

THE INSURGENT

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Assata Shakur is Alive and Well in Cuba!



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Editorial:

Iran/Contragate: The Empire Has No Clothes!

"One of the essential tasks of the revolutionary left, irregardless of the shadings that repression assumes in their countries, is the demystification of the bourgeois state, especially its false 'democracy.'"

- La Liga Socialista (LSP)
Puerto Rico

The Iran/contragate hearings gave us only a glimpse of the workings of the U.S. imperialist state (as distinguished from the U.S. government.) In the congressional hearings, Congress and the mass media pulled the curtains closed on the truth. It remains the task of all of us to open those curtains, so that we know what we're up against in order to devise strategies to resist.

Whatever truth has come out is thanks to the work of progressive religious groups, leftist political analysts and human rights advocates. They have revealed a conspiracy to carry out the "Reagan Doctrine" -- a global anti-communist counterrevolution labeled "counterterrorism" -- outside of congressional review and hidden from the American public. Under the auspices of the National Security Council, Col. Oliver North took \$1.4 million made in a secret arms deal with Iran and funneled it to the contras. The investigation of this deal revealed the shadowy world of imperialism's covert actions taken under the war cry of 'defending national security interests.'

But we're in danger of missing the real lessons of the Iran/contragate affair if we don't go somewhat further than even most of the left's analysis. Congress wanted the public to conclude that there were rogue elements in the White House -- a "shadow government." Congress never quarreled with the goals of the covert maneuvers -- that's why they allowed the hearings to become a platform for counterterrorist ideology. What did disturb them was how unprofessionally these operations were carried out. The resolutions that Congress proposes will be ways to professionalize the very same strategy.

The left/liberal critique exposes more of the facts, but it concentrates on the "privatization" of U.S. foreign policy -- that policy is carried out outside of the structures and control of "democratic" government. They do argue that the Reagan Doctrine violates both international and U.S. law and that the contra war against the legitimate revolutionary government of Nicaragua is illegal. The solution they propose, though, is to return foreign policy to Congress and other "democratic" institutions.

What we have really seen revealed is the operations of the U.S. imperialist state. The ruling class has under its control an apparatus to maintain its domination and political power -- an organization of violence to maintain the status quo. That organization is the state: the army, the police, paramilitary organizations. Iran/contragate showed us once again that this apparatus contains both governmental and non-governmental structures. The U.S. military and private paramilitary organizations, U.S. government funding and private donations -- all are under the control of the U.S. ruling class. Military codes were given to Oliver North to secure private contra support networks. This is not the "privatization" of legitimate U.S. military functions but rather the interchange between official and private institutions, all serving the same goals of the same ruling class.

Of course the U.S. ruling class would rather achieve its goals through legitimate channels. They would have preferred there to have been more popular support in this coun-

ON THE COVER:

Assata Shakur is alive and well and living in Cuba! Just two weeks before the eighth anniversary of Assata's liberation from prison, she has revealed that the Cuban government has granted her political asylum. Assata, a Black revolutionary, former member of the Black Panther Party, soldier of the Black Liberation Army, was freed from Clinton State Prison in New Jersey by a unit of the Black Liberation Army on November 2, 1979. Since then she has been hunted nationwide by the FBI and the N.J. State Police. Assata Shakur had been serving a life-plus-30 year sentence for the 1973 death of a N.J. State Trooper, killed during a highway assault on Assata and two others. In the shoot-out, BLA member Zayd Malik Shakur was killed and Sundiata Acoli, also of the BLA, was arrested.

On Sunday, October 11, a front page story in the New York City newspaper Newsday revealed that Assata has been living in Cuba since 1984. They published a lengthy interview with Assata in which she reaffirmed her commitment to the Black Liberation Struggle in the U.S. She also announced the publication of a book, Assata, the Autobiography of a Revolutionary, due out in December. The Insurgent celebrates this dramatic victory against the political police, and sends our warmest greetings to sister/comrade Assata Shakur.

try for the contras so that Congress would have voted more aid. Since this wasn't the case, private methods were developed. Different name, same game. This method is not unique to Reagan -- for the past thirty years, presidents have carried out secret wars without Congress' advice or consent, and without widespread public support. Operatives like Oliver North and John Singlaub (a retired Army general who was central to the Iran/contragate affair) have carried out unaccountable military operations through several administrations. The goal of these secret wars overall has been the establishment of "national security states" throughout the world.

This term has been used by a group of radical political analysts to describe the type of military government that has been empowered by U.S. intervention in the Third World over the past twenty years or so. Edward Herman writes in The Real Terror Network:

"In country after country in the U.S. sphere of influence, "dominoes" have been falling, with military regimes and other dependent tyrannies coming into power in virtually all of Central and South America, and Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines, Zaire and elsewhere. These regimes have almost universally displayed the following characteristics:

1. They represent a small elite interest, including the multinational corporation, which they treat kindly;
2. They all use terror, including modern forms of torture, to keep the majority unorganized, powerless and as means to local elite and multinational corporate ends;
3. The leadership of these states is almost invariably venal;
4. They have allowed already skewed income distributions to become still more unequal and have caused a large fraction of their population to be kept in a state of extreme deprivation."

In other words, dictatorships whose role is to keep their population quiet and available as cheap labor for U.S. corporations.

The national security state was designed to protect U.S. financial interests from "low intensity conflicts." This is a term used by counterinsurgency experts to define guerrilla war as opposed to "high intensity" conventional warfare. Reagan's policymakers see low-intensity conflicts as the main threat to U.S. domination in the twentieth century; "counterterrorism" is their strategy to meet this threat. The built-in violence of the national security state is responsible for the overwhelming incidence of terrorism -- state terrorism -- on this planet.

The strategy of national security states is a response to the real need of U.S. imperialism to ensure its continuing survival. The victory of national liberation struggles and the creation of socialist nations in the Third World cuts off the life-line of imperialism: the superprofits it extracts from the labor and resources of the Third World.

Years ago, Che Guevara encapsulated the strategy that can defeat this economic reality with his call to "create two, three, many Vietnams." Protracted people's wars (low-intensity conflicts) for national liberation and socialism -- like the one that defeated the U.S. in Vietnam -- can encircle and defeat the U.S.

