- Even though this fact is irrefutable, I will not stop all the mechanisms within our reach to defend myself against the injustices committed against me, our country, and the Independence movement.

- When I was arrested I had a booklet with various phone numbers, that included family members and Puerto Rican friends that have nothing to do with my situation, or my political beliefs. And the FBI is going to use this booklet to repress and terrorize these good Puerto Rican people. In the booklet I have telephone numbers of doctors, family members, friends and journalists.

- And finally, a greeting to all the Puerto Rican people to have faith in God. In this slow decolonization process, together with poetry, the arts, the guitar and song, with honest day to day practice, and with the power of a whole nation in the different trenches of struggle, from the legal to armed confrontation, we will achieve results desired by all! Liberty. And all is done for love.

## EXPolice Terror In Sevilla

In Sevilla, Spain, a series of actions were held in April to protest against the Expo 92 and to demonstrate against 500 years of colonialism, the fortress Europe, and the North-South conflict.

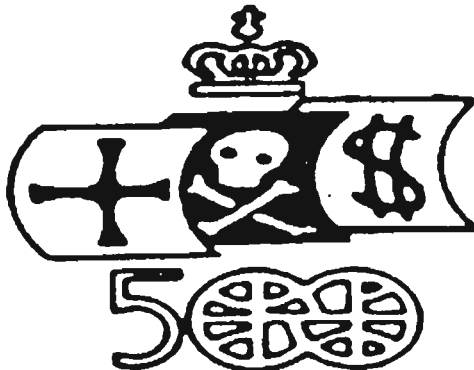
After an anti-Expo concert on April 19, a left-radical demonstration of about 350 people was held. After about an hour, the march was stopped by police on both sides, resulting in panic among some demonstrators. As people tried to disperse, they were chased by police with pistols drawn, and brutally beaten. When some demonstrators fought back with stones, police opened fire, hitting one bystander and wounding three demonstrators. At least 100 people were arrested, and most had to be hospitalized.

When the Expo opened on April 20, a group of people holding placards demanding the release of those arrested the night before were attacked by police as they

attempted to talk to a Spanish TV crew. There were 20 arrests. Tensions increased in Sevilla as hundreds of police with machine guns were deployed throughout the city. It seems the state sought to crush any public actions against the Expo. A camping ground used by demonstrators, including some people from South America, was evicted by police on April 21. There were 30 arrests.

On April 22, most of those arrested had still not been released, and those that were complained of racism and severe mistreatment. Solidarity demos and press conferences were held in Pisa, Padua, and Venedig. Three Germans and one Austrian were transported to a Spanish prison for preventive detention. Other Europeans that had been arrested were quickly deported. But, as is indicative of the New Europe, others, especially North Africans, were given much harsher treatment. As a form of intimidation, arrestees were told that they must renounce the anti-Expo actions before being released, and that if any one person refused, all would still be held.

By this point, the political differences among the anti-Expo organizers had worsened severely. The Greens completely distanced themselves from the left-radical groups. The Spanish press spread a series of lies about the actions, and Sevilla was filled with heavily armed police. Meanwhile, the prisoners were still being mistreated and denied visitors as they awaited trial for taking part in an "illegal demonstration". Often during their confinement, prisoners had to stand for hours against the wall with their hands above their heads. If they moved, they were beaten. They were also denied food and water for long periods of time. Several South Americans, upon being released, were immediately deported from Spain.



# Open Letter To The Puerto Rican People

As we reported in A.T.S. 12, Puerto Rican independentista Ivonne Meléndez was to be sentenced on July 1, and faced up to 15 years in prison charged with transportation and conspiracy in an expropriation carried out on the Wells Fargo Company in Connecticut in 1983 by the political-military organization "Los Macheteros". We are happy to report that she will not be jailed, but was sentenced to 5 years probation and 1,000 hours of community work. On the same day, Filiberto Ojeda Rios, a leader of "Los Macheteros" was sentenced in absentia and sentenced to 55 years for his alleged participation in the expropriation. Below we have reprinted a statement that Ivonne made before the legal process began.

I want to take this opportunity to explain to the Puerto Rican people the reasons why I have decided to face trial on charges brought against me following my arrest on August 30, 1985.

However, before I explain my reasons I want to give my political analysis of each of our cases and the history preceding them.

Historically in Puerto Rico, the Puerto Rican Independence Movement has taken the uniform position of refusing to collaborate with the government that represses our people. I am sure that everyone who struggles for Puerto Rico's independence feels this way.

## Consider The Following

13% of the land on the 35 by 100 mile island is occupied by U.S. military bases.

U.S. nuclear arms are used and stored in Puerto Rico in violation of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, which prohibits nuclear weapons in Latin America.

The island's unemployment rate is 45%

40% of Puerto Rican women of child-bearing age are sterilized as a result of U.S. depopulation programs.

Half of the Puerto Rican nation has been forced to migrate to the United States due to unemployment and the colonial government's policies - an exodus among the most massive recorded by history. And, when they arrive in the United States, the migrants are subjected to poverty and racism.

The U.S. congress retains power to legislate for Puerto Rico without the consent of its people. Puerto Ricans on the Island are not permitted to vote for President or congressional representatives.

In 1917 the Jones Act forced citizenship on the Puerto Rican people, along with the draft and World War I. Puerto Ricans have been forced to serve in all subsequent U.S. wars.

Implementation of U.S.-designed 2020 plan (named for the year of its anticipated completion) will transform the economy and physical terrain of Puerto Rico to conform to U.S. strategic needs. The plan will subject the island to large-scale strip mining and deforestation, contamination of water resources, further reduction of its population, and expansion of U.S. military presence.

As part of its attack on the independence movement, the FBI trains the colonial police - responsible for bombings, assaults and assassinations of independence and labour activists.

## FREEDOM FIGHTERS



## NOT TERRORISTS

Arrested comrades have traditionally claimed the Prisoner of War status based on the analysis that Puerto Rico was invaded militarily in 1898 by the U.S., and that today the U.S. continues to oppress our people. For these reasons Puerto Rico is a colony of the U.S. To take the Prisoner of War position takes courage and sacrifice, as it means facing automatic conviction and a maximum prison sentence, such as those being served by the Puerto Rican Prisoners of War in the U.S. Their decision was based on their analysis. I respect and perfectly understand that decision.

When we were arrested on August 30, 1985, we began analyzing our reality to determine what position to take, keeping in mind the government's objective - to take us out of circulation, give us maximum sentences and keep us in sub-human conditions (of incarceration), as they do our comrades - the political prisoners and prisoners of war.

We decided to organize a political-legal defense which implied using U.S. laws to expose the government's intentions, which has been historically to obstruct and weaken the movement through imprisonment, fabrication of cases, persecution and assassination such as the 'Cerro Maravilla' case.

During this political and legal process, different circumstances have arisen leading the compañeros and I to assume different positions. These were based on our respective political and personal ideologies and our analysis at the time.

Filiberto Ojeda Rios and Luis Colón Osorio decided to go clandestine. I respect this decision mainly for two reasons:

1. Every comrade has the right to confront the enemy in whatever form he/she understands is necessary, (by definition, colonialism is a crime against humanity and must be fought by whatever means available; this has been recognized by international laws and the United Nations);

2. Clandestinity is a valid form of struggle, one that these comrades felt obligated to choose, because of the repression that exists in Puerto Rico.

Though this decision could have had an immediate effect on those of us who were on bail, it was more important to view their decision in the context of the long-term goals, recognizing the importance of the two points mentioned above.

About a year ago, the government began to make offers for a politically negotiated way out of the case. Once again, we started to analyze each case and found that, first of all, the government's case is weak and they feel obligated to drop the charges against Elias Castro Ramos and Angel Diaz Ruiz. Secondly, the government

has no alternative but to drop the two main charges, which bore sentences of 20 years each. In my case, this reduced the possibility of a 60 year sentence to 15 years.

The government continues to make offers, attempting to negotiate a political way out in order not to go to trial.

I terminated the negotiations on my own case in December 1991. The other comrades decided to continue negotiating and seek a solution according to their own situations. These negotiations resulted in the following:

1. Hilton Fernandez Diamente and Orlando Gonzalez Claudio reached an agreement with the government. The details of the final outcome is unknown. The hearing on the case is scheduled for April 10, 1992.

2. Isaac Comacho-Negrón reached an agreement with the government whereby his charges were reduced to one count with a possible maximum sentence of five years. He was given a 44 month sentence.

3. Jorge Farinacci Garcia also reached an agreement with the government. To date we are not aware of the final results. His sentence hearing is scheduled for July 10, 1992.

I understand and respect the decisions of the comrades. I believe that when faced with the impossibility of a fair trial, a jury of people who are not our peers, and maximum sentences, it was the correct position to take due to their particular situation.

Mathematically speaking, 200 years are more than 10 years. Politically speaking, political prisoners and prisoners of war are needed on the streets to advance the struggle for Puerto Rican independence, not in prison.

Nevertheless, this leaves us with an unresolved issue; why have I decided to go to trial, if I am aware, as they were, that I will not receive a fair trial, that I will face jurors that are not my peers, in a country, in a language and a culture that are not my own?

These are my reasons:

1. The violations of civil and human rights in this case, including:

- violations of the Puerto Rican colonial constitution and the right to privacy as it relates to the recordings made during the investigation;

- imprisonment for 16 months without bail;

- bail conditions that included restrictions on our freedom of movement, properties confiscated for more than five years, and house arrest restrictions from 12:00 midnight to 6:00 AM, among others;

- being extradited from my country to be judged by people who are not my peers;

- violation of a speedy/expedited trial. We have waited not 90 days, but almost seven years. Late justice is no justice.

- forced separation from my children and family for all these years;

- and all the other violations that I am unable to enumerate at this time because there are so many.

2. And, the reason that carries a lot of weight in my decision;

As a woman and a Puerto Rican mother, I believe that we should always aspire to give the maximum. Our political work is often ignored and minimized. For this reason I think someone should raise a voice in protest.

Throughout all these years of colonialism, our people have demonstrated resistance, and if I can contribute to that process, I will do it proudly.

In practice, this process, full of contradictions and difficulties, in which we have taken different positions, has proven to be a victory and has advanced our struggle.

continued on page 12...

# Interview With Chinganji Akinyela

New Afrikan Peoples Organization, L.A. Chapter

**Why did the King verdict cause such an explosion in the Black community?**

It's not just the verdict. People have been told over the past five years and more that police crimes in our community can be resolved through the justice system. In the last year, the situation of the Korean women who killed Latasha Harlins and was let off scot-free brought a lot of heat, fire and anger in the Black community; right behind it was the Rodney King trial. People watched it, they waited for justice to be served. When it wasn't, people had already decided there was going to be hell to pay in the street. It's more than a spontaneous riot or an isolated incident as the media has been trying to say. It's a justified response to an unjust situation.

**What was it like to live in South Central L.A. during the last week?**

I have been inspired by our people. I had thought that LA was pretty lethargic, pretty Hollywood, pretty Disneyland. And I've been inspired to see people respond in a healing way, a way that makes sense, that is just. Living here has been frightening. I'm more frightened by the state troopers and the military than by the people who have come from our community and are responding in a strategic way to an unjust system. I say that because it was not just senseless looting or burning. It was done strategically, and in discussion with people out on the street, most people understand that we were not in jeopardy. No homes were burned. But you can go to Philadelphia and they'll bum a whole neighbourhood like they did with the MOVE bombing without any consideration for families and children. There were some casualties, and unfortunately when you have war, when you have rebellion, there are some casualties.

One of the most appalling things is that the only area where the troops are is south of Pico Boulevard. If you go up in the white community - Beverly Hills, Hollywood, other areas which were also affected by the rebellion - there are no troops there. This is like South Africa. People up there have no idea what's going on in South Central. They have no idea people are walking up and down the streets with guns and in fatigues as if it were a war zone. Although the curfew is lifted, everything closes down after dark. They don't let more than five people into a bank at a time. It's terrifying. It's not like living in a city at all. Total regimentation. I mean, it's a Nazi camp. Go outside the community and it's a whole other world.

**What would you say to the charge that the community was engaged in senseless, self-destructive violence?**

It's funny to me to hear people talk about violence on the part of our community, when we're responding to a situation that has been very violent towards us. It's OK when it works for the system. But when it's us responding to the system, we're violent, terrorist, gangbangers, and thugs. In videotapes of the looting you do not see predominantly gangbangers. You see mothers, fathers, children out there liberating things for their survival.

If you look at it realistically, you see a strategy. The fires, the so-called looting, were systematic. In most cases, those business were either Korean or white-owned. These institutions in our community are not of our community and do not serve our community. We are consumers in those markets, but the money immediately goes out of our community, so we do not reap any of the benefits. If those institutions are to be rebuilt, they have to be responsive to our community.

Unfortunately, 50% of the Black businesses in Los Angeles were also affected because they were near other businesses. It's sad to see our senior citizens having to go so far out of the community to purchase their groceries and what have you. We, as activists, have mixed emotions about this, because it does affect people who are dependent on these services within our community in order to be able to exist. On the other hand, we see it as righteous response to a very unjust system. In fact, it's a blow against a neocolonialist situation where they set up certain things in our community to make it look like it's ours, but it's not ours; in fact it does not serve us at all.

**Can you talk about the relationship between the Black and the Latino community in all this?**

I think it's key. We've seen graffiti which says "Crips, Bloods" - two opposing gangs here in Los Angeles - "and Mexicans unite" throughout South Central. In the past there have been a lot of tensions between the Mexican and the Black gangs, and within the general population a feeling that the Mexicans were taking over. Now there's some real unity. In fact we've reached out to build coalitions to do some joint work, so that the same tensions are allowed to come back.

**How would you compare this rebellion to what happened in Watts 27 years ago?**

The most striking thing to me is that our people have guns now. There were several pawn shops and surplus stores that were hit, and the first things that were taken out were guns. People are armed; in the past that wasn't the case. Most of the 1965 uprising was so-called looting and burning. Here it's been people preparing for war.