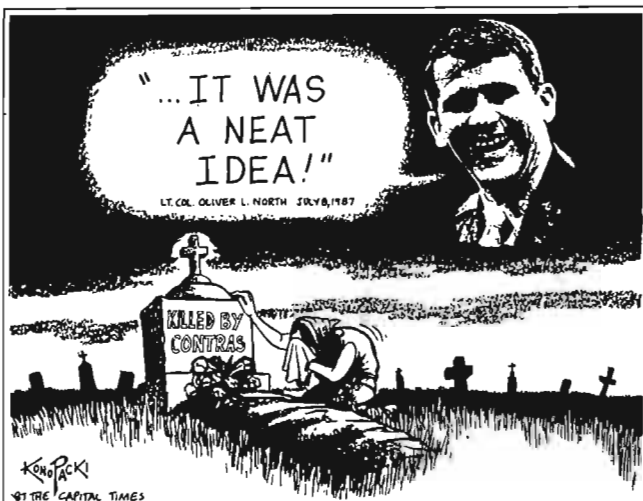
The Reagan Doctrine has countered this threat with (according to analyst Gregory Shanks):

1. U.S.-generated counterinsurgency warfare against national liberation and revolutionary struggles using Special Operations Forces supplemented by police and intelligence operations;
2. Contra-type wars of mercenary armies against radical Third World countries like Nicaragua or Mozambique (where the U.S. and South Africa back the Mozambique National resistance);
3. Quick-strike conventional military actions like those used against Grenada and Iran.

These actions are all carried out through the kind of network exposed in Iran/contragate: U.S. military/private networks using current and former intelligence and military operatives; public and private funding; bribery and drug trading -- a worldwide infrastructure which comprises the U.S. imperialist state.

None of this was pursued in the Congressional hearings. In addition, when particularly sensitive material arose, it was quickly passed over. The cover-up shielded two areas in particular:

1. The \$1 million a day contra war is financed, in large part, by drug dealing. Investigations by journalists Martha Honey and Tony Avirgan revealed that a U.S. right-winger, John Hull, used an airstrip on his ranch in Costa Rico to support the illegal contra war. Arms and explosives for the contras went in, dope went out. An informant testified that a ton of cocaine arrived in the U.S. every week as a direct result of





Billboard in Denver, Colorado

this enterprise to finance the contra war. These are the real criminals behind the explosion of cocaine and crack in poor and Third World U.S. communities.

This is nothing new -- for the past 25 years, the CIA has been involved in the international drug trade. During the war in Vietnam, anti-war activists exposed the participation of the CIA and CIA-supported mercenary forces in the export of opium from the "Golden Triangle" of Laos, Burma and Thailand.

2. Oliver North and the National Security Council were also deeply involved in a domestic counterinsurgency plan organized in part under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA was established in 1979 by presidential order to manage national emergencies like natural disasters, nuclear war or the aftermath of terrorist attacks. Under Reagan and Attorney General Meese, FEMA's jurisdiction has been extended to include surveillance and law enforcement capabilities to combat "terrorism." Cloaked in secrecy, FEMA operates under General Louis Giuffrida, a right-wing counterinsurgency expert who worked for Reagan in the California state government. In a "national security emergency," FEMA will administer what amounts to martial law.

FEMA devised a plan to deal with domestic dissent if the U.S. were to invade Nicaragua called "REX 84." Under this plan, thousands of undocumented Central American refugees as well as political dissidents would be rounded up into 10 federal detention centers (read: concentration camps). The national security state comes home.

If it's true that the methods, goals and networks exposed in Iran/contragate represent standard operating procedure for the U.S., why was it all exposed? Why the scandals, the polarization of the American public? We think these have happened for two main reasons:

1. It has been very difficult for the U.S. to build support at home for the contra war because the Nicaraguan people are defeating the contras militarily and in world opinion. Like the Vietnamese in the 60s and 70s, the Nicaraguans have exposed to the world the bestiality of the U.S.-backed forces, the violations of international law and human rights, and the determination of the Nicaraguan people to defend their right to determine the destiny of their own nation. Congress hasn't wanted to vote as much aid as the Reaganites have wanted at least in part because Congress doesn't want to support losers. The resistance of the revolutionary nation of Nicaragua forced the search for illicit channels for aid.

2. There are debates among this country's rulers about the best way to get things done and how much they have to remain within the law -- even when the structures of "democracy" make it harder to carry out their policies. This debate is represented in the views of two British counterinsurgency experts who are studied by U.S. military and police forces, Frank Kitson and Robin Eveleigh. Kitson made popular among counterinsurgency experts the notion of "permanent insurgency;" i.e., even when you can see no sign of it, colonized and oppressed people are either fighting or getting ready to, so

intelligence and repression must also be permanent. Kitson argued for all-out war on many levels: infiltration, surveillance, disruption and military assault -- against the forces of resistance. He advises secrecy; he sees the legal system as merely an obstacle to effective counterinsurgency, to be manipulated as another weapon in the state's arsenal.

Evelegh is no less concerned with maintaining imperialist rule (both he and Kitson have commanded British forces in Northern Ireland), but he is far more concerned about doing it with the support of the people. If the community supports the police or military, its job becomes so much simpler. For that reason, it is unwise to cynically manipulate the law, and far preferable to change it or make use of it. The counterinsurgency apparatus should operate within the law or else people will lose faith in the government. Evelegh would have opposed the Iran/contragate operation; Ollie North is clearly a Kitson man.

But Evelegh would enthusiastically support the agenda of the far-right to prepare the American public to support wars for the establishment of national security states. As described by Gregory Shanks, a radical political scientist, these are the programs that Reagan is implementing to mobilize support from an American public grown skeptical of war after the U.S. defeat in Vietnam:

1. The Reagan administration's initial identification of "street crime" with terrorism in order to prepare for any eventuality resulting from the dramatic cuts in social spending undertaken during Reagan's first term in office;

2. The erosion of political and civil liberties through the criminalization of domestic dissent, within the general framework of right-wing political action and legislative initiative;

3. The elaboration of "terrorism" as a key conceptual and ideological weapon wielded to transform popular antipathy into popular support for accelerated unilateralism and global military adventurism; and

4. The attempt to rewrite international law in accord with the new imperatives of the Reagan Doctrine, or in support of anti-communist insurgency ("pro-insurgency") which runs counter to the principles of customary international law.

It was shocking to hear this ideology so eloquently articulated by Oliver North on national television: national security interests rising above all individual rights, rabid anti-communism and anti-terrorism, and religious fanaticism used to justify it all.

We need to both understand the state and have a program to fight it. If we believe that the U.S. imperialist state is a mechanism to maintain and protect the basis of the system -- the exploitation and social domination of Third World nations for profit -- then it makes strategic sense to support the efforts those nations are making to win their freedom. Nothing really fundamental about this system will really change unless the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer changes. We need to make part of our resistance solidarity with the national liberation movements who are in the front lines of fighting this system.



credit: Guardian

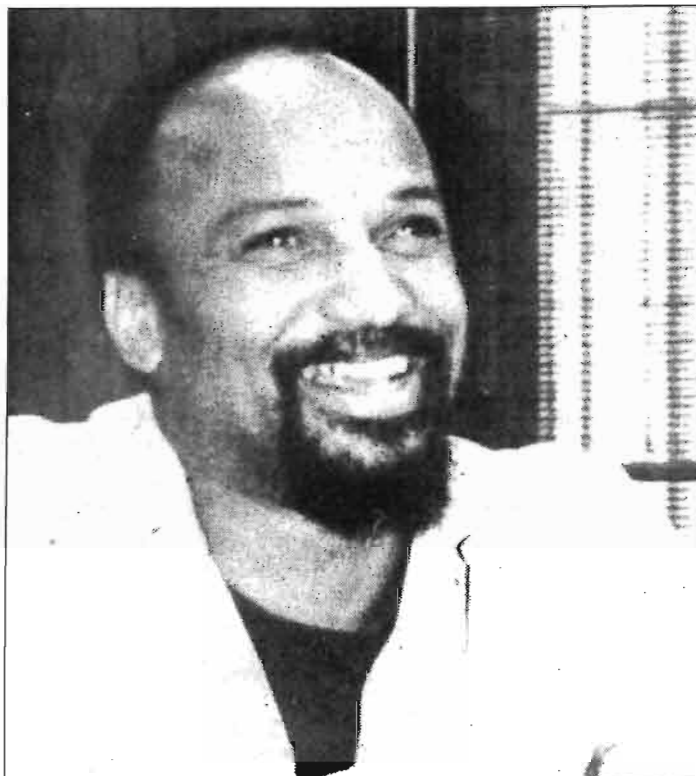
Nicaraguan army returns from a successful military attack on the contras

Free Geronimo Pratt!

An international campaign to free Black/New Afrikan Prisoner-of-War Geronimo Pratt, which is directed at the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, has been launched. Geronimo Pratt has been imprisoned for the last 17 years as a result of the FBI COINTELPRO (code name for COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE PROGRAM) war against the Black Liberation Struggle in the 1960s and 70s. Geronimo, who was a leader of the Los Angeles chapter of the Black Panther Party (BPP), was targeted and then framed by the FBI on a phony murder charge. He has spent eight of the last 17 years in solitary confinement, the longest period of time any prisoner in the U.S. has spent in "the hole" for political reasons.

The persecution of Geronimo Pratt was and is part of the U.S. government strategy to destroy the Black Liberation Struggle. His case has drawn the attention and support of progressive people around the world. In 1981 Amnesty International (AI) declared Geronimo a victim of COINTELPRO and called on Reagan to institute an independent commission to investigate FBI misconduct under COINTELPRO and its persecution of Geronimo. Throughout the years of his imprisonment, Geronimo has remained stalwart, a loved and respected leader of the Black struggle, organizing among the prisoners as well as leading the campaign for his exoneration and freedom. His case has starkly exposed the depth of COINTELPRO and the repressive web that was unleashed against the Black movement, as well as its impact to this day.

In the most recent developments in his case, Geronimo was again denied parole in May of 1987. On June 12, 1987, Geronimo's appeal was filed in the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco. The appeal seeks to overturn another judge's 1986 decision which denied Geronimo's request for a new trial. The appeal is demanding a new trial based on Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) revelations that clearly expose the original frame-up, as well as the fact that his defense team was infiltrated by the FBI during his original trial. Geronimo was targeted by the FBI (along with hundreds of other Black Panther Party members around the country) and the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD). He was first arrested on an unsolved 1968 murder in 1970. His arrest followed a 1969 shoot-out attack on the Los Angeles BPP headquarters by 350 LAPD officers. By defending their headquarters, Geronimo and the other BPP members rendered the police attack ineffective, and no BPP members were killed. In revenge, the FBI and LAPD formed the "Geronimo Pratt Squad" to "neutralize" Geronimo, which then led to his arrest and frame-up.



credit: Breakthrough

Geronimo was convicted in 1972 based on the testimony of a paid FBI informant. During the trial, his wife, Sandra Pratt, who was pregnant, was found brutally murdered. No investigation was ever made of this grisly crime. From 1970, when he began awaiting trial, to 1978, Geronimo was held in solitary confinement, in a 5' x 7' cell, without bed, books or basic toilet facilities. Investigations which resulted from the efforts of Congressmen Paul McCloskey and Don Edwards, and the 1985 testimony of a retired FBI agent further exposed the scale of the FBI frame-up. Thousands of pages of documents detailing COINTELPRO operations against the BPP and Geronimo were released. This included the fact that although he was at BPP meetings in Oakland, 400 miles away, on the day of the 1968 murder, that FBI surveillance records of that meeting were destroyed by the FBI.