I also think it's much more youth-led than in the past. I've talked to so many young people who watched the trial intensively. The youth are responding, they're organizing, they're politicized. The work that they have

## L.A., Washington Heights...

On Friday July 3, Jose Garcia, a Dominican immigrant living in upper Manhattan, was shot and killed by NYPD officer Michael O'Keefe. The following Monday, a march to the 34th precinct turned violent. The violence continued for the next three days, with over 1200 riot police being deployed in the neighborhood. One demonstrator was killed when, according to witnesses, police cornered the man on the roof of a building and then pushed him to his death. Police often had to flee from sniper fire during the rioting. By Friday July 10, 125 people had been arrested, 14 buildings and 125 cars were burned, several business were looted, and scores of police were injured and at least two dozen police vehicles has been destroyed. Over 2000 riot police remained in the Washington Heights neighborhood throughout the weekend... "They have found a common enemy". The gang truce between the Crips and the Bloods in Los Angeles is still in effect. Gang members have recently held meetings with Korean merchants in an effort to heal racial wounds in riot-torn neighborhoods. Gang members also issued a written proposal with their ideas for rebuilding East LA. They have even formed a non-profit corporation to sell car-wash spray and gang-truce t-shirts to raise money for community reconstruction...

done in the aftermath, in terms of really getting a voice on the media, has made it so clear that our youth is not a lost generation.

**How are the youth influenced by the legacy of Malcolm X?**

The youth are without a doubt influenced by Malcolm. "By any means necessary" speaks to their frustrations at being told to wait, to be patient and to follow. The youth are inspired by Malcolm because he spoke to them. They are tired of a school system which does not address them. They are tired of being tempted by materialism but unable to have the "things" which say they are successful.

*continued on the back page...*



# Assata Shakur On Racism In The USA

Delivered at a meeting of the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Havana, Cuba May 8, 1992

First of all I would like to say it is a great pleasure and a great honour for me to be here today. I would like to thank the Cuban government and the Cuban people for their long and consistent history of solidarity and support for the struggles of African-Americans and other oppressed people in the United States. I am sure that I speak for the vast majority of progressive thinking people in the United States when I say that for us, the Cuban revolution has been a shining example of freedom, social justice, and of courageous struggle against U.S. Imperialism. We are truly grateful for the very principled stand that the Cuban government has taken against racism, both nationally and internationally.

Many of us in the African-American community first became acquainted with the Cuban revolution in 1960, when Fidel Castro and the entire Cuban delegation stayed in the Teresa Hotel in Harlem, N.Y. and became the first, and probably the only, world leader to stay in a hotel in a predominately Black and poor neighbourhood. Black and Third World people in the United States have repeatedly been the victims of persecution and political repression and we are deeply grateful to the Cuban people for giving political asylum to activists like Robert Williams and Huey Newton of the Black Panther Party. We are also very appreciative of the vast support in Cuba that political prisoners like Angela Davis and Leonard Peltier have received.

At a time when the United States government's policies around the world are becoming more militaristic, repression inside the U.S. borders is also on the upswing. Racism and police brutality have been part of the U.S. reality, but they are now reaching levels that have never been known before. The case of Rodney King in Los Angeles is not an isolated incident. Over the last five years there have been uprisings or mass demonstrations in every major city in the United States protesting police brutality and repression. Although there are also white victims of police brutality, blacks and other Third World people are the most frequent victims of police violence. In African-American, Latino, Native American and Asian communities the police have a virtual license to kill. Each year, hundreds of police are investigated on charges of using excessive force or of wanton murder, but only a small number are ever officially charged with crimes and only a tiny percentage are ever found guilty. And even on those rare occasions when policemen are actually convicted of assault, torture or murder, the violators seldom spend time in prison for their crimes.

The racist mass media and the entertainment industry tacitly condone this police terror by depicting Blacks and other Third World people as violent criminals and by treating police violence as a normal, justifiable fact of life. The message is repeated over and over in thousands of subtle ways, implying that Blacks and other people of colour somehow deserve to be beaten or shot.

Given the reality in poor and oppressed communities, it is not surprising that police brutality triggered an uprising in Los Angeles. What is in fact surprising is that more rebellions have not occurred. The police chief Daryl Gates has come under fire for his racist policies and racist remarks. When his department was criticized because a large number of Blacks, approximately 20, had died as a result of police chokeholds, Gates stated that "We may be finding that in some Blacks when a [restraint] is applied the veins or arteries do not open up as fast as they do on normal people." Police racism is such a common occurrence in L.A. that the police showed little hesitation in laughing and joking over police radios and computers

about the beating of Rodney and other police beatings, referring to King and other blacks as lizards and gorillas. For years L.A. SWAT (assault) teams have conducted massive sweeps of African-American and Latino communities, during which huge numbers of youths are forced to kneel or lie on the ground while the police conduct random searches, supposedly to combat drug and gang activity. In some Los Angeles neighbourhoods police have put up concrete barricades with police posted at entrances. Signs reading "Narcotics Enforcement Area - Open to Residents Only" have been put up and everyone police suspect of being a gang member or a drug pusher or user are routinely stopped and searched.

The events in Los Angeles are repeated, almost identically, throughout the U.S.A. Although young Black and Third World males in their teens and twenties have been the main targets of police violence, no one is safe.

In California, police broke into a locked apartment and shot a five-year-old black boy who was playing with a toy pistol to death. The officer who shot the boy claimed that he thought that the boy was a man who was trying to shoot him. He was never prosecuted.

Eleanor Bumpers, a 67-year-old black grandmother, was shot to death as police attempted to evict her from her home because she was several months behind with her rent. Police claimed that Bumpers attacked them, although she weighed close to 300 pounds and could barely move because she suffered from severe arthritis.

Michael Stewart, 18 years old, was beaten to death by police for the crime of painting on the walls of the subway. In an attempt to cover up his death, New York City's chief medical examiner falsified autopsy reports on three different occasions - stating that he died from cardiac arrest, bronchial pneumonia, and then finally, of spinal cord injury. The six police who were charged with the beatings were found not guilty.

In Philadelphia, police launched an aerial bombardment that killed 11 African-Americans, 5 of them young children. Sixty-one homes were also destroyed, leaving 253 homeless. Although the group had committed no crime, police officials initiated the bombing to evict them from the area, stating that they were radicals, undesirable, and naturalists who had to be removed from the area by force.

In many states, not only beatings but various kinds of torture have become a common practice, usually to obtain a forced confession. In Texas, Alabama, California, and New York, police have been accused and convicted of torturing prisoners with "Stun Guns" - batons that can deliver a 50,000 volt charge.

These are just a tiny sampling of racist police violence in the United States. The overall statistics are alarming. In New York City, for example, minorities accounted for 92.5% of police killings in 1990. There were 41 people killed by police in 1990; 15 were African-American, 23 were Latino, and only 3 were white. The U.S. Justice Department reports that there were 15,000 cases of police brutality and excessive force investigated over the last 6 years. The Justice Department has brought only approximately 40 lawsuits charging police brutality. In almost all areas, in the vast majority of cases as racism and violence are increasing, the U.S. government looks the other way.

Racism has become fashionable in the United States, largely due to the open hostility and indifference to the plight of poor and third world people by the Reagan and Bush administrations. Both administrations have vigorously opposed all Civil Rights legislation, all pro-



grams to help the poor, and have severely cut back funds slated for health, education and social welfare. By the beginning of the 1990s, most of the policies and programs which had provided a small amount of aid to the urban poor had been eliminated.

Both Reagan and Bush ran political campaigns which represented the interests of rich, white America. Instead of using overtly racist language, they cloaked their racist appeals with thinly code-words by opposing "quotas", "special interest groups" "reverse discrimination", etc. In 1988 the George Bush campaign paid huge amounts of money to run "Willie Horton" television ads which directly appealed to white racism. Willie Horton was a Black man who, while released from prison on a furlough, allegedly raped a white woman. Bush quietly aligned himself with elements of the far-right, sprinkling his speeches with ultra-right rhetoric.

It was under these conditions that white supremacist groups proliferated in the U.S. Between 1990 and 1991 the number of hate groups in the U.S. rose by 27%. In 1990 there were 69 Ku Klux Klan groups; by 1991 there were 97. In 1990 there were 160 neo-Nazi groups; by 1991 there were more than 200. There were 25 bias-related murders in 1991, up from 20 in 1990.

As a result of the ongoing, uninterrupted racist policies of the U.S. government, oppressed communities are in a state of crisis. Drug abuse, violence, crime, the AIDS epidemic and poverty have wreaked havoc on black and other third world communities. These conditions make up the underlying cause for the rage and extreme discontent that led up to the rebellion in Los Angeles and other places.

## Poverty

There are more than 5 million homeless people currently living in the United States.

Between 1986 and 1990 there was a 49% rise in the number of Blacks living in high poverty areas in central cities. In 1989, half of Black children under 6 were living in poverty, along with 40% of Latino children.

For the most affluent 5% of all families in the U.S., average income rose to 148,438 in 1989, from \$120,253 in 1979. In the same 10 year period, the average income of the poorest one-fifth of all families declined by \$559. In 1990, the average Black worker earned \$329 a week, compared with \$427 for the average white worker.

### Education

As government funds are cut, access to quality education becomes more and more difficult for poor children. In many large cities, the high school drop-outs rate is between 30% and 70%. Racism follows children from kindergarten to college.

Black children are three times more likely to be classified "retarded" by their public schools as whites, while black teenagers read four years behind the level of white classmates.

In 1980, the wealthiest school districts in New Jersey spent \$800 more per child than the poorest districts. Today, they spend \$3,000 more. In Texas, in 1978, the richest districts spent \$600 more than the poor districts. Today they spend up to \$5,000 more.

Tuition costs have more than tripled at private colleges since 1977. Last year's average bill was about \$8,700. At public schools tuition more than doubled, up to about \$1,700 last year. The percentage of low-income black high school graduates attending college dropped to 30% in 1988, from nearly 40% in 1976... In 1976, 53% of black middle-income high school graduates were enrolled; by 1988 only 28% were there. The black presence on campus waned - even as total college attendance rose, according to Newsweek:

"Who goes to College?" (from Newsweek)

Black males	4%
Black females	6%
White males	39%
White females	46%

### Health

The death rate for Black infants (17.6 per 1,000 births as of 1988) is more than twice that for whites (8.5 per 1,000). According to the National Commission to Prevent Infant Mortality, Detroit, Washington, and Philadelphia suffer higher infant-death rates than Jamaica or Costa Rica. In Central Harlem the infant mortality rate is the same as in Malaysia:

Infant Mortality Rate, 1988  
(Deaths per 1,000 births)

Central Harlem	23.4
Bedford-Stuyvesant	21.0
East Harlem	14.9
New York City	13.3

A study by Dr. Harold Freeman, director of surgery at Harlem Hospital, and Dr. Colin McCord, found that a man in Harlem has less chance of living past 40 than a man in impoverished Bangladesh. In Bangladesh 55 percent of men live to age 65, while only 40 percent of Harlem men live that long.

Nearly 7% of all U.S. babies - a quarter million a year - are born too small. The rate is far higher, and rising, among minorities. In 1988 fully 13% of all Black children came into the world dangerously underweight.

Cocaine use rose ominously among young women during the 1980's. Recent findings suggests that the problem has peaked; experts guess that 300,000 to

100,000 women deliver cocaine-exposed babies each year. At Harlem Hospital, the frequency of cocaine use among expectant mothers jumped from 1% in 1980 to 20% in 1988. A 1989 survey suggested that 17% of Philadelphia's babies were born exposed.

More than 34 million Americans have no health insurance. Of the uninsured, about 27% of Hispanics are uninsured, 20% of blacks and 12% of whites.

### Prison

Black males comprise less than 6% of the U.S. population but represent nearly 50% of prisoners in jails and penitentiaries. The United States now has the world's highest know rate of incarceration, with 426 prisoners per 100,000 population. South Africa is second in the world with a rate of 333 per 100,000.

- Black males in the U.S. are incarcerated at a rate of four times that of Black males in South Africa, 3,109 per 100,000 compared to 729 per 100,000.

- Between 1973 and 1988, the number of felons in state and federal prisons almost tripled from 204,000 to 603,000. By 1989, the total inmate population in U.S. prisons and jails had passed the one million mark.

- Almost one in four (23 percent) Black men in the age group 20-29 is either in prison, jail, on probation, or parole on any given day.

- For white men in the age group 20-29, one in 16 (6%) is under the control of the criminal justice system.

- Latino males rates fall between these two groups, with one in 10 (10.4%) within the criminal justice system on any given day.

The number of women inmates has almost tripled in the last 10 years. Three quarters of the women are mothers, and many of them single parents... The typical offender, according to a 1988 national study conducted for the American Correctional Association, is a young minority mother.

### Death Penalty

- There are approximately 2,400 people on death row. More than 41% of prisoners on death row are African-American.

- More than 6% of those on death row are Hispanic.

- Native Americans receive the death penalty in numbers more than triple their proportion of the general population. A House Judiciary Committee found that 60 of the 115 prisoners on death row in Alabama were African American, as were 71% of those executed since the reestablishment of executions in that state in the early 1980s.

The government's own General Accounting Office reviewed 20 studies on the patterns of death sentencing. The study concluded that "in 82% of the studies, race of victim was found to influence the likelihood of being charged with capital murder. Those who murdered whites were more likely to be sentenced to death than those who murdered Blacks."

There are more than 100 Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War currently in U.S. Prisons.

The "Special International Tribunal On The Violation Of Human Rights Of Political Prisoners And Prisoners Of War In United States' Prisons And Jails" held in December, 1990, concluded in its verdict that:

- "Within the prisons and jails of the United States exist substantial numbers of Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War.

- "These prisoners have been incarcerated for their opposition to U.S. government policies and actions that are illegal under domestic and international law, including the right to self-determination, genocide, colonial-

ism, racism and militarism.

- "The U.S. government criminalizes and imprisons persons involved in the struggles for self-determination of Native Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Black and Mexicano-Chicano activists within the borders of the United States.