While awaiting the 9th Circuit Court decision, which is expected by the end of 1987, Geronimo and his supporters are conducting a campaign directed at the UN Commission on Human Rights and massifying public awareness of his case. The Committee to Free Geronimo Pratt and the New Afrikan People's Organization is collecting signatures on a petition to the UN, with a goal of obtaining one million. A video interview with Geronimo,

Free the Land Trial Begins

The trial of Dr. Mutulu Shakur and Marilyn Buck began in New York Federal Court on Nov. 9th, one month after the wonderful news that Assata Shakur is alive and well in Cuba. Mutulu Shakur and Marilyn Buck are accused by the government of taking part in Assata's liberation from prison on November 2, 1979, on Black Solidarity Day. (Six people from the New Afrikan Independence Movement and Northamerican anti-imperialist movement were tried on this indictment in 1983, including Sekou Odinga and Silvia Baraldini, who were convicted and are serving 40 years.) The liberation is one of the subjects of this RICO conspiracy trial, along with other actions, including the attempted Brink's expropriation in 1981. Assata Shakur has just announced from Cuba the publication of her book, Assata: An Autobiography. (See Page 3)

Mutulu and Marilyn intend to expose in this trial how the government's ongoing COINTELPRO program targeted their respective movements for destruction. They will expose how the government uses the criminal justice system to criminalize political acts and revolutionaries.

This trial is taking place in a period where the crimes of Oliver North, Bernard Goetz and the white racists of Howard Beach are being officially justified. In a recent video interview with Mutulu, Marilyn and their attorneys, Chokwe Lumumba and Judith Holmes, the trial was related to some of these larger issues. Chokwe Lumumba pointed out that, as the government tries to criminalize the resisters, they are also trying to criminalize Black people as a whole. The Howard Beach and Goetz trials justify the random killing of Black people by white people because according to the defense and media Black people are just criminals anyway. Dr. Shakur warns Black people to understand that such scapegoat labels mean that they must urgently prepare to defend themselves. He says that Oliver North and the National Security Council were using FEMA to set up concentration camps for Black people, as well as Central Americans, because they understand the potential for Black people to resist and see their interests allied with other liberation movements against the U.S. government.

He says, "What it has to do with the trial is that that is what we were doing (resisting)...One of the ways to understand what are the consequences, what type of character, what type of determination, what type of input you have to be prepared to do once you get down and prepare to resist this monster...you have to look at what's going on in what we now call the Free the Land Trial. We are on trial because our respective move-

ments had participated in fighting against police repression...in giving aid and support to Azania, Angola and the Soweto movement, and Steve Biko...in fighting drugs, trying to keep health centers in the community, keep the hospitals from closing down. We participated in trying to develop education for Black people, that is relevant to Black people, and control it. We have went through the system and we went around the system. It has been an ongoing battle... and anytime that you be a part of a predictable apparatus to support political prisoners and POWs who become victims of the society, and speak to your community and nation to support them, you must be moved on... So I say to the community. Look at the plausible deniability that is implausible and undeniable and determine what you must do and then look at the alleged case of Mutulu Shakur and Marilyn Buck and look at what you must do."

Marilyn Buck says, "I am in this case because I've been an anti-imperialist who has supported the Black Liberation Struggle, the New Afrikan Independence Movement for nearly 20 years, all my adult life. I think that the government fears so much the fact that people who came from Africa should be liberated...that they cannot afford to let any movement develop which deals with the aspirations of Black people in this country. ...So the law is made in order to repress us. It is being used in order to destroy our movements so that there can't be the moving of revolution in this country. So there can't be liberation and there can't be justice."

This trial will last for several months. We urge people to set aside a regular time to come to court to support Mutulu and Marilyn. Federal Court, Foley Square, Judge Haight, 3rd Floor, Monday through Thursday. For current information contact:
Campaign to Free Dr. Mutulu Shakur
Box 3171 Manhattenville Station,
New York, N.Y. 10027 or call 212-662-4675
(days) or 212-865-3688 (nights)

Committee to Fight Repression
P.O. Box 1435
Cathedral Station
New York, NY 10025

Watani Tyehimba, a long-time activist in the Los Angeles Black community and a founding member of the New Afrikan People's Organization, has been released from detention. In August 1986, Watani was jailed for refusing to collaborate with a federal grand jury investigating the Black Liberation Movement and the capture of Dr. Mutulu Shakur in LA.

New York Police Department "Black Desk" -- Different Name, Same Game

On July 1, the New York City newspaper Newsday revealed that the New York City Police Department maintains an intelligence "Black Desk" to spy on the Black community. When confronted, the police confirmed that the unit, part of the "Public Security Section," had compiled dossiers on over 200 Black leaders, videotaped demonstrations, and even recorded talk-shows on WLIB, a progressive Black radio station. The operation, they said, was expanded in the winter of 1985 when the police found themselves unprepared to respond to the militant Black response to the Howard Beach murder. (On December 23, 1986, a gang of white racist youths attacked three Black men in Howard Beach, a Queens, New York neighborhood. One of the victims, Michael Griffiths, was chased onto a busy highway where he was hit by a car and killed.)

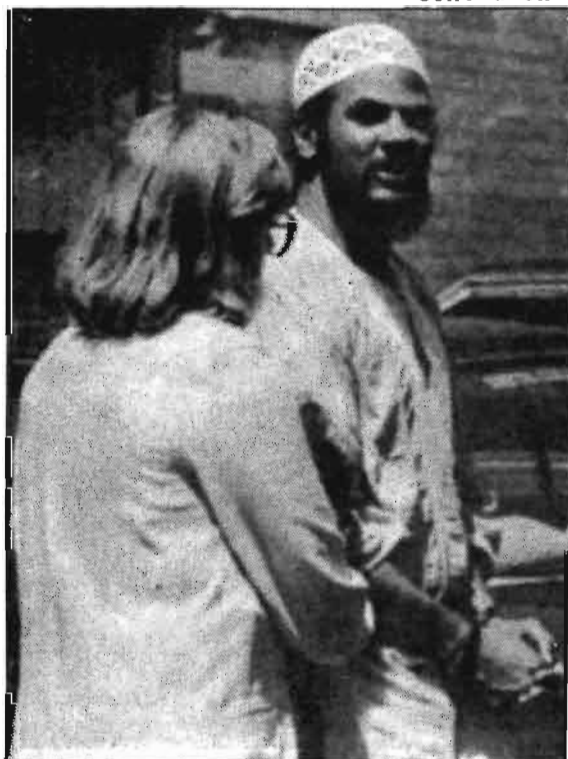
Two months later, a report was issued by an intelligence oversight board stating that no such broad surveillance had in fact taken place, while at the same time completely justifying the surveillance of revolutionary political organizations in the Black community. This Board -- comprising former federal judge Harold Tyler, Jr.; Deputy Police Commissioner Richard Condon and Deputy Police Commissioner for Legal Matters Robert Goldman -- was set up as part of the settlement of a federal law suit, Handschu et al. v. Special Services Division. This law suit was brought by political activists in the early 70s against the Special Services Division, the NYPD 'red squad,' and the oversight board was to be part of a guarantee that no group would be surveilled unless the police could make a convincing argument that illegal activities were being carried out. Attorneys for the plaintiffs in the suit are reviewing the September report, and are expected to be going into court soon to challenge its conclusions. In the meantime, attorney C. Vernon Mason, the Rev. Calvin Butts, Sonny Carson of BMMAC and other Black activists have filed a major law suit against the New York Police Department for illegally surveilling and recording their political activities.