- "The U.S. also criminalizes and imprisons white North Americans and others who have worked in solidarity with struggles for self-determination, as well as for peace and against nuclear arms, against racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination.

- "Political people have been subjected to disproportionately lengthy prison sentences and to torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment within the U.S. prison system."

### The Reality of Life in the USA

The reality of what life in the USA is really like depends on what class and race one belongs to. In many cases the quality of life is a far cry from the images shown on the silver screen. The image that the U.S. government projects abroad is based on sheer hypocrisy. While U.S. leaders make speeches about Human Rights abroad, they blatantly violate the human rights of the U.S. population.

Democracy has meant little more to many people living in the U.S.A. than a choice between the lesser of the evils. Just because you've got Hitler, Mussolini and Franco running against each other in an election doesn't mean you've got democracy. There is no freedom of speech in the U.S., only freedom to whisper. Anyone who really speaks out against U.S. policies loudly and effectively becomes targeted by the FBI or the CIA. The government's spokesmen give much lip service to "multi-party democracy," but any party that differs from the pro-capitalist policies of the Republican and Democratic parties will be infiltrated and attacked by government agencies.

Oppressed people in the United States identify with and support Cuba, not only because of Cuba's revolutionary example. We also relate to the Cuban experience because we have been victimized by the same reactionary politics. It is not difficult for us to recognize and condemn the U.S. blockade against Cuba, because many of us have experienced a very different but somewhat similar blockade during our entire lifetimes. The subjugated people in the United States have been subjected to a kind of economic and political blockade since the day we were born. We have experienced a job blockade, an education blockade, a healthcare blockade, and a freedom, justice and liberty blockade. We can relate to the plight of the Cuban people because we know what it feels like to be attacked from all sides, simply for fighting against exploitation. We support the right of the Cuban people to self-determination. We feel certain that the Cuban people will be able to solve their own problems, without copying any kind of big-business, Willie Horton style "democracy."

Referring to the uprising and the racial composition of Los Angeles, Police Chief Daryl Gates called it "a Third World city." Those of us who have suffered at the hands of the U.S. government for years knew the truth in what he said. The same federal troops that had invaded Panama, that had fought in Iraq, were now fighting in Los Angeles. And we were the enemy. In one of the bloodiest rebellions in U.S. history, with close to 60 dead and more than 2,000 wounded, the reality is staring us in the face. Oppressed people in the U.S. are no different from oppressed people all over the world. We will never be free until imperialism is defeated.

Viva la Revolucjon Cubana!  
Viva la libertad!  
Venceremos!!!!

(from Race & Class Newsfeed via NY Transfer News Service)

# Interview With Women Political Prisoners In Chile



On Tuesday, December 10/191, some 150-200 people demonstrated in Santiago, Chile. The demonstration was held on the Day of Human Rights under the motto: "Against the Chilean State! For the Freedom of Political Prisoners!"

The demonstration was technically illegal, since the organizers did not wish to receive the State's permission for a march beforehand.

It was planned that a march would start from two different places at 1 p.m. and head for Moneda (the government palace). As soon as people began forming for the demonstration, the police arrived and stood with their clubs in front of those passing out leaflets and holding banners.

Without any reason, other than wishing to hinder the demo before it even began, the police fired a water cannon ("Guanaco") down the main street, hitting not only the demonstrators, but passers-by as well. Demonstrators responded with stones and molotovs. The supposed thrower of the molotov which set the "Guanaco" water cannon on fire was brutally beaten and taken to hospital.

The common march to the Moneda palace was abandoned, since the number of demonstrators was so small, so instead, small bands of people headed for the justice ministry. A regular demonstration was no longer possible, as people had already been dispersed. But about 40 people assembled in front of the CODEPU (the political prisoners' support group) building near the justice ministry. They shouted slogans like "(Todas las Presas Políticas - presente)" ("All political prisoners are here with us!") and "Haber, haber, los derechos humanos, liberar a los presos, castigar al tirano" ("Just wait and see, human rights will punish the tyrants and set the political prisoners free!"). The cops ordered all foreigners to leave the area - they probably wanted no witnesses to what was to follow. They "lead" them to the next intersection, and when the foreigners refused to go further, they were pushed into open traffic. After a small confrontation, they crossed the street. Meanwhile, some of the demonstrators tried to seek refuge in the CODEPU office, but the porter wouldn't let them in the building. So

then 10 people were beaten and arrested. The cops then went on a total rampage in the inner-city, in full riot-gear, firing tear gas and beating people. A mobile unit continually patrolled the area in order to find, beat, and arrest demonstrators. This went on for three hours and involved most of the city's security forces. On account of the small number of people, no common actions could be carried out, so most actions were individual and spontaneous. The press conference, which was to be held on the Plaza de Arma, never took place.

The background to this demonstration is the situation of political prisoners. There are still 60 men and 8 women in jail who were imprisoned under the [Pinochet] dictatorship. The women are organized in a women's collective in the Santo Domingo prison in Santiago, and the men are in the "Carcel Publica" in Santiago. The demonstrators were acting against the Chilean State, which continues to detain persons who had struggled against the dictatorship, and which continues to violate human rights and carry out torture. They criticized the so-called democracy which captures new prisoners, in accordance with the new Anti-Terrorist Law, who are members of revolutionary organizations, and which will not recognize them as political prisoners, and which detains them in inhuman conditions, as is especially the case with Marcela Rodriguez.

The Chilean State has not changed its line since the elections of two years ago. The policy of reconciliation has instead been directed against the people, not those responsible for the dictatorship. The goal of the December 10 demonstration was to unmask the State's reality, for example: the secret service has merely been subsumed into the military; the neo-liberal economic policies are continuing, and the new finance minister under Aylwin seems more liberal [in a classical, economic sense - ed.] than his predecessor under the dictatorship; new anti-terrorist commandos are being formed; military spending is up 30%, and the number of Carabineros has also increased; and in the spheres of justice, the

military, and banking, almost no personnel changes have taken place. The old faces remain in the "new" political system.

In order to make known the current situation, we are reprinting this interview which appeared in Angerhogen Info 86.

This interview was held on December 15/191 in the women's prison Santo Domingo in Santiago, Chile, with: Ceceila Radrigan - a MIR [a left-revolutionary organization active in the peoples' movement against the Pinochet dictatorship - ed.] militant arrested in October 1981, sentenced to 18 years and one day, with four other trials still open.

Ester Alfaro - 37 years old, with two children; a militant from the Movimiento Juvenil Lautaro, jailed in September 1990.

Belinda Zubicueta - has two sons who fled Chile after their mother's arrest; a militant of the PC (Communist Party), sentenced to life imprisonment in 1986.

Patricia - 32 years old, married with a daughter; a militant of the PS (Socialist Party), arrested in October 1988 and charged with anti-terror laws and weapons offences.

Valentina Alvarez - 26 years old; a MIR militant, arrested in November 1986 and charged with anti-terror laws and weapons offences; her trial has been transferred from a military to a civilian court in order to speed up her conviction.

Glady - 29 years old; a PC militant, arrested on June 20/90, when she was two months pregnant; her son was born in prison and lives with her there; her trial, for anti-terror law violations and weapons offences, has likewise been transferred to a civilian court.

There are also two other comrades imprisoned in Santo Domingo who did not take part in this interview:

Leonora - in hospital since December 10/191; an MJ Lautaro militant, on trial since October 1989.

Catalina Arila - arrested in September 1990, sentenced to 5 years and one day.

**What is your present situation here in the prison like, and how did you reach these conditions?**

**Cecella:** Our present situation is the result of long struggles, to reach decent conditions. Our status as political prisoners was much harder to maintain under the dictatorship, in fact, it practically didn't exist. And every petition we submitted for schooling or sports was turned down. To get these things, we had to carry out actions. Sometimes we were successful, sometimes we weren't. By the time of the end of the dictatorship. We had achieved some improvements, like to be in a prison for political prisoners, like the one we're in now, Santo Domingo. After the civilian government took power, things remained the same. There's a little bit more "freedom" as far as conditions inside go, like lengthening the visiting day, more activities, visits from children every day, general visitors three times a week, and the right to receive special visitors every day. We do different kinds of jobs, craftwork with copper and leather, literature, dance classes, and macrame. So we have lots we can do, including computer lessons three times a week, so time passes quickly.

**Patricia:** Like Ceci said, we achieved certain "freedoms", but nonetheless, things are harder for us now than during the dictatorship. At that time, there was a dictatorship whom we could struggle against. But today, two years after the people voted in a new government, we are still held as political prisoners, and that's a difficult situation.

**Valentina:** And another thing, which I think is important that people internationally learn of, is that we are tortured as prisoners, both under the dictatorship and the democracy. And the trials, or rather the law suits, which went before the court concerning human rights abuses, achieved nothing. What's more, some people responsible for torture escaped going on trial altogether.

**Please describe to us the prison conditions under the dictatorship, and what aspects have changed for you.**

**Valentina:** During the dictatorship - there are prisoners who have been in jail more than 10 years, and some of us have been in for 5 or 6 years - we were moved between different jails. First we were in a women's prison, which was very strictly regulated and repressive, especially for the political prisoners. Then, because of international pressure, we were incorporated into a men's prison. Although all the women here were political prisoners, we still had to fear for rape and physical attacks from the male social prisoners. Then, after issuing a series of demands, and with pressure from international human rights organizations, we were put in this prison in January/88. Since then we've been here, in Santo Domingo, which differs a lot from other prisons. It's a big old house, used specifically for us. That has improved our living conditions, as far as accommodations go, but not the state of our lock-down. The judicial conditions, which we have been subject to, both now and during the dictatorship, are unjust.

**Belinda:** And another thing that needs to be said regard-

ing the conditions, especially for imprisoned women, is that every time we start a movement to demand more space, we get punished. That initially stirred the attention of the prison's directors. For example, they threatened to take away the guaranteed right of those comrades, who, for example, come visit their imprisoned comrades in jail, to visit, so then they'd lose the ability to see their comrades. We also got punished with a general ban on visits.

Some things we did achieve, however, was the ability to have doctors and psychiatrists visit. That has enabled us to hold some sort of dialogue on prison situations. This situation has led to familial disintegration, for example. This disintegration has, among other things, health side-effects. And even psychological help can't undo the effects of torture. The doctors, which we have now, are very trustworthy. This has been gained both through our activities and through the support of the social organizations who exert pressure on our behalf.

**Gladys:** In addition to the disintegration of the family, for those of us who have children, there is an organization dedicated exclusively to this. That's crucial, because children also have to live through the side-effects of torture. The PDIE is an organization which offers psychological help, pediatry, and medicine.

**Patricia:** Something else we have achieved is that comrades are now able to complete their schooling here. We have two comrades, who are now free, who just finished their mid-level education. One group intended to study sociology at the university level from inside. Unfortunately we couldn't do this, because there was a lack of professors. But with this action, we succeeded in further developing ourselves.

**How is it that most prisoners are now out, while you all are still being held? What clause in the Lex Cumplido led to this?**

**Patricia:** That has to do with how the government has answered the problem of political prisoners. That's why there were different laws to deal with the whole problem of political prisoners. These were the so-called Cumplido Laws. At the end, everything was more complicated, and only a few comrades actually got out, since the government viewed the problem as judicial, not political. So what happened next? During the last year of the dictatorship, and even now, they solve things according to their own interests. And it's the same people: the judges now are the same ones there were then. In other words, although the government changed hands, the judicial system did not. So that's why some prisoners got out sooner than others. But then there's judges who hand out indictments against us. In my case, three, and Valentina got another one just a week ago, and she's been in jail for 5 years now! That's the general situation. Things have gotten worse, more miserable. There's still the possibility, once the trials are finally over, to win freedom by means of a pardon, or by an offer of exile. But I think it's difficult to predict. There are so many different cases, like Miriam Ortega's, for example. She was in prison for 10 years. When her trial ended, she was pardoned. But as you can see, her trial took 10 years.

**Valentina:** Furthermore, what the possibility of freedom for certain prisoners of the dictatorship meant was being released under warning after the trial was over. The punishments they got were small. This was one group. Still others received pardons, once the trials were over. And then there's us, those of us that are left, unlucky enough to still have open cases. If we go before a progressive judge, then we may gain our freedom. But if we get a right-wing judge, one from the dictatorship period, then we will be denied our freedom. So it's all a matter of luck. But it supports the impression which the government and the courts are giving at the moment, namely releasing a

certain number of political prisoners.

And this isn't violating the stipulations of the laws which were passed in the parliament. We haven't yet lost our chance for a release under warning. But in this country, the mechanism isn't urgent.

**How do you all hope to gain your freedom, and what are your means of struggle? The men, for example, began a hungerstrike with the demand of "Immediate Freedom!" Tell us something about your activities.**

**Valentina:** You see, we were involved in the hungerstrike, which lasted 23 days, and the purpose was to draw attention to the matter once again - to make the public aware of the fact that there are still political prisoners from the dictatorship period. In June of this year [1991] we had a second hungerstrike. The first one was in March, and it lasted 19 days. All these actions, and things like prison occupations which we did along with our supporters, were and still are designed to put pressure on the



government to give us our release under warning and to speed up the trials, to grant pardons, and some comrades are considering exile as a possible option. All of these are possibilities which the government agreed to discuss - but which they never once discussed until June [of 1991]. The hungerstrike resulted in some comrades having their trials speeded up, some gained their freedom, and some now have the possibility of a pardon. For us it was like this: if we do nothing, we'll lose again. Our main demand is freedom based on the amnesty mechanisms which are in place. That means, if they say they're actually going to wrap up a case, that they do so. The government is in a position to put pressure on the judges based on the decrees. But if there's no pressure exerted, either nationally or internationally, then the trials go very slowly. So you can see then this is clearly a political problem. When the government sees that there are people mobilizing, exerting pressure, and making demands, then they have to either negotiate or put pressure on the judicial system to make sure the mechanisms are functioning.