Just two weeks after the story broke, three members of the Black Men's Movement Against Crack, a Brooklyn-based organization, were arrested in upstate New York. Some of the individuals active in the BMMAC are former members of the New York 8+, who the police had said were major targets of Black desk surveillance. The New York 8+ are Black revolutionaries who were arrested in massive raids by the FBI/NYPD Joint Terrorist Task Force on October 17, 1984. They were charged with conspiring to expropriate money from

armored trucks, with conspiring to free New Afrikan POWs Kuwasi Balagoon and Sekou Odinga from prison, and with numerous other charges. The 8+ waged a successful fight against preventive detention (the law had just been passed and the 8+ were among its first targets), built substantial community support and were ultimately found not guilty of all of the major charges against them. The New York 8+ as such no longer exists. But members of the group continue to be targets of police surveillance and harassment, and the arrests of Robert Taylor, Abdul Haqq and Arthur Barnes Majid were an attempt by the police and FBI to justify the Black Desk.

The three were pulled over while driving through Orange County in upstate New York. All were charged with possession of weapons and explosives (some M-80 fireworks were allegedly found in the trunk of their car; these qualify as "explosives" under N.Y. state law). In addition, Abdul Haqq was charged with assault; in classic fashion, after he was beaten by police, the victim is charged with being the aggressor. As bail was being raised for the three, Robert Taylor and Abdul Haqq were rearrested by federal authorities and charged with being convicted felons in possession of a weapon. The federal government moved to hold the brothers

Cont'd on p. 19



Abdul Haqq

Conspiracy to Escape Trial Begins

On October 19, 1987, the "Conspiracy to Escape" trial began in Chicago federal court. Independence activists, Jaime Delgado and Dora Garcia, Puerto Rican Prisoner of War Oscar Lopez-Rivera and New Afrikan Political Prisoner Kojo Bomani-Sababu are on trial and charged with what the government calls an FALN conspiracy to liberate Lopez-Rivera and others from the Leavenworth Penitentiary in Kansas. The FALN, or Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional, is a revolutionary clandestine Puerto Rican independence organization in the U.S.

Our readers will recall (see Insurgent, last two issues) that on July 4th, 1986, the FBI held a splashy press conference in Chicago, at which it announced that it had "cracked" an FALN conspiracy with the arrests of Delgado and Garcia. Also at that time, another independence activist, Viola Salgado was arrested (the charges were later dropped for lack of evidence), and two Northamericans, who remain free, Claude Marks and Donna Wilmot, were charged in the case. By projecting a "terrorist conspiracy", involving political prisoners, paralegals and public activists, the FBI had intended to further isolate revolutionaries in prisons from their supporters and their communities. One of the consequences of this FBI attempted disruption of the movement is that Tim Blunk, a Northamerican anti-imperialist political prisoner, was convicted at Leavenworth of disciplinary charges related to this case, though he was not formally charged in federal court. Nonetheless, this situation was used to transfer Tim out of Leavenworth and into the locked-down Marion Penitentiary, where he has now been for over a year.

What is revealed in this "conspiracy" trial is how the FBI and the Justice Department continue their persecution and isolation of political prisoners after their convictions. Once political prisoners enter the federal prison system, the FBI works closely with the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to monitor and manipulate the prisoners' lives.

The government's case in this trial is based on extensive electronic surveillance as well as the testimony of FBI informant, George Lebosky. Conversations between the prisoners and their visitors in the Leavenworth visiting room, as well as numerous telephone conversations, were bugged and tapped by the FBI. In pre-trial hearings over the last year, the defense team has argued that the FBI not only over-stepped "legal" bounds in the scope of its electronic surveillance gathering, but also tampered with the tapes as well as their transcripts.

On the trial's opening day, over 150 supporters of the defendants braved a cold rain to demonstrate outside Chicago's federal building. The demonstrators, organized by the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War, chanted slogans calling for the independence of Puerto Rico, and demanding that all charges against the defendants be dropped. Inside the building, the demonstrators met extraordinary court security and were searched several times before being allowed into the courtroom, a process designed by the FBI and US Marshals to be discouraging and intimidating. A jury was picked after several days, and opening statements were begun. POW Oscar Lopez-Rivera delivered his own opening statement, a dramatic discourse on how and why he became a Puerto Rican freedom fighter. As Insurgent goes to press, examination of the FBI agents is proceeding. The government's star informant, Lebosky, is expected to testify on November 2.

Addressing a packed courtroom, Oscar Lopez-Rivera concluded in his opening statement:

"...What can be deduced from the attitudes and actions of the u.s. dept of justice and fbi is that those who support the independence of Puerto Rico are fair game for attacks of local death squads, the colonial police and the federal government...

"...It does not matter whether the person is an anti-colonial combatant or the leader of an organization (legal by colonial and federal laws), as long as he (or she) supports the inalienable right of Puerto Rico's right to self-determination and independence he (or she) and his (or her) family are going to be the targets of the colonial and federal police, especially of the fbi's counter-insurgency program.

"...Because that is the reality that I must confront on a daily basis, because that is what is at the heart of this case, because I've chosen to defend my dignity at all cost, I stand before you to say that the u.s. government and this court do not have jurisdiction over me and that these proceedings are only another attack on the Puerto Rican independence movement. Long live the right of every nation and every human being to be free!"