**Belinda:** The question is often asked, how will we adjust ourselves in society, should we gain our freedom. For those of us still in prison, we have seen how comrades who have been released have had difficulties on the outside, and we'll have to deal with these problems

ourselves. There are so many things about our charges, under the Anti-Terrorist Law and weapons violations, that will affect us in daily life and prevent us from finding work. You want to be fit in again, but you can't, because on the one hand there's no jobs, and on the other hand because it's logistically so difficult now, because you don't have a home, you can't develop yourself or study, and you see yourself as marginalized. That's another point that we addressed in the hungerstrikes.

**Gladys:** I think it's more than this. Fitting back into society is also difficult psychologically. Comrades who have been in prison for more than ten years get out and have to make do in a totally different society; their lives outside were suddenly stopped, and now they are back out, and they see how things have changed, their former friends are no longer there, and the conditions are totally different. They then have to readapt to this, and, as it were, start anew again. Not only is finding work difficult, but just adjusting psychologically is as well. For those comrades who are mothers, there's the problem of coming to terms with the children. The children have grown up and have very different lives of their own. Relationships with the family and with their partner will have stagnated. This is really a difficult situation.

**What do you think of the possibility of exile or a pardon? Wouldn't a pardon have to be tied with a renunciation? How do you all view this as a possibility of gaining freedom?**

**Cecella:** Well, as for voluntary exile, that's something we have rejected outright. We think that we have the right to live in our own country, because our struggle was a just one. We should have been released in March 1990 [when Aylwin took power - ed.]. I myself turned down "voluntary" exile. They established the boundaries early on, and our option for freedom is waiting for the cases to be over and then to discuss the possibility of an amnesty - that's the only way we see of gaining our freedom. There are very individual matters of conscience to be dealt with when considering whether or not to accept "voluntary" exile. Like in Patricia's case, because her fiancée is in Belgium. But she doesn't want to go. So you see, we are confronted with some very difficult problems, like with her, her partner and comrade is outside of the country. And he can't reum, or he'll be arrested. And on the other hand, she doesn't want to leave her country. That's a situation with no easy solution. She'll have to decide for herself when the time comes: to stay and lose her partner, or be reunited with him but to leave her country behind.

**Valentina:** What we have struggled for is not only to be recognized as political prisoners, but also to have our struggle against the dictatorship recognized, that we took on forms of struggle which were revolutionary. Apart from our own efforts, we have to thank the international pressure which helped to end the dictatorship. Our legitimate right to form a resistance has not yet been recognized. What's more, they degrade people with talk of things like pardons, voluntary exile, and the Cumplido Laws. The government treats us like law breakers. They look at us as if we have done things which must be punished; they don't realize that we had no alternative. When the government changed hands, they didn't have the will power to grant us our rights and recognize us as political prisoners. They partially recognized us, but they failed to recognize the most significant part, and the hardest for us, namely that we are still in prison. [They are recognized as political prisoners against the dictatorship, but this has not automatically led to their freedom. ed.] We aren't in the business of asking for concessions, or writing papers and seeking trials. We demand freedom and the right to live in Chile, now. But the government just sticks to its mechanisms, and acts as if there's no alternative for us. We have to accept these means, be-

cause we don't have the strength to develop any alternative; so that's why we have to address the reality of the Cumplido Laws and the trials. But these are realities which we are not in agreement with, especially as women.

**Belinda:** The same goes for the question of voluntary exile - that's something we don't agree with, but there's no alternative. That means accepting the fact that either they throw you out of the country, or they keep you in jail. You have to choose between one or the other. You have to resolve the problem within the confines of the Cumplido Laws. Another thing about the Cumplido Law is that it is a general legislative law that also addresses other prisoners. So it undermines our status as political prisoners. It's significant that they are not concerned with this, they bring us to trial, but not as people who struggled against the dictatorship, to make changes in this period in which we live. The Cumplido Law was not passed with this in mind, but rather was seen as general solution to the prisoner issue, which for the government meant both social and political prisoners.

**The women have been on hungerstrike since December 9/91. Which women are these, and what are their demands? [We do not know the outcome of this hungerstrike - ed.]**

**Ester:** First I'd like to say that there are about 70 political prisoners in Chile who were arrested during the democracy. In the penitentiary in Santiago, there are 40 comrades, and that have to put up with bad conditions and violence from the guards. Some have received death threats.

As for the women, there is the case of Marcela Rodriguez, who is in the prison hospital. She has an injury which has basically made her an invalid. This is from a bullet lodged in her vertebrae. Other comrades are being imprisoned in San Miguel. This is a man's prison, and they had to be transferred on account of sexual assaults. In total, there are 9 of us, 2 of whom have been raped. We have all been tortured by the Investigative Commission, which is a special police group. We have all been tortured, but still the government acts deaf. The government won't recognize us as political prisoners, but still there are special laws that apply only to us, like the weapons laws, and the Anti-Terrorist Law. On December 9, we began a new, unrefreshed hungerstrike. We demand the release of Marcela Rodriguez on humanitarian grounds. The second demand is the regroupment of all the women here in Santo Domingo in Santiago. We also demand to be recognized as political prisoners, captured during the dictatorship, and we also demand the freedom for all political prisoners.

**Tell us something more about Marcela Rodriguez's health condition?**

**Ester:** Marcela has been in the prison hospital, in a regular cell, for a year now. She has no view of the outside from her cell. On basic humanitarian grounds, she should not be in such conditions. We'd like to see her released, so that she can be rehabilitated. At present, she has only basic conditions. But she needs special conditions including physiological therapy so that she can be rehabilitated. What Marcela demands is, if she cannot be released, that she at least have her own, trusted physicians. And she also demands conditions which at least allow to get some fresh air.

Marcela has received death threats from the guards.

The Penitenciera [where Marcela is held - ed.] is a man's prison, and it allows no free choice of physicians. Not only Marcela, but also her whole family have been threatened. They have found dead animals like cats and dogs in their yard at home, and so this is why Marcela seems to get worse each week.

A week ago, she had a serious break down.

She will join fully in the hungerstrike, but she would prefer to die in hungerstrike than to die in the conditions in which she presently is.

Marcela has a bullet in her spine, so she is partially paralyzed. She has no control over some of her bodily functions. What she can do is speak and move her hands, nothing else.

**The government makes a distinction between prisoners of the dictatorship and prisoners of the so-called democracy. The present hungerstrike only involved the prisoners of the so-called democracy. What are your relations, exchanges, and opinions of one another?**

**Cecella:** We, as political prisoners from the dictatorship, recognize them as political prisoners, we support them and are in solidarity with their actions. And it's important to note that they are only rarely recognized as political prisoners. But in general they aren't. That is their present demand. We see this as legitimate, so they deserve our support and solidarity, and we are ready to initiate various activities to support their action. Our primary means of support will be public declarations which support their demands. They are a part of the dossier which we have sent out internationally, and in this we describe their testimonies and their current situation.

We gave the impetus for murals on walls in Santiago, and, in the hopes that people will recognize their rights, we made a pamphlet which was distributed in neighborhoods and to organizations; these are our forms of support. And we have asked those organizations which support us to likewise support their activities. They are prisoners of this period. At the beginning of the hungerstrike, an external committee was formed to support them. We likewise support this external committee with resource materials. And we have taken up the international side of their campaign. How things go from here depends on how the movement develops, and we'll have to see just what forms our continuing support can take on. They have asked us to write letters to the justice ministry and to the prison administration, expressing their demand to be regrouped in this prison.

**What forms of support are there on the outside? How is the external committee put together, and what is its purpose? Are there parts of the social movement, political groups, or parties which support your strikes?**

**Ester:** The external committee is a group of friends and allies of us all who support the hungerstrike, among others the "Velcoda Mothers", and as the committee further develops, other social organizations will surely join. But that's the case at the moment.

**Do statements about the hungerstrike appear in public, that is, in the media?**

**Ester:** Yes, some media do cover the hungerstrike, and on Monday the press conference outside the prison was prevented from happening. Today, on Friday, a press conference was given outside the Penitenciera. All the discussions were about Marcela. She is the spokesperson for the hungerstrike.

**What has the government's reaction been to your hungerstrike?**

**Belinda:** They've said absolutely nothing. I don't think that bodes well for us. And as I said, the strife is unrefreshed, so we're not expecting to reach our goal in just a few days, and that goal is Marcela's immediate release and regroupment in one prison.

**How realistic are you about your demands being**

**fulfilled, and do you think that Marcela's has a chance at freedom?**

**Cecella:** Yes, it's going to be difficult to reach this goal, but not impossible. It all depends on the level of support which the comrades receive. Pressure, both from inside the country and internationally, could help to push the government to release Marcela on humanitarian grounds and because of her physical condition. There are different factors which play into this. So the fundamental issue here is if people will support the action to reach this goal. Marcela's condition of being unfit for prison has resulted in many international campaigns. For example, a big campaign has developed in France, and there are also efforts being made in Sweden and Belgium and in other countries which I can't remember. If she has special conditions so that she can rehabilitate herself as much as possible - then she will make progress. Her progress depends on her medical care, care which she is not getting at present. The longer things are held up, the more difficult her recovery will be. That's why her freedom is so necessary, so she can go to another country where she can get adequate treatment. If she remains in prison, she will not heal. She needs, at the very least, a minimal improvement in her conditions, so that she can care for herself, because right now she's totally dependent.

**Belinda:** Like you just said, Ceci, in the earlier campaign for Marcela, the government was totally unsensible. That's why it's so important that the support for this present action be so much stronger.

**Gladys:** And I'd like to point out, that these conditions for Marcela which we are talking about are merely for her survival. I don't think they are trying to help her be rehabilitated. They want to keep her alive to such a degree that she can be in a state to be detained.

But this brings with it a lot of difficulties and emotional and physical problems. Because she has lost so much strength, she has gotten a whole series of wounds, on account of her lack of strength, and this just makes her worse.

Twice she nearly died from an infection. That's why we think it would be good, no, it's fundamental that she be given her freedom so that she can receive care. And then she could develop a bit. This is crucial, because it's so hard for her to see herself degenerating day by day into a baby.

And that's what she practically is at the moment.

**Cecella:** Well, I'd like to thank you, on behalf of the collective, for giving us the opportunity to discuss our situation, and to complain about our continued detention, and to make a call to international organizations to continue to ask for our release and to support the new generation of political prisoners. They should receive the "best conditions" possible during their detention - the best conditions in a prison which they should be reunited in.

For them and for us alike, who find ourselves still in prison today, it's crucial to support the petitions for regroupment, better conditions, and recognition as political prisoners. And in our case, the pressure must be kept on to demand our freedom!

*(from Angehörigen Info #86)*

*...continued from page 6*

All means of struggle have been respected and recognized. The comrades can integrate themselves in the work as soon as possible, and most importantly the U.S. government has not achieved its purpose of destroying the Puerto Rican revolutionary movement.

The struggle continues until the final victory!

*(from Libertad Update, April 18, 1992)*

# FPMR: Our Eight Years



by Daniel Martinez

On December 14, 1991 the Manuel Rodriguez Patriotic Front (FPMR) was 8 years old. Born in 1983 in the midst of the Pinochet dictatorship the FPMPR has been an important actor in national life, especially during the years of tyranny.

Every anniversary, aside from being a time of celebration, should also be a time of evaluation and reflection. The remembrance and appraisal of the past should allow us to project ourselves into the future to advance more and better.

Making an account of the Patriotic Front's life proves how difficult it is to summarize this brief but intense history, these 8 years filled with human and revolutionary content at times rising to heroism because of their dignity and consequence.

The birth of the organization took place in the heat of the peak of the anti-dictatorial popular struggles which had been increasing since 1980. Driven by the popular rebellion which had the dictatorship in check, we were born and grew in the midst of great neighbourhood, communal, regional and national protests; strikes and other multifaceted forms of struggle which our people applied to rid themselves of the tyranny which oppressed us since 1973.

On December 14, 1983, a national blackout announced that something new was being born in the country, the people relieved with great joy their new tool of combat born in the deepest part of its social being. The actions took place quickly, dizzyingly, melted in the frontal attacks against the dictatorship; in them we were formed and forged our combativeness as the armed arm of the Chilean people. There were thousands of Patriots who began joining the "Front" to be on the front line against the tyranny, men and women from all social classes, most of them youth who were the ones who with greatest decisiveness took on the new forms of struggle which the FPMPR was leading. The colossal increase of the quantity of combative actions by the popular masses began producing a qualitative leap among them, almost naturally going on to superior forms of struggle, incipient expressions of armed actions which demanded organization and leadership in which the militias and other operational structures went on to earn the admiration and

sympathy of the people which no longer felt unprotected in its unequal anti-dictatorial struggle.

The main objective of the great offensive from those years was to overthrow the dictatorship, to obtain its overthrow as it was no longer possible to continue. Putting up with so much oppression and state terrorism, so much criminality. How to finish with the dictatorship was a difficult objective; the means employed in the struggle were titanic and heroic. Between 1983 and 1986 the pressure of the struggles made the tyranny tremble as it began sinking in an almost total crisis: economic, political, military and moral and a total internal and international isolation. Its discreditation was total and it suffered absolute repudiation. That is how 1986 arrived, which defined itself as the decisive year. Everything indicated that this would be achieved and the result would be progressive, participatory and popular, that we would reach an advanced democracy with an important participation by the sectors of the left which had laid an important role throughout all those years.

The strength of the deeds had forced a sector of the center-right opposition, hegemonized by Christian Democracy to join the margin of the aforementioned struggles, to support the social mobilization and other forms of anti-dictatorial struggle, faced with the fear of being marginalized by the changes that could be seen in the short term. In this manner the Christian Democrats went from collaborating with the fascist regime to the opposition and participating in the struggles for its overthrow, incorporating into its policies the concepts of civil disobedience and ungovernability to complement, or counter-balance, those of popular rebellion and national revolt with which the left had won a leadership role. In this picture there are two important elements which must be highlighted:

1) The peak of this offensive against the tyranny achieved its destabilization by sharpening all of its contradictions and crisis in all fields.