"Only the Slave Can Change His Situation by Striking Out For Freedom"

Interview with Ivonne Meléndez and Elias Castro of the Puerto Rican Independence 16

On August 30, 1987--the second anniversary of the arrests of the Puerto Rican Independence 16--over 2,500 people demonstrated in Hartford, CT in support of the 16 and Puerto Rican independence. Pre-trial hearings in Hartford federal court entered their tenth month in the case of the 15 Puerto Rican Independence activists and one Northamerican. The 16 are charged with carrying out the 1983 \$7.2 million Wells Fargo expropriation in West Hartford. The action was claimed by the revolutionary, clandestine Puerto Rican independence organization, Los Macheteros. Two of the 16, Filiberto Ojeda-Rios and Juan Enrique Segarra-Palmer have been in pre-trial detention for over 26 months and are in federal custody in a Hartford detention center.

The defense is rigorously questioning FBI agents and presenting evidence showing that the FBI tampered with the over 1,000 tapes of conversations among the 16 defendants. The tapes are the result of extensive surveillance carried out before the August 30, 1985 arrests, and they make up the core of the state's case against the 16. The defense has attempted to expose that these tapes were gathered illegally by the FBI as part of its counter-insurgency program to destroy the Puerto Rican Independence struggle. Finally the FBI was forced to admit that the wiretapping went far beyond the "legal" scope of the investigation, taping every conversation and then destroying the evidence. In another significant development, Judge T. Emmet Clarie ruled on September 21 that some evidence seized under certain sections of the overly broad search warrants must be suppressed, for example numerous phone numbers taken from the homes of the 16. Although this ruling essentially acknowledges that the FBI did illegally seize some things and overstep its bounds, further courtroom arguments will have to clarify the specifics.

The following is an interview with two of the 16, Ivonne Meléndez and Elias Castro-Ramos.

Insurgent: 15 Puerto Rican independentistas and one Northamerican are facing charges stemming from the Wells Fargo expropriation in Hartford, CT. Can you tell us who you are, and what sectors of the movement you come from?

Castro-Ramos: The arrests of August 30, 1985 have a particularity which other repressive acts of yankee imperialism against our people may not have. That is, for the first time, yankee repression reached into broad sectors, and almost all the classes which make up our society. Among those arrested and/or those whose homes were broken into and searched are housewives, small farmers, professionals, artists, and labor unionists. In other words on August 30, a sample representation of all our people were repressed.

In my case, I am a teacher in the Puerto Rican public school system. All my adult life I have been involved in the labor union and workers' movement of my country, in addition to being a militant independentista and socialist.

Meléndez: It is interesting that, although 15 Puerto Rican patriots were arrested, around 50 houses were broken into and searched. This in itself shows that this attack was much broader than what many have thought.



Ivonne Meléndez and Elias Castro-Ramos



Within this broad spectrum, I was a housewife, a student, and I worked as an aide in the elementary school as a mother who was not only concerned about the quality of the education of the students in the community, but also that adequate facilities should exist to guarantee the childrens' health and educational progress.

Insurgent: Can you talk about the scope of the FBI assault when you were arrested on Aug. 30, 1985? Why did the FBI carry out the arrests as a military maneuver? Did this signify a new level of repression against the Puerto Rican Independence struggle?

Castro-Ramos: To understand the repressive operation in Puerto Rico on August 30, one must begin with the war policy being orchestrated by the Reagan administration. On the strategic-military level, Puerto Rico is one of the most important places the U.S. has in the Caribbean-Central American area. This explains why imperialism has to keep under control the patriotic movement in particular, and the Puerto Rican people in general--to avoid that its military position in the region be weakened. Therefore, we believe the arrests of August 30 were not directed against one patriotic organization in particular, like the yankee government tries to make one believe, but rather against the patriotic movement, and against the people to terrorize them and keep them under control. Historically, imperialism has not had any scruples about using whatever means

necessary to maintain social control in its principal colony. We have only to remember the Massacre of Ponce in 1937 where more than 20 patriots died and hundreds were wounded; and the Nationalist Revolution in 1950 in which the victims numbered in the thousands, counting the dead, wounded and arrested.

Meléndez: The significance of this assault is different for the FBI than for the independence movement and the people of Puerto Rico. Throughout the years, Puerto Rico as a colony of the U.S. has been used not only as a storehouse for nuclear bombs, but also as a training base for the U.S. military and its war maneuvers, with its objectives of continuing its invasion and intervention of those sister peoples who have undertaken the process of liberation and who clearly do not serve the U.S. interests.

This being the reality, all those who show love for our country and desire freedom present an obstacle to the U.S. and its plans. It was necessary to take different representatives of the social classes, primarily from the independence sector, out of circulation, in order to make an example to the people of what the U.S. is capable of doing to all those who oppose, hinder or set back its plans. This is the context in which I understand the arrests of August 30, 1985.

The effects the FBI did not expect, but we did. Our whole people rose up in support of

us and began to clarify the question of "What is it to be a colony?" and what that means. I consider this development of consciousness to be of great importance.

Insurgent: What was the response in Puerto Rico to the FBI military assault on Aug. 30, 1985? How has support for the 16 grown?

Castro-Ramos: Those that planned the arrest at the highest levels of the Reagan administration under-estimated the depth of our people's indignation. Instead of being terrorized, our people responded with great indignation and courage. Within a few days of the arrest, support committees were formed in almost all the towns from which those arrested came. Thousands of people mobilized in activities of repudiation and protest. Dozens of family members and friends were brought to Hartford to be witnesses in the bail hearings.

The support committees have done intense, consistent work in raising funds, in doing propaganda work and in mobilizing people. We can not think of even one patriotic or progressive organization in Puerto Rico as well as in the U.S. that has not participated in the unitary efforts to gain our liberty. Unions, religious and civic groups have given their support and solidarity, according to their resources and means.

As can be seen, the support has been broad. At the same time, it has permitted our people to further its organization at levels it did not have prior to August 30, 1985.

Insurgent: Why is the Puerto Rican Independence Movement being criminalized?