2) In the midst of this strong combativeness and unleashing of the popular masses revolutionary violence the greatest unitary achievements in which the left played an important role took place. During this period the workers command assembly of civility and the table of political parties were created, among others.

## News Briefs

In the March issue of the German police magazine "Kriminalistik", journalist Matthias Mletzko describes the antagonism between far-right forces and autonomist anti-fascists as a considerable security problem for the near future. In his five-page article entitled "The ANTIFA-Campaign of Autonome Groups", he examines the militant, pro-violence politics of the autonomists which incorporates a resistance to "fascism" with criticisms of "western imperialism" and Germany asylum policies. Mletzko points out that anti-fascism has always been a potent tool for "orthodox communist manipulation and disinformation". The article mentions by name such periodicals as "Radikal" and makes note of the ECN, an autonomist computer information network. On the international level, the pig Mletzko also takes notice of the autonomist conference held in Venice in 1991, the network of "info-shops" which has sprung up across Western Europe, and alleged contacts between German anti-fascists and foreign revolutionary groupings such as Dev Sol and the PKK. In other words, the autonomist anti-fascist scene is experiencing a period of intense scrutiny and criminalization by the German state security apparatus. For example, the Göttingen Autonome-ANTIFA scene was recently criminalized under paragraph 129a, and the anarchist paper "Unfassbar" was indicted for "supporting a terrorist organization", i.e. the RAF. This is all part of wave of raids and searches of autonomist info-shops throughout Germany (*from APS*)... Citing no practical results after spending almost \$500,000 of Justice Ministry funds, the Dutch government has decided to disband the special investigative team which was set-up to investigate the clandestine autonomist group RARA. The team, known as LCT-2, will continue its investigations until the end of 1992, but with a reduced budget of less than \$50,000. Ha Ha! RARA Continua! The LCT-2 team has also failed to turn up any clues regarding the group calling themselves "Freedom For All Political Prisoners" who set fire to several military helicopters at a military base near Amhem on February 3 (*from APS*)... On January 27, Florence Tosi and Serge Quadruppani, editors of the radical French magazine "Mordicus", were charged with "incitement to robbery, looting, arson, direct provocation to murderous crimes, and complicity in misdemeanors." The apparent reason for their indictment seems to be an article in which they published the text of a rap song, "C'est ton festin" ("This is your feast"), which includes the refrain, "No cops in the quarter, no quarter for the cops." The two editors are facing 3-5 years in prison for these ridiculous charges (*from "Communist Antinational"*)... Since May 14, blockades set-up by Native and Metis peoples have successfully halted clear-cutting in the forests of north-western Saskatchewan. The forces on the blockades, loosely called the "Protectors of Mother Earth", have criticised the "corporate indians" of the Tribal Council for selling off logging rights to the NordSask corporation. Lubicon peoples from Alberta and activists from Toronto have aided in the blockade actions. On June 30, over 100 RCMP officers moved in on one blockade and arrested 31 people. The police have vowed to take further action if the blockades are not ended soon. Tribal elders, however, refuse to end the blockade until their concerns about the logging are addressed (*from Ecomedia #120*)... On December 17/91, five people associated with the Italian communist/anti-imperialist magazine

continued on the back page...

## A Blow To The Possible Popular Triumph

The level of confrontation was so great that the United States forsook a revolutionary result and the imminent overthrow of the tyrant, this was made clearer considering the situation in Central America: the Sandinista revolution; the strong guerrilla struggles in El Salvador and Guatemala, and its influence in the region. Faced with this fear the United States developed a complete offensive against Chile which involved billions of dollars. This took place mainly in the political, economic and military fields; in the cultural, judicial and diplomatic areas, among other areas of interest. The objective of these American efforts were to preserve its imperialist interests in Chile and throughout the region.

Aside from the United States some European countries also invested to help achieve a result in accordance with their interests efforts in which many non-governmental organizations (NGO's) have played an important mediating role of the struggles. The big influx of fresh dollars to "help" the peaceful removal of the dictatorship bought many who began to play a braking role. In this manner Christian Democracy and other center-right sectors allowed themselves to be used in the formula to remove Pinochet and the dictatorship from government; a formula which went against any popular solution and especially a revolutionary one. The United States demanded from the beginning, an end to all social mobilization and violent struggles, as well as any agreement with the Marxist left and above all the revolutionaries, "terrorists" in their hypocritical slang. At that stage significant unitarian advances had already been achieved, principally at the student level, among others. These humiliating demands were accepted by Christian Democrats surely because of their ancient greediness for power which has been demonstrated so many times before. Already in 1964 they received millions of dollars from the United States, through the CIA, to halt the possible presidential triumph of the "Marxist" candidate Salvador Allende. When Allende was overthrown as president in 1973, Christian Democracy supported the fascist coup d'etat and the bloodbath in which they immersed our people, thinking that the coupist military would deliver power to them at that time. In the pacts made in 1986/87 they forced the exclusion of the Communist Party and the MIR and logically the political-military organizations. From there the so-called concertation for democracy became privileged as a political formula for change, a political alliance to which the most opportunist and inconsequential sectors of the traditional Chilean left attached themselves.

They negotiated these agreements with the dictatorship and since then they assumed the "policy of agreements" to go about replacing the anti dictatorial struggle. Our people, totally against these undignified transactions made behind their backs, lead great battles of struggle in 1986 from the perspective of overthrowing the dictator. The national strike of July 2-3 of that year was a transcendental combative struggle, the regime resorted to the most criminal state terrorism to impede the popular struggle: they murdered a family on Marniña street in a southern Santiago neighbourhood. They burned alive two youths in the Estacion central neighbourhood among thousands of other atrocities. In the month of August they discovered a large cache of weapons in the northern part of the country with which they frustrated a great attempt in the path of liberation; they held the Patriotic Front responsible for this and unleashed a real "witch hunt" against our organization. On September 7, 1986, the execution attempt of the tyrant took place in "Operation 20th Century", an ambush of the dictator's motorcade in the canyon of the Maipo, an action carried out by the FPMR. These three important deeds only illustrate the great efforts that were made by thousands of actions to end the tyranny.

The difficulties in meeting the objectives of the

"Decisive Year" produced all manner of fears and deserts, of setbacks and retreats. The historic left was not capable of maintaining its steadfast anti-dictatorial position which produced a serious process of dispersion and atomization which they have yet to overcome. Regrettably in the midst of this the Christian Democrats and their allies assumed the political leadership which could count on all the resources to achieve their current hegemony. All of this facilitated the institutional timetable contemplated by the 1980 Pinochet constitution, strengthened by the agreements and political support of those who compromised themselves in the dictator's negotiated exit, ensuring a process of continuity of the political system imposed by the tyranny in its nearly 17 years of oppression.

Our organization never accepted the "pseudo-legitimacy" of the criminal Pinochet regime and their fraudulent pseudo-constitution. We also never gave moral solvency to the government which has given itself to represent this comedy of "democracy" born in agreements with imperialism, or rather with the same ones responsible for the 1973 coup d'etat.

## A System Of Domination: The Dictatorial Continuity

From its genesis the agreements which have been imposed defend interests alien to our people, to our nation, and have even less to do with a legitimate restoration of real democracy; in them they assured American interests the first place. For this the neo-liberal economic model has been the perfect instrument to assure these interests, to consolidate the system of domination imposed during the dictatorship by blood and fire. This external system of dependence, because of its transcendence, constitutes a long term national development project of a strategic character which will mortgage the country for decades into the 21st century. In its entirety this system tries to stratify class relations in favour of the dominant sectors: the transnationals, the group of economic power, and the political and military cliques which have colluded for the revision of dependent capitalism which currently holds power. This explains the role which the dictator continues to play as commander-in-chief of the army and the immense quota of power he still currently holds. It also explains the evolution of the "democratic" government in this year's nine months of management, that its drift to the right is increasing as well as its repressive counter-insurgent character it assumes day by day. Finally, President Patricio Aylwin himself has announced that last August 7th the "transition to democracy" ended and logically all that was left now was to consolidate it.

## The Patriotic Front's Development Process

In these 8 years of life we have accumulated a great combative experience, we have carried out a significant number of principally urban armed actions as well some rural ones. One action that stands out was the kidnapping of Colonel Carlos Carreño, Director of FAMAE, the army weapons factory which appears to be currently involved in the contraband shipment of 11 tons of weapons seized in Hungary en route to Croatia, in violation of the embargo on weapons sales to the warring countries in that region. Colonel Carreño was freed in Sao Paulo, Brazil. [Translators note: Carreño's tortured, bullet riddled body was recently found in a river in Chile. According to the Uruguayan newspaper "Brecha" no one has claimed credit for the killing but it appears related to the above mentioned arms shipment to Croatia]. Aside from the combative actions and various forms of struggle employed in these years we have also carried out an important amount of social work; we have a good accumulation in the area of struggle for human rights and solidarity; in political-diplomatic work in the international arena, etc...

As an organization we were born as the armed arm

of the Chilean people but since 1987 we initiated our transformation to a political-military organization - a process still underway. The first tool for this change was the political redesign elaborated in the 2nd semester of 1987. Until 1988 our politics and actions were within the concepts of national uprisings which we replaced that year with the political strategic line of Patriotic and National War (P. and N. W.) which had its baptism of fire on October 21, 1988 in the campaign for "national dignity", a battle in which our comrades Cecilia Magni C. and Raul Pellegini F., Comandantes Tamara and Rodrigo, fell in combat, who with their sacrifices became true symbols in the rescue of dignity.

Our party construction is that of a vanguard organization in a concept of shared vanguards, organizations which should be built and it will be our people who give them this quality.

Our strategic line of P. and N. W. was completed with the Patriotic Struggle for National Dignity (PSND), our tactical line elaborated in 1990. In September of that year the "Manifiesto for National Dignity" summarized our current policy, our tactic for the period. This is finished with the document "Character of the Stage".

Despite the fact that our characterization of the current Chilean government was correct as to its continuity, we lacked flexibility to confront the new realities and the space they have created. This took us to a certain stagnation of our project which we confronted by democratically analyzing it at all levels of the organization, militants, combatants, and leaders in the first Internal Rodriguista Consultation which took place in the first months of 1991. This consultation concluded in clear mandates for change to achieve a greater insertion into current reality to advance our revolutionary project of national and social liberation which will end the current system of domination and dependence. Today these changes are being implemented which signifies a restructuring and redefining on the project's part.

## Ideological Fountains Of Rodriguism

Patriotism is the principal ideological fountain. From it we rescue our historic roots, everything that is great about our nation and our people. This is framed in revolutionary internationalism stemming from Latinamericanism: Bolivar, San Martin, Marti. We have learned from, and been inspired by the Cuban and Sandinista revolutions. We have scientific socialism as our analytic base, as a guide for action.

Humanist moral and ethical values, such as dignity and decorum, which are needed so much in these times. Consistency, selflessness, loyalty and fidelity with the noble causes, solidarity, etc.

The Rodriguist mysticism which our brothers [and sisters - ed.] have had based on these practices and principles and human and revolutionary values have written the most heroic and sacred pages of our history; as brothers [and sisters] who have paid with prisons and torture the loyalty to our people, many who are still political prisoners. Remembering our heroes is how we shall end this incomplete summary; symbolizing all of the patriots who have given their lives for our cause: Camilio, Tatiana, Marcelo, Patricio, Margarita, Valeriano, Moises, Jose, Ignacio, Cesar, Pato, Elizabeth, Ester, Julio, Ricardo, Manuel, Wilson, Juan, Maria, Isidoro, Raul, Cecilia, Roberto, Heman, Carlos and Mauricio.

Memory would never be able to retain so many dear names who had given the most sublime human and moral base which each time obligates us more to carry our liberation project forward, for which they gave their valuable and irreplaceable lives. For them, for our peoples, for the viability of principles and revolution we conclude with our slogan:

"Until victory or death!"

(from *Ko'eyú Latinoamericano*, Jan.-Mar. '92)

# Peace Negotiations In The Philippines

## Interview With European NDF Representative

*A civil war has been fought in the Philippines for the past 23 years. The fall of the Marcos dictatorship in 1986 made the prospects for peace more likely. But after the recent presidential elections, peace now seems more distant than ever. Negotiations between the National Democratic Front (NDF) and its guerrilla wing, the New People's Army (NPA), were only on the campaign platform of one minor candidate.*

*After the fall of Marcos and Aquino's take-over of power, a series of negotiations in February 1986 led to a cease-fire and negotiations between Aquino and the NDF/NPA. But this process collapsed on January 22/87, when the Aquino government bloodily crushed a protest march by farmers. This attack became known as the "Mendiola Massacre". In March of 1987, Aquino declared "total-war" on the left-wing resistance movement.*

*Since then, the conflict has taken on disastrous proportions: there have been over 2 million internal refugees in the past 3 years. The murder and disappearance of legal left-wing activists have become commonplace. Amnesty International's last report from February of this year reported that "the murdering continues" in the Philippines. The army and other right-wing paramilitary troops roam freely.*

*In 1990, a new movement towards a peace-process developed. Church groups and non-governmental organizations took the initiative, and in September 1991, there was a meeting in Hong Kong between NDF leaders and Philippine army generals. A second round of talks scheduled for March of this year in Brussels were called off by the government at the last moment. They felt that the meeting place (the European Parliament) was "too prominent" and would allow the NDF a chance to spread its propaganda. Since then, there have been no moves towards scheduling further talks.*

*The following is an interview with Byron Bocar, the NDF's representative to Western Europe:*

**The talks in Hong Kong did not result in much, and the talks in Brussels never took place. What went wrong?**

The talks in Hong Kong were supposed to discuss respecting human rights and applying international laws to a situation of armed conflict. In our eyes, this is the first step of the peace-process. Normal civilians must be protected. We had proposals with us, but the government's delegates had nothing. They didn't even have a mandate from the government and so they couldn't sign or agree to anything.

The government felt that the talks would give us international status as a party in an armed struggle. We have never demanded this status. The Philippine government consistently maintains that the Philippine constitution has to be the basis of the peace-process, and that's been the biggest obstacle so far. That relegates the NDF and the whole national democratic struggle to a police matter. That is not acceptable to us. The conflict in the Philippines is not a judicial one, but a political one. The causes of the conflict have to be settled with political measures. Both sides have to be open to this. Only then can serious talks begin.

**How do you account for these problems?**

The government doesn't take the negotiations seriously. They see the peace-process as a part of their strategy of total-war. Aquino used the peace-process in 1986. She used it to get the "moral justification" for



resulting to a military solution to the problem. She vowed to crush the revolutionary movement by the end of her term. That's this June. So now she's talking about gaining "strategic control" over the revolutionary movement by the end of 1993. As long as the government keeps thinking in those terms and refuses to work towards a political solution to the conflict, no advances can be made in the peace-process.

**Some people claim that the NDF don't take the peace-process seriously, but are just using it for tactical gains. Is armed struggle still your most important strategy?**

You have to judge the NDF by its deeds. And when you consider all the efforts we've made since 1988 to get people at the negotiating table, we have to be taken in earnest. Of course discussions about where the talks should take place are a part of the NDF's overall strategy. But we have stated that we want to continue with the peace-process until a political solution is reached. We stand by that promise.

**But until then, you'll keep shooting?**

Yes...there can be no cease-fire without a clear proposal and time-table for talks. We learned that back in 1986/87. At that time, we agreed to a cease-fire before the agenda for the talks had been set. But all the government wanted to talk about was our surrender. So the armed struggle continues.

**But isn't that an odd combination, peace-negotiations and armed struggle?**

In some areas, we have structures in place that have to be defended. We have to maintain and expand our strength. That is necessary, so that we will be taken seriously at negotiations. You could compare this to El Salvador. The peace-process there only got underway when the US recognized that the FMLN rebels could not be defeated militarily. Even though the far-right Christiani were in power...just like here in the Philippines. Some

members of the government, and especially the military, consistently maintain that we have to be crushed militarily.

**Within the NDF, are negotiations viewed as reformist?**

No. The fact that you have built up enough strength and organization to force the elite to negotiate about changing the fundamental problems affecting the population helps get at the roots of the problem. If negotiations lead to this, then we view it as part of the revolutionary process. What's more, the peace movement in the Philippines realizes that peace means more than just the absence of war. We have to find solutions to the problems which cause the conflict.

**Can this be compared to El Salvador?**

The process that we are involved in is much like it was in El Salvador, but the eventual content will be decided by the negotiations themselves. We won't lay down our weapons before there is complete agreement on social, economic, and political reforms.

**Did the FMLN give up on too many of its demands?**

In many ways, their agenda didn't differ from ours. But we disagree on the end result. Many of us feel that they gave more than they got.

**Can you be more concrete? Will industries be nationalized?**

I don't know. But one point is the dismantling of the guerrilla-army. It seems that the FMLN agreed to leave the government's army intact, more so than they wanted, while their forces would be incorporated into the police. As for the other reforms, there still have to be a number of constitutional changes. Some people doubt whether there have been enough guarantees secured of actual reforms. The FMLN have said that the people are their best guarantee, and international solidarity...The discussions are still taking place. We will have to examine the specific advantages and disadvantages of the actual accord. As for the Philippines, that will depend on the balance of power.

**What role do elections play in your strategy?**

We naturally don't take part, but we do view them as strategically important. We encourage the progressive organizations to take part and support progressive candidates. Everything we win in the elections is gladly taken, but elections are not as important as building peoples-organizations and the armed struggle. These elections won't lead to meaningful change. Not one single candidate is even addressing the fundamental problems affecting the people.

**What do you think you can concretely achieve?**

First, progressive candidates can be chosen. But at the national level, they have little chance in the "guns, goons, and gold" system. They have a better chance at the local level, even though their effect there is minimal. The important thing is to advance the struggle of the peoples' movement. Electoral struggle and mass-struggle must go together. Another important point is the American mili-

*continued on page 19...*

# Red Army Fraction Communique

Greetings To All Those Taking Part In The Demonstrations And Congresses Against The World Economic Summit In Munich!

We are glad that you all have come to this demonstration and to this congress, despite the massive numbers of police troops and the media's smear-campaign, which both attempted to beat down and defeat your organizing efforts and preparations.

Despite the varying levels in the development of the struggle and differing conditions, there remains the need for a common search for urgent solutions for peoples' lives against the world-dominating policies of the G-7 states, whose capitalist power rules over people and destroys nature.

We think it's correct that you all have chosen to oppose the 500-year festival of imperialism with this demonstration, congress, and days of actions. You have showed that on our side - the side of the oppressed - history and the consciousness of struggle are alive. As long as this imperialist system, which values human lives and nature as mere tools of capitalism, exists, there will also exist a struggle for a society free from domination. The struggle for the liberation of spiritual worth will be carried out wherever racist and sexist structures of oppression exist which deny the worth of human beings.

With this congress, you have made it possible to exchange experiences with one another and to learn from each other, to come to common evaluations and to begin working on common strategies.

Given the contemporary situation, we think it's extremely important, both here as well as internationally, to arrive at concrete common goals and demands. We need to come up with proposals as to what steps need to be taken against the ruling powers' grip over people and nature - whether in Munich, Rio, Los Angeles or Maputo, whether in Palestine or Kurdistan - and reverse the tide of global catastrophe.

A process of appropriation from below is created in concrete struggles and demands which confront the ruling powers' with the peoples' needs. For example, the struggle for living spaces, the struggle against destructive and pointless labour, the struggle against environmental destruction, the prison struggles, organizing help for refugees, anti-fascist mobilizations, and the demand for debt-cancellation and reparations from the imperialist states which have profited from colonizing peoples.

We in Germany bear a great deal of responsibility in this process, because we live under a state whose capacity for destruction is enormous. Domestically, the ruling powers have created a reactionary climate which has resulted in racist mobilizations and an almost daily war against refugees. The ruling powers need this reactionary climate to strengthen the German male-consciousness and as a safety-valve against the increasingly desperate living conditions of millions of people here, because they want to be given a free hand for their super-power politics: today, the German deutschmark marches across Eastern Europe, tomorrow, German troops march across the globe. Next to Japan, Germany has the world's strongest economy. The might of German capital is unbroken.

With this statement from us, we'd like to make some points from our April communique (namely, our de-escalation) clear to the comrades from other countries



who have travelled here for these protests.

This is part of our special steps within Germany. We don't question the legitimacy of armed liberation struggles in other countries; our deepest solidarity goes out to all those struggling for liberation throughout the world.

It is up for those involved in the struggle to decide, based upon their specific conditions, which means and forms of struggle should be employed at a given point in time.

For you all, we'd like to say something brief about our own history.

We, the RAF, came into existence in the early 70's out of the world-wide anti-Vietnam War movement. Our beginnings came during the 68-revolts, a time when many people became active; in this country, where, after Auschwitz, there was no broad social discussion of Germany's Nazi past and where ex-Nazis held positions of power in all the major government and financial institutions, communists and anti-fascists were spied on, and all those who sought to break with Germany's fascist past faced repression. Against this gloomy and suffocating imperialist reality in post-war Germany, an entire generation sought new emancipatory and anti-capitalist means of living. For example, base-democratic structures at schools and universities, living together in communes as opposed to nuclear families, organizing women against their traditional roles and against their oppression both within society and within the left.

During the Vietnam War, our country was the most important turntable for the U.S.-genocide of the Vietnamese people. We linked ourselves to the world-wide resistance to U.S.-imperialism.

At that time, the existence of the Soviet Union made it easier to secure ties to the national liberation movements of the South. Under those global circumstances, we made our radical struggle here part of the international anti-imperialist liberation front. That was our sworn perspective, to carry out simultaneous international struggle to achieve freedom.

Even when imperialism was able to halt the advance of the liberation struggles at the end of the 70's, our politics were still primarily orientated in this way and remained that way up to the mid-80's. We used our strength in the 80's to hinder the imperialist roll-back, in order to turn around the history since the October Revolution; we wanted to re-strengthen our side.

In the various phases of our 22-year history, we have intervened in our role as an urban guerrilla against imperialist world politics, against U.S. policies, against NATO, against the formation of a West European bloc, against the development of Great Germany as a world

## Look Forward In Anger! Anti-G7 Actions

In early July, the world economic summit (WWG) of the world's seven richest nations, the G7, took place in Munich, Germany. Since the summit was being held in Bavaria, one of Germany's most conservative regions, heavy confrontations between police and anti-summit demonstrators were expected. To prevent this, over 9000 police from all over Germany were deployed in Munich, and all roads into the city had police check-points.

On Saturday, July 4, over 15,000 people took part in an anti-G7 demonstration through Munich. Munich police do not tolerate the wearing of masks, or even the holding of large banners along the sides of demonstrations. Shortly after the march began, the women/lesbian-bloc unfurled a banner along the side of their bloc, resulting in a police attack. In total, 53 people were arrested during the demo. Interestingly, the autonomist and women/lesbian blocs made up about 2/3 of the total demo, which says something about the ability of various groups to mobilize.

The same was true throughout the weekend before the actual G7 summit. The Anti-Summit Congress, held the weekend before the G7 summit, was, in many ways, a disappointment. Originally scheduled to be held on a university campus, the university revoked the permit shortly before the event was to begin. Thus, the counter-congress had to be dispersed among seven area churches. This understandably upset many participants, since the church has played a leading role in colonialism and third-world exploitation throughout history. Plans by autonomists to merely storm the university and use the buildings anyway were fiercely resisted by liberals and student groups who did not want to risk confrontations with the police, who had already raided two counter-congress organizing meetings in the weeks before the actual event itself.

Despite all the problems and disappointments, much needed dialogue between European, Latin American, Asian, and Middle Eastern social movements did take place at the Anti-Summit Congress. One the second day of this congress, representatives were present from the National Democratic Front of the Philippines, the Pro-Human Rights Association of Turkey, the FMLN of El Salvador, National Liberation Movement-Tupamaros of Uruguay, the government of Cuba, the Polisario Front of Sahara-Africa, and the Puerto Rican MLN. The topics discussed were human rights, the New World Order, political prisoners, methods of struggle, and politics in the metropolises. Despite the ideological differences of many of the participants, some basic points were agreed upon: 1) That the New World Order is nothing less than the redivision of the world into spheres of influence for the powerful and will never solve the socio-economic problems of the Third World; 2) That the topic of political prisoners and prisoners of war must be a priority on the agendas of revolutionary political movements; 3) That it is of the utmost importance to sustain a truly authentic and independent process not prescribed by imperialism; 4) That the hope of humanity rests on the development of a socialism that is truly participatory, where there do not exist privileges just for the few, and where there is no oppression on the basis of race, gender, or sexual preference. There was also talk of trying to establish an International Day in Solidarity with the Political Prisoners of the World.

Besides the discussions during the anti-summit congress, actions were also carried out to protest the

*continued on the back page...*

power, and against the "new world order".

By the end of '89, when the annexation of the former DDR by West German was a reality, an entire phase of history, one which had begun with the October Revolution, had come to an end. Nonetheless, we failed to initiate a discussion of this and of the history of our own struggle - of its strengths and weaknesses - and to come up with a new orientation.

With our actions, we sought to begin to create a counter-power from below and to start a discussion and re-orientation around this situation, which had greatly increased the social contradictions and given rise to new struggles. Nonetheless, we could not break through the feeling of powerlessness and the resignation to the victory of capitalism which had gripped the very people we sought to stir into motion.

It was precisely our last action which made this most clear to us, the attack on Rohwedder. With this action, we intervened in an entirely new social situation, one which arose after the annexation of the DDR. It's goal was to hinder the march of capitalism into the former DDR and to allow us to create ties with the people in struggle there. Now we realize that to come to a common struggle from out of two different realities and sets of experience takes a great deal of discussion and understanding, learning from one another's different histories, and to then go forward together in making a counter-power.

Of course there were plenty of people who supported our actions, but these actions hardly started any discussions or resulted in any organizational gains, nor did they push the ruling powers' into any corners.

Because of all this, we need this break to come up with a new departure point.

We need an open discussion about new foundations and orientations in order to come up with new thoughts and proposals for developing a process of change. A break also means learning from our own history, so as not to repeat the same mistakes, but also to bring along all the positive experiences.

We know that there are comrades who find contradictions between our statement in April and the current situation, considering, for example, the escalating war against the Kurdish peoples, which the Turkish state is waging with German weapons and German money.

There is no question that resistance to the policies of Great Germany, both from within and without, is extremely necessary and that this can't simply be limited to a process of discussion. But we feel that armed actions won't advance this process at this time.

To come up with a new point of departure, we need a common, deep, foundation-laying discussion.

Since global changes have global ramifications, like the increasing number of people deemed not-needed by capital and who no longer have any means of existence and who cannot escape their oppressive life's reality, we need to build entirely new foundations for our process of change.

For us here, the main question is, how can we create a counter-power from below that can draw in more people who are being forced to the fringes here in Great Germany, people who are seeking a new social reality with human criteria and who reject the values and ideology of capitalism.

The history of decades of social orientation towards capital has alienated people from their lives. From this, and from the failure to create any existing alternatives, we can see why racist and sexist violence has increased here; it's a way of dulling the brutality of day-to-day life. By not creating groups consisting of different kinds of people who can work together to solve the common problems facing them daily, taking these problems in hand and struggling against them, what we have seen happen in our society is the rise of destructive and self-destructive forces and increased fascist mobilizations.

It's up to everyone who does not want to be crushed

by the power of money to develop new social struggles which come from the people themselves. In this, we see the possibility of creating a relevant social counter-power.

But the development of this is also a part of our responsibility to all those people around the world who are struggling for change and to all oppressed peoples, because it's up to us here to see to it that Great Germany's world-politics don't go unchallenged at home, but rather that there is a social consciousness that expresses solidarity with other peoples and which resists the ruling powers. We have to start a new social movement in which people can find a genuine social perspective and see the worthlessness of the capitalist system and its treatment of human worth. A movement with new content and values, one which can make concrete changes - because these are not goals which can be put off until "after the revolution".