Castro-Ramos: Historically oppressor nations have tried to present those who fight for freedom as criminals. It is a part of their propaganda arsenal to strip liberation struggles of their profoundly human content and to denounce these struggles as simple criminal acts. This has been the imperialist's conduct. But, historically, it has also been demonstrated that oppressed peoples rise up against the imperialist lie and show the world the justness of their cause. Today exists the glorious example of Vietnam; we have the present example of Nicaragua; and we are certain that our struggle against colonialism in our nation will triumph over the lie and the laws that try to present our struggle as criminal acts.

Without doubt, the greatest and most abominable criminal act that has been committed in our country is that our nation has been enslaved by yankee colonialism for the last 89 years--indeed a crime against humanity.

Meléndez: In this case, we have the opportunity to prove, under their own laws, that it is the U.S. government that is the "terrorist". Also, and more importantly even, is that our colonial status continues being exposed. This has been our people's reality for 89 years. And, for 89 years many great

and brave men and women have fought for our Independence. Now our colonial situation has become crystal clear. This understanding has advanced the process of raising consciousness in a people which has lived deceived, as a slave of an oppressor nation.

Insurgent: Would you describe your conditions of incarceration, and how the "security threat" was used to justify these conditions?

Castro-Ramos: The majority of those arrested on August 30 were in prison approximately 16 months before their right to bail was recognized; even worse is that still (26 months later) two companeros, Filiberto Ojeda Rios and Segarra Palmer are in prison, denied their right to bail.

The conditions in prison during that time were very hard. The enemy constantly tried to break the will to struggle of all of us, and as a consequence, that of our people. We were put in isolation cells; companeros were physically attacked; we were denied adequate medical services, religious services, and recreation; our families and friends were constantly harrassed by the guards. Our contact with the rest of the prison population was limited, principally with the other political prisoners that were there. Obviously, all these violations of the most basic civil and human rights were justified in the name of "security" and how "dangerous" we were.

Meléndez: The situation in prison for us as women was different from that of the men. In MCC-New York there were no toilet facilities in the cells for women. Because of this, they could not lock the doors, so we were with the other prisoners during the day. This gave us the opportunity to know other, North-american political prisoners, which enriched our knowledge of the anti-imperialist struggles in the U.S., and about what political prisoners stand for.



Insurgent: These arrests have obviously disrupted your homelives, your families and jobs. As Puerto Rican nationals and patriots, you have also been isolated from your homeland, families and movement while incarcerated in New York-MCC. Now you are forced to attend constant hearings in Hartford. The state intends to try you before a Northamerican jury in Hartford. What has been the struggle to move this trial to Puerto Rico, and how would that affect your defense?

Meléndez: We will be in front of a judge and a jury that does not understand our language, much less our customs and way of life. Discrimination will prevail in this court, just as it does in the U.S., through its treatment of minorities, including Puerto Rican people. Bringing family members, as well as witnesses from Puerto Rico to aid in the defense will be limited because of the high costs of transportation and housing. Even the great climate differences affect us. All this has resulted in increasing the probabilities of a conviction.

Castro-Ramos: It is clear that the kidnapping and the removal of all of us to the U.S. to be tried has great repercussions. The yankees mobilized its whole propoganda apparatus to present us as terrorists and criminals of the worst kind. They have distorted public opinion with lies and the display of extreme security measures in the whole city of Hartford, making it almost impossible now to find an average Northamerican that is not prejudiced against our case. This means that we have to petition the court for a change of venue to the U.S. federal court in Puerto Rico. The government is opposing this tenaciously, because it knows that, even though the trial would take place in a federal court, it would be impossible to find us guilty before a jury made up of Puerto Rican people. Our people know us and are aware of our political path. The forced exile in Hartford, far from our country and families, is an important part of the vile repressive act that imperialism launched against our people on August 30, 1985.

Insurgent: Can you summarize anything else about what is happening with the case at this point? When is the case expected to actually go to trial?

Meléndez: Since the pre-trial hearings have begun, there has been a long parade of FBI agents who participated in the arrests as well as in the investigation. They have had to answer defense questions about why they seized everything in the houses (for example, books of poems, literature, medical records of children and adults; personal papers, including love letters; video movies for children like Star Wars, etc.). They were not able to answer, obviously, because there is no possible explanation unless it was done to use this case as part of a further-reaching investigation.

A recent example, for four months, the prosecution and the agents have denied the exist-

tence of documents called "psychological profiles" about each of the accused. Some psychologists were sent to Puerto Rico to meet with agents who were involved in the investigation and who later took part in the arrest teams. It is interesting that parts of the questionnaire form were dedicated to questions about the personal and sexual lives of each one of us. Is this normal procedure in cases of arrest? The FBI itself admits it is not. The purpose really was to understand the personality of each companero, their skills, capabilities, limitations and defects. Once they had this information, the methods of repression could be adapted (for example, torture to obtain confessions), and/or they could be made more sophisticated.

It is expected that the trial will begin in January of next year, at the earliest. What is interesting is that 2 years have passed since the arrests and, as of now, the trial has not begun. Among other things, this demonstrates that the government did not have a case against us, but rather, is using it for repressive, investigative purposes.

Insurgent: On a more personal level: many of you have families and children. Your lives have been disrupted, you have been forced to leave your homeland, and you have been isolated from your loved ones and supporters. Two of you, Ivonne Melendez and Lucy Berrios-Berrios are women and mothers. Can you talk about how this has affected you?



Ivonne Melendez with her children

Insurgent wishes to thank comrade Marilyn Buck for translating this interview.

Meléndez: From the personal aspect, as a Puerto Rican woman and mother, the arrests signify more than the loss of physical liberty. In my case, it was the first time that I had ever been separated from my children and family. This blow can not be overcome, even less for my children who had to continue their lives without their mother, under another roof, with other customs of living. They had already lived the terrorism in their own home when rifles were pointed to their heads at the ages of 8, 7, and 5.

To be a part of the Independence Movement in Puerto Rico is difficult for anyone, but for a woman the situation is more complicated and demands sacrifices. We have to continue being mothers and carry out all the responsibilities that signifies. Since women have demonstrated that we have the same capabilities as men, our lives are more productive, more active and freer.