With our communique of 10.4, a very long phase of our history came to an end. This was our decision, because we want to see a process of reflection and re-orientation on our side - it had nothing to do with the state.

This state has sought to destroy the RAF and the prisoners from the RAF and the resistance for the last 22 years using all the means available to it. The state failed, and with this in mind, we entered this new phase. If the state chooses to disrupt this new phase, then it will be up to everyone to decide how to react, and we won't take responsibility for the consequences.

We have stated that an important component of this new rebuilding process must be the struggle to free our imprisoned comrades.

When we state their freedom can be achieved through a political solution, this is the result of years of struggle. Freedom for all political prisoners within a foreseeable period of time can only be achieved through a process of struggle.

It should be everyone's task to seize the initiative and struggle to end the torture and win freedom for the prisoners.

We seek a realistic life-perspective for our imprisoned comrades and for the prisoners from all liberation movement; we want this for everyone and with everyone who wants to struggle for justice and a humane existence for all the oppressed peoples of the world.

29.6.92

Red Army Faction

*The recent cease-fire announced by the RAF has unleashed a great deal of discussion within autonomist and left-revolutionary circles in Europe. In our next issue, we intend to cover part of this debate by reprinting a number of critiques, not only of the RAF, but also of the RZs, RARA, and militant-armed struggle in general. For example, we will publish the text of an RZ group who announce their intention to abandon the armed struggle. We will also print a paper by another RZ group who criticize both this text, as well as the "Gerd Albartus is Dead" text by another RZ cell. Although all of the papers to be published in our next issue are from Europe, we feel that the issues discussed are important and should help to start a similar discussion here in North America on armed and militant resistance.*

## Revolutionary Cells Communique

### ENOUGH OF THE BROWN-SHIRTS!

Everyone has heard of the burning refugee-hosels and the deaths, but far too little are doing something about this. Munich is on its way to becoming the capital of the German neo-Nazi movement. Enough of this! We will attack the fascists!

Two centers of the Munich fascist movement got bombed early this morning. The first, the AVO-office of Ewald Althans, the most important propaganda center of the Munich neo-Nazi scene. The second, the "Munich Anzeiger", which is responsible for spreading fascist and anti-semitic hatred.

E. Althans has been a leading figure in the Munich neo-Nazi scene for years. In 1990, he organized a march to commemorate Hitler's birthday. In March 1991, he organized the Leuciter Congress, where he and other prominent neo-Nazis publicly declared that the murder of millions of Jews during the holocaust was a lie. In May 1991, he organized a meeting in the Eden Wolf hotel to honor Rudolf Hess. He has arranged transportation across Germany for Munich neo-Nazis.

There has hardly been a far-right event Munich which he has not helped to organize. On May 1/92, he organized a meeting in his new brown house under the motto: "Unity Brings Strength!" About 300 neo-Nazis, including the most significant cadres from Bayern, attended.

Althans also has strong international ties. He has money and behind-the-scenes contacts. And from his office at Herzog-Heinrich Street 30, he can spread his brown propaganda unhindered.

The "Munich Anzeiger" is a free advertisement bulletin which gets distributed to mailboxes and which can be found in most supermarkets. It comes out in 8 neighborhood editions all throughout Munich. It's published by Alfred Detscher, Jagdstreet 28. In the paper, Nazis distribute their fascist and racist propaganda unhindered. Like in issue 49/91, when the "Munich Anzeiger" ran a full-page article entitled "We want the truth and our rights", which called the holocaust a lie and demanded that "the flood of illegitimate refugees be stopped". The piece was written by the old Nazi Otto Ernst Renner. NPD and Republikaner Partei [two neo-Nazi political parties -ed.] members also use this paper. In the letters section, writings full of hatred for foreigners are regularly printed. The letters are full of terms like "parasites" "lawless gangs" "fake-refugees" and "asylum-cheaters". In a fascist youth bulletin distributed this spring by AVO, E. Althans was highly acclaimed. Another connection, thus.

PS: We'd like to quickly respond to a few groups in this statement: we don't agree with people who think that fire and flames are no longer appropriate methods for revolutionary politics. Furthermore, we don't want to close out this stage of history and be stuck with rusted structures and means of struggle, rather we want to be a political subject which is able to intervene in contemporary social processes.

Revolutionary Cells



# Punks Making Threats Again

## Statement By Brian Coan Regarding His Grand Jury Subpoena

When I was approached by a Secret Service (SS) agent while at track practice on May 7, it was the first time I had ever found myself in such a position. But I knew how to react: I refused to speak to the agent. The SS then tried to coerce me into talking by issuing me a subpoena to appear before a federal grand jury. Again, this was the first time I (or anyone else in the contemporary anarchist movement for that matter) had ever been in such a position. But once again, I knew what to do: to counteract the grand jury's secrecy, I alerted the media and other comrades in the movement, and I stated from the beginning that I would not comply with the grand jury investigation.

When I was issued the subpoena on May 8, an agent mentioned that it was related to a threat on the president. But on what grounds? Was it due to a speech I had given a week earlier at a protest in front of federal court in Pittsfield, in which I had defended the armed L.A. rebellion? Or was the government after something more? Perhaps they were on a "fishing expedition", hoping to gain info on the anarchist/autonomist movement, or the revolutionary anarchist network "Love and Rage". But there were other things to consider as well, such as my contact with political prisoners, and my involvement with "Arm The Spirit". As for the latter, there was obvious cause for alarm, given the nature of the material which ATS publishes. Given all of these concerns, it was not clear what the grand jury were up to. Hence, I took a stand of total non-collaboration.

But as time wore on, things became more clear. The SS, it turned out, had copied all of my computer files on the campus main-frame, which I used to gain access to the Internet, a global computer information network. What's

more, as no one else had been subpoenaed to appear before the grand jury, it began to look like I was the target of the investigation. But still, you can never be sure of what the government is up to, so I maintained my stance of total non-collaboration.

Just as I never let down my posture, neither did the government. US Attorney Kevin O'Regan remarked to my lawyer, Stanley Cohen: "OK, your client wants to play hard-ball. We'll play hard-ball." Stanley's motion to delay the grand-jury proceedings for one week (Stanley was to be out of town right up until the 28th) was met with a counter-motion from O'Regan in which was mentioned my intention to not only refuse to give testimony, but also to refuse to give finger prints and handwriting samples. O'Regan also called me a "political opportunist" and said that Stanley's attempt to delay the proceedings was just a means of gaining time to do more political organizing. Not surprisingly, the judge denied Stanley's motion, and the grand jury was set to proceed on May 28.

Given the fact that the anarchist/autonomist movement only had 20 days to organize, solidarity efforts were tremendous (with many heart-felt thanks being due to imprisoned comrades and comrades from other parts of the Left who helped with these efforts). In that time, an individual and a movement with no prior experience in dealing with federal grand juries had to become both educated and organized to take on the government. A letter-writing and phone-in campaign was organized, and they were very effective. The day before the proceedings, the U.S. Attorney's phone rang all day long, and Mr. O'Regan received several dozen letters and postcards of protest from all sorts of people ranging from Williams College students and faculty, to Williamstown residents, to anarchists/autonomists and leftists from across the U.S. and Canada. All of this, combined with a great deal of favourable media attention, was not to the liking of the U.S. Attorney's office. O'Regan mentioned all of this in his counter-motion to the court.

I left for Springfield on May 28 fully expecting to be jailed that afternoon. It was only on that morning that a conscious, politically-motivated decision was made to comply with the subpoena's request for a photo, handwriting samples, finger prints, and firearms documents. Was this a reversal of a previously-stated position? Yes. Did I in some way comply with the subpoena by providing those materials? Again, I must admit, yes. Was this the best political route to take? I think so.

The tactical decision to comply with the subpoena's request to furnish a photograph, fingerprints, handwriting samples, and firearms documents was not made until the morning of the proceedings before the federal grand jury. The decision was made after a heated discussion with my lawyer and with comrades. The decision was not one of fear, but rather one of strength. It was a conscious, political decision, and one which, we feel, resulted in the outcome of this case being a minor political victory for the movement and an embarrassment for the government. Because some people in the movement may tend to view my partial compliance as giving in to the State, I would instead argue that my actions represented a political offensive, one which put the government on the defensive, and one whose alternative would have simply been the passive acceptance of a jail term - in other words, complying with the State's wish to get an active militant off the streets. Indeed, is this not what federal grand juries seek to do? IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE, such an outcome - being held in contempt by refusing to give materials already in the government's possession - would have amounted to collaborating with the State's wish to jail a militant activist. But through our



handling of the matter, we in effect caused the State to back down and accept defeat.

Again, bear in mind that what in fact was at issue here was one line of a computer message in which was stated that Bush "needs a bullet". This was the sum total of the State's evidence against me on a charge of threatening harm to the President of the United States (a federal offense punishable by up to 5 years in prison)! The reason for the subpoena was probably my steadfast refusal to speak with a federal agent about the message. This, coupled with my outspoken militant politics and the fact that I am licensed to own firearms, warranted, in the government's mind, an investigation.

My stance, contrary to what some may argue, did reinforce some very important precedents. First: activists must never speak to federal agents. As Stanley and I went to the fifth floor of the federal courthouse in Springfield on May 28, we were taken aside by US Attorney Kevin O'Regan and two SS agents. O'Regan then "explained" how this matter was not about my political opinions or associations, but was simply the routine investigation of a possible threat against the President (O'Regan later repeated this de-politicizing statement to the members of the grand jury). O'Regan then said, if I would just tell the agent that the message was not intended as a threat, then the matter would be closed, we could avoid the grand jury, and I would not risk prison on contempt charges. Clearly the State had been put in an embarrassing situation: a routine check-up had escalated into a political mobilization and lots of media attention questioning the very propriety of the federal grand jury system itself. Although offered an easy route of escape for both parties, I immediately refused.

First rule, militants never speak with federal agents.

Second, militants never give any testimony to a federal grand jury. I refused to answer any questions. Even when they just showed me a copy of my firearms licence and asked if I recognized it, I wouldn't answer.

Third, militants never give the State things they don't have, or shouldn't have. If I had merely been asked to provide a copy of the newspaper "Love and Rage", for example, or an issue of "Arm The Spirit", I would have refused, even though the feds could just go to any leftist bookstore and get a copy; this would have been a principled refusal to submit to an obvious political attack. But the things I provided to the grand jury were things which I had already freely given to the State when I applied for a pistol permit. When you apply for such a permit, you get photographed and finger printed. So, if I collaborated by giving them to the grand jury, then I had already collaborated by applying to legally carry firearms as opposed to making due with illicit ones. If they didn't already have my prints on file and requested them for the grand jury, I would have refused.

Again, the decision I made was not an easy one, but I do firmly believe it was made in order to go on a political offensive rather than passively accept a jail term on a trivial matter. Again, the original plan was to go in,

...News Briefs continued from page 13

"CONTROinformazione" were arrested and charged with association with a terrorist organization. In addition, the newspaper's offices were searched and some materials were seized. Those arrested were held in solitary confinement until a court ruled that they be released on January 2. We apologize for reporting this news so late, but word only got to us about this event recently. We don't know what has developed since the comrades were released... On July 4, America's 'Independence Day', a coalition consisting of the Puerto Rican MLN, the Partido Nacionalista Puertorriqueno, indigenous peoples, white anti-imperialists, and NYC anarchists organized an anti-Columbus demonstration. During the march from Battery Park to City Hall, police arrested some 25 people, mostly Puerto Rican independentistas. Another demo is being planned for October 12 in New York City, organized by groups associated with the Freedom Now Network (from *La Patria Radical* July/92)... Two Santa Cruz, activists who used axes to damage several NAVSTAR satellites went to prison July 13. Keith Kjoller and Peter Lumsdaine pleaded guilty in U.S. District court to destroying property being manufactured for the U.S. government, a felony. They face up to 3 three years in jail when they are sentenced on September 21. In total, the pair did approximately \$2 million damage at the Rockwell plant in Santa Cruz on May 10. The Pentagon uses the Rockwell satellites to guide nuclear and other weapons and for military reconnaissance. For information, write to: Maxina Ventura, P.O. Box 11645, Berkeley, CA 94701 (from *The Guardian* 4/13/8).

## We received the following letter from a comrade in Greece:

Dear comrades,

In ATS Nr.11 (p.16) you refer to the united action of "1st of May" and "R.P.S." against a van of anti-riot police. I think that you might want to know that the groups have carried out a lot of actions together.

At first, the two groups decided to unite on October 20, 1991, the day, 14 years ago, that guerrilla activist Christos Kiasmis died during an attack against the German multi-national AEG (as an act of solidarity and revenge for the murdered RAF comrades at Stammheim prison).

19.2.92 Bomb attack against a bar named "CAN-CAN". This bar is owned by Gigitakis, a notorious drug dealer who is connected to and protected by the cops and politicians.

26.2.92 Bomb attack against a van of anti-riot police van near Thisio. 18 cops wounded.

17.3.92 Bomb attacks against two cars belonging to EBC officials in Athens.

20.3.92 Bomb attacks against the cars of two men who gave the police descriptions of the persons who carried out the attack of Thisio.

31.3.92 Bomb attack against the Court of Justice of Salonica.

Also, a lot of actions have been carried out by the "Anarchist Group Mihalis Kaltezas". The group has carried out numerous fire-bombings over the last 10 months (since October 1991):

- Four local offices of the ruling right-wing New Democracy Party in Kastella, Elliniko, Iliupoli, and Erithros.
- The local office of the Socialist Party in Elliniko and N.Smiri.
- Two super-markets in the area of Ilissia.
- A police car in the area of Pelki.
- The Boy Scout's Club at Peristeri. The Boy Scout's Clubs here in Greece are only trying to pass nationalist and militarist propaganda on to kids. (Of course, the action wasn't directed at the boy scouts themselves.)

Do the right thing!  
Fight the Power!

- a comrade in Greece

...continued from page 16

policies of the G7 nations. Late Sunday night, a branch of the Deutsche Bank was fire-bombed by an autonomist group, resulting in \$150,000 damage. A message nearby was found which read: "Attack the WWG!"

At the G7 summit's opening on Monday, the police presence was extremely heavy. Most demonstrators were not able to reach the Max-Joseph-Platz where the summit was being held. Those that did were quickly surrounded, beaten, and arrested. There were several spontaneous demonstrations throughout the day, resulting in over 500 arrests. There were several complaints of police brutality, so much so that even Munich's daily-paper ran a front-page condemnation of the police's "unnecessary escalation".

(from Interim #201 and La Patria Radical July/92)

deliver a statement denouncing the federal grand jury process and affirming left-radical politics, and then be held in contempt. But if we had done that, we never would have really known what the state was up to. But by listening to the questions asked by the U.S. attorney (although, of course, refusing to answer any), I was able to see what the grand jury was after. And as it turned out, it was a trivial matter relating to my use of a computer network. The knowledge of this then put many of my comrades' minds at ease, since right up until May 28, there was still the fear that other comrades in the movement may get subpoenaed.

IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE, the best political route was to make a tactical decision. Why? It's kind of like when you get busted for spray-painting. Do you then denounce the entire U.S. justice system and go to jail? No, for a trivial charge, you put up with the legal nonsense and try to get off. And it seems like my recent case was just the federal equivalent of spray-painting. Of course I refuse to recognize the legitimacy of federal grand juries; they are tools of political oppression. They have been used, to wrongfully imprison Puerto Rican independentistas, Black/New Afrikan revolutionaries, white anti-imperialists and so on. But even though I don't recognize their legitimacy, they exist nonetheless. And I had to face one of them. Under almost any other circumstances, I think an uncompromising stand of total non-collaboration is the only way to go. But was the movement ready for this in my case? Was the left once again prepared to tackle the issue of federal grand juries in-and-of-themselves? I don't think so. That wasn't the main issue in my case. What was at issue, however, was a whole variety of other concerns, like youths, guns, computers, and their relation to radical-left politics.

At this time, I have to extend my warmest thanks to the imprisoned comrades who supported me. They talked with me, gave me advice, and were generally looking out for me. This meant a lot to me. The left, to a large degree, has abandoned its political prisoners. We on the outside often forget our comrades on the inside, but it's clear that they haven't forgotten about us. I think all serious activists should make prisoner support work a major priority. Also, we should all seriously reflect on the possibility of being sent to prison at some point. I almost had to go, and I'm sure I'll be in a similar situation before the decade is out.

A movement that forgets its prisoners is not revolutionary.

...NDF interview continued from page 15

tary bases. Last year, the Senate reached a new agreement on the bases. It should stay that way. It's important to elect enough senators who are opposed to the bases. In line with this, major progressive organizations are trying to make such issues central political questions in the elections.

But with little success, one would think...have the peace-process and the total-war become hot issues?

No. But the pressure by the peace-movement on the politicians has had some effect. Presidential candidate Salonga publicly declared his willingness to enter into an agreement with the NDF. Even Ramos has mentioned the issue, but he only talks of our surrender.

If Ramos is elected president [he was - ed.], how will the NDF insure that the government begins negotiations?

We have little choice. We will keep defending ourselves against the government's total-war, which will surely continue, and we will try to put pressure on the Ramos government. Military successes by the NPA will weaken the army's faith in their ability to defeat us militarily. In addition to this, it's important that the peace-movement stay strong. There is now a group calling

Again, for the most part it was only a group of imprisoned comrades and my lawyer who were giving me (often conflicting) advice. Lots of folks around the Love and Rage project, as well as several Canadians, mobilized really quickly to help. But again, most of us had never dealt with this before. So we had to go about it in the way that seemed best to us in this instance, and I think we did OK.

Going to jail was never an issue. I went to Springfield expecting to have a number after my name at the end of the day. And again, the feds offered me a way out, and I refused to accept their "offer". So the issue was politics: how could the movement gain the most from all of this? Would my being locked up for total non-collaboration be the best? Maybe. But maybe not. For one thing, my being in jail would have put a big financial and organizational strain on ATS and Love and Rage, two projects already operating on very low budgets. Normally this would not be a concern. But my case, again, was just a foolish one, and one which only directly involved me. In a way, I think it would have been irresponsible of me to drag the whole movement behind an issue which really only had to do with me. Obviously there were larger political issues on trial, but the case against me was in reference to a ridiculous law, and the government didn't have any substantive evidence for a case to begin with. So, we seized on this, made the government look bad for refusing to comment about the inquiry ("We can neither confirm nor deny that the grand jury is even in place at this time."), we exposed the nature of federal grand juries in the mainstream media, and we all (hopefully) learned that we have to take things like government repression, movement security, and potential imprisonment seriously.

In any case, I learned a lot from all this. Just noticing who gave me support and who didn't was revealing: it was no surprise when liberal student activists steered clear of me when the feds arrived, but my friends and "normal" working folks at my job did all they could to help. And I think the anarchist movement got a good wake-up call as well. We had to educate ourselves about the federal grand jury process, for one thing. And this process of education is something we should continue: we have to educate ourselves about movement security, about dealing with federal harassment, and about the prospects of doing time. I work on the assumption that state repression will only become more intense as the decade wears on - with many comrades facing imprisonment.

continued on the back page...

themselves 'peace initiators'. This is the broadest group to date. They want to act as intermediaries. The government needs to clearly state what it wants from the peace-process. That's why they may come to The Netherlands to speak with the NDF. If this happens, the peace-process will have advanced one step. Then we can begin to discuss dates and delegates. Of course, international support for the peace process is also important. The Swiss and Swedish governments have offered to host talks in Geneva and Stockholm respectively, but foreign minister Manglapus refused this offer. The European Parliament passed a resolution expressing its hope that the new Philippine government will take steps towards peace and improving human rights. But pressure from the US government is crucial. American churches have taken some initiatives. We need to have other governments and parliaments expressing a need for peace. But so far, that hasn't happened.

So the American presidential election is important. Who do you support, Clinton or Bush?

Well, what can I say? That's like choosing between Coke and Pepsi...No, give me Heineken...or San Miguel (the most popular beer in the Philippines).

(from Konfrontatie #11)

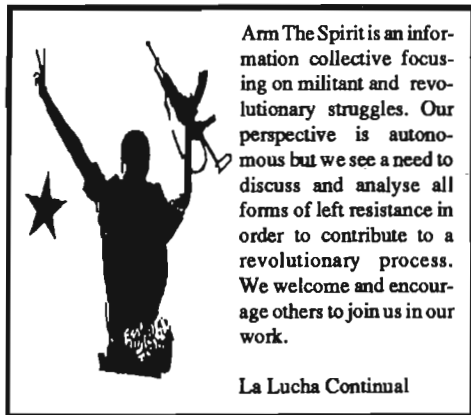
We now have a FAX number. It's (416) 527 2419 (for the Canadian address)

We also have an E-mail address in the U.S.: aforum@moose.uvm.edu

...Alberto Rodríguez interview continued from page 2  
Rican women lead a dangerous existence, their lives are in danger every day, going out in the streets at night is a threat, even living at home is a threat to them.

So I think the situation in Puerto Rico is like the situation in the U.S. and Europe and everywhere in the world where women are developing their own political thoughts, their own ideology to question patriarchy.

Several years ago, one of the organizations in the Puerto Rican independence movement, the MLN, held a congress, and a major part of that congress was dealing with sexism, the family, homosexuality and questions that for the most part the independence movement has ignored. Now I think the MLN has begun a process in which the whole independence movement is questioning its past with regards to the issues of homosexuality, sexism, and attitudes towards women, children and the family. A lot of very good things have come about. In the Puerto Rico today women are organizing their own organizations and their own projects and they have challenged men's leadership in the independence movement. I think in the last five or six years some very good steps have been taken towards dealing with sexism in the independence movement, but I think we have a long way to go. And I think that this cannot be just a woman's project, men have to take a role in it also. Women will lead this struggle, but men have to be willing to change and to open ourselves up to criticism and enter this process. I think it is challenging and threatening to us because for so long we ran the show and now to have women challenge us puts us in a predicament that for many men is very difficult to handle. But I think if we are to grow as a



Arm The Spirit is an information collective focusing on militant and revolutionary struggles. Our perspective is autonomous but we see a need to discuss and analyse all forms of left resistance in order to contribute to a revolutionary process. We welcome and encourage others to join us in our work.

La Lucha Continual

Arm The Spirit is co-published with the U.S.-based Autonomie Forum. The editorial group is based in Canada and all correspondence, subscriptions and literature should be sent to the Canadian address. Subscriptions for this bi-monthly bulletin are \$12 for 10 issues. Donations are always welcome. We accept cash (conceal it well) or money orders but no cheques. If sending a money order do not put 'Arm The Spirit', just leave it blank.

Arm The Spirit  
c/o Wild Seed Press  
P.O. Box 57584, Jackson Stn.  
Hamilton, Ont.  
L8P 4X3 CANADA

Arm The Spirit  
c/o Autonomie Forum  
P.O. Box 1242  
Burlington, VT  
05402-1242 USA

FAX Number for Canadian address: 416 527 2419

Editor: Gabriel Dumont

### Caution: Protected Private Property!

This publication remains the property of the sender unless and/or until it has been personally and materially accepted by the prisoner to whom it is addressed. In the event that the prisoner is denied direct personal access to this publication, it must be returned to the sender with notice of the reason(s) for failing to deliver it to the addressee.

movement for social change and not just as a narrow nationalist movement, then I think we have to open up to the struggle of women and the struggle against sexism, patriarchy and homophobia and all these questions that we have ignored too long. And we suffer because of that ignorance.

Any last words?

I definitely want to thank you for giving me this opportunity. I think that the Puerto Rican independence movement has for a long time suffered a curtain of silence. Many people think of Puerto Rico only as a wonderful place to vacation; an island with beautiful mountains and the sea, and they don't really realize the fact that we have suffered colonialism for 500 years. And also, there are over 1.5 million Puerto Ricans living in the U.S. in conditions of an internal colony and that challenge U.S. imperialism in each and every day. I think that the left has to recognize that it doesn't have to go half-way around the world to fight colonialism; colonialism exists right next door and I think that the left in North America needs to look at the fact that there is colonialism right in their own backyard, and to rally around it and fight for its independence. The last thing is, I think that the left in general has to realize that there are people in prison because of their principled stand against imperialism. And even if one disagrees with the tactics that they have used, or if they take a non-violent approach to their political struggle, nonetheless, these brothers and sisters who suffer long years of imprisonment are part of the very same struggle and should not be ignored.

Alberto Rodríguez and Edwin Cortés were both interviewed by ATS on CKLN, a progressive radio station in Toronto, Canada, during the early part of this year.

## Editorial Notes

We apologize for the fact that some of the information in this issue is somewhat out of date. Unfortunately, because our budget is so limited, we can only publish on a roughly bi-monthly schedule. Even though pieces like the Chilean articles are a little old, we still feel it's important for such information to be published, since there are so few left-radical publications in North America which cover the material which ATS covers. Also included in this issue is a statement from an ATS collective member, Brian Coan, regarding his recent federal grand jury case. We are printing a lengthy statement from Brian, because we feel it's important that political issues involved in his handling of the case be properly addressed.

...Brian Coan's statement continued from page 19  
ment, and even death. Kind of a negative mind-set, I realize, but it's a realistic one, and it's better to be prepared for the worst, that way anything better is a gift. In short, we should make prisoner support work a bigger priority than it has been in the past. After all, all militants/revolutionaries are potential prisoners. I was almost one, and my comrades on the inside were there for me; we should all be there for them.

Solidarity is a Weapon!

Brian Coan

...NAPO interview continued from page 7

They are tired of the cutbacks in their college enrolments and programs. They are inspired by Malcolm because he taught them to fight for their liberation.

What do you think the impact internationally and nationally has been?

It's going to have a profound impact. It has forced the international community to look at America and see the racism and the resistance to that racism. On a national perspective it has allowed us to unite around this issue. It has the potential for rebuilding a movement that went to sleep in the 70s and is reawakening in the 90s. Our responsibility is to pull together that movement.

The state is doing everything possible to squash any movement, because it doesn't want us to give the political context for what is happening. As long as they continue to say it's monsters and thugs and vultures involved in this and there is no political consequence, then they're fine.

They want to keep the real issues away from the screen. Initially, anybody could say anything. But after three or four days, the only ones that could talk were all saying that these were just a few people, that it didn't reflect the total community, that they're just gang-bangers, that most people out there had nothing to do with Rodney King, that they were just greedy.

What has been the response from the white community?

There has been a big response. People all over the world have responded to the injustice. But the white community still has a lot of work to do to address latent racism, and the other issues that have come up. If you live in the Black community, you are aware of the issues. But because of their isolation, the only information that the white community gets is from the media. So they come and do the do-gooder thing of trying to clean up the community, but they really have no concept of what happened, of what's going on and what people are responding to. "Hey, it was a jury trial, what can you say, the jury found them innocent; it's fair, that's how it works." There is no real conception of what racism is how it works throughout the system.

What's going to happen next?

In the short term, the demands of the movement are for amnesty for those arrested; U.S. troops out of South Central Los Angeles; and rebuilding - providing services. A real important element of our coalition is providing clothing and whatever other services are needed for survival.

We've organized a crisis intervention group, the Coalition for Justice, to reinterpret the Los Angeles rebellion, to formulate demands, and to counteract the media campaign to criminalize our community. Our desire within the New Afrikan People's Organization (NAPO) and the Malcolm X Grassroots Movement, is to build it into a much broader group, and it certainly has the potential for that. For the first time in quite a while, we find ourselves working with individuals who feel the connections between this and what else is happening in the world. Ultimately, we see it building toward the national liberation movement that we want in this country.

Chinganjiri Akinyela is an organizer for NAPO. She was interviewed on May 9, 1992 by Breakthrough. NAPO, which celebrates its sixth anniversary this year on May 19, struggles for self-determination in the tradition of Malcolm X.

(from the insert to the Summer 92 issue of Breakthrough)