Having been a prisoner for 16 months together with Northamerican political prisoners was a very important experience for me. It is important to mention their names: Carol Hill

and Collette Pean, and Marilyn Buck, Susan Rosenberg, Linda Evans, Laura Whitehorn, Pat Gros, Barbara Curzi and Carol Manning. Through them I learned about the anti-imperialist movement in the U.S. as well as about the conditions of discrimination that minorities (Afro-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Colombians, etc.) are subjected to. We built a great friendship that helped me in my own formation as a political prisoner and fighter for the independence of my country.

We received a special support from the people in general. We were seen as an example of combative, strong revolutionary women. As mothers, we also were given much support. This represents, for me, a great responsibility that I have taken on for my people, because I consider myself one woman more, one mother more, as so many who have been and will be as part of our independence process. My function was one thing in prison, while others in the street continue much more arduous work--the day-to-day confronting the world, the enemy, the necessities and all the limitations imposed by the system on women, as well as, in a certain form, the sexist attitudes which exist in our culture.



**BUILD A
REVOLUTIONARY
RESISTANCE
MOVEMENT!**

**COMMUNIQES FROM THE
NORTH AMERICAN
ARMED RESISTANCE MOVEMENT**

**BUILD A REVOLUTIONARY RESISTANCE
MOVEMENT: Communiques from the
Northamerican Armed Clandestine
Movement, 1982-85**

The Committee to Fight Repression has published this collection to make available the words of the organizations which have made a critical contribution to the development of anti-imperialist resistance. The 54-page book includes all communiques issued by the United Freedom Front, the Armed Resistance Unit, the Revolutionary Fighting Group and the Red Guerrilla Resistance, which accompanied armed actions. It also includes a foreward by political prisoner Dr. Alan Berkman.

\$2.50; discounts on bulk orders

When You Strike a Woman, You've Struck a Rock

Lexington Control Unit: SHUT IT DOWN Campaign Escalates

On July 20, 1987, two attorneys from the American Civil Liberties Union National Prison Project conducted a tour of the Lexington control unit accompanied by a correctional psychologist, Dr. Richard Korn. A month later, they issued a report calling the unit "a living tomb," and recommending that it be shut down. On October 5, 1987, the ACLU met with J. Michael Quinlan, director of the Bureau of Prisons. During that meeting, Quinlan said that the BOP intends to close the Lexington HSU in eight to nine months (i.e., around July, 1988) -- as soon as they have constructed a high-security women's penitentiary to hold 150-200 prisoners. Quinlan said that the "justice community" is concerned about what to do about the "influx of terrorists" into the federal prison system. He also told the ACLU that he would look into changing the book policy (only 5 books allowed to each woman; many are turned away by prison censors); would examine applications for social visits by friends and other non-family members; and would look into changing the policy which allows the women in the control unit no personal clothing.

Since this meeting, none of these changes have been made. In fact, the BOP has hardened its stand that the HSU is "safe, secure and humane." Quinlan has also said in a letter to one of the women's attorneys that the new institution is to be located in Marianna, Florida -- apparently, a new HSU located inside a new prison. Alejandrina Torres, Susan Rosenberg and Silvia Baraldini, as well as two social prisoners, will remain at Lexington until Marianna is completed.

The decision by the BOP to close the Lexington control unit is clearly a victory, but a partial one. The combination of the resistance of the women inside; the broad-based opposition to the unit and the realization by the BOP that this opposition is growing, forced them to decide to close the unit as a political liability.

At the same time, it is clear that the U.S. government is not about to give up its strategy of isolation and psychological torture of political prisoners. In response, the National Campaign to Abolish the Lexington Control Unit has made plans for heightening the campaign to SHUT IT DOWN:

1. On November 23, there will be a national telephone campaign to J. Michael Quinlan, Director of the Bureau of Prisons, to demand that the women in Lexington be immediately transferred into general population and that there be no more control units. Quinlan's phone number is 202-633-5000.

2. On Sunday, March 6, there will be two all-women's demonstrations to mark International Women's Day (which falls on March 8 of every year) and to demand that the women in Lexington HSU be transferred immediately into general population, and that no more control units be built or maintained. One will be at the federal prison at Pleasanton, in northern California which currently holds Puerto Rican POWs Haydee Torres, Lucy Rodriguez, Carmen Valentin and Dylcia Pagan; as well as anti-imperialist Northamerican political prisoners Laura Whitehorn and Linda Evans. The other will be at the gates of Lexington.

3. The campaign to shut down Lexington needs your participation. Get in contact with one of the groups listed below to organize a house meeting with a video; to get a speaker to come to your organization or classroom; to contribute time, energy or money.

National Campaign to Abolish the Lexington Control Unit
294 Atlantic Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11201

Out of Control Committee
Box 30
3543 18th Street
San Francisco, California 94110

Committee to Shut Down the Lexington Control Unit
Box 295
2520 N. Lincoln Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60614

or the Committee to Fight Repression



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ACLU Condemns Control Unit as "Living Tomb"

Following are excerpts from the ACLU's report:

"The reasons given for assignment to the unit and the lack of administrative procedures for assignment, the manner in which the unit environment and procedures are manipulated by institution staff and the failure to provide a meaningful mechanism to move out of the unit taken together violate notions of fundamental fairness and create severe mental distress for the unit population. In addition, some of these women's first amendment rights to freedom of association are being violated.

The conditions combine to make assignment to this unit severely punitive, regardless of the Bureau's assertion that it is merely a classification determination. Additionally, the failure to provide the women with any hope of release from the unit is not simply violative of due process but cruel. . .

Our first and overriding recommendation is that this unit be discontinued as a high security unit. . . The unit procedures and staff conduct should not create an atmosphere that is cruel. . .

The National Prison Project believes that the high security unit should be closed or utilized merely for short-term disciplinary confinement for women who are assigned to the Federal Correctional Facility at Lexington. We have made a number of recommendations to the Bureau for procedural and substantive change in the unit if the Bureau, despite strong professional and public opinion to the contrary, remains committed to maintaining such a unit. . . The criteria [for assignment to the unit] cannot include a person's political beliefs. We have not focussed on recommendations that go to mere cosmetic changes in the facility. Cosmetic changes will not alter the reality of this unit that as it was designed and operates, is a living tomb for women who are assigned to it.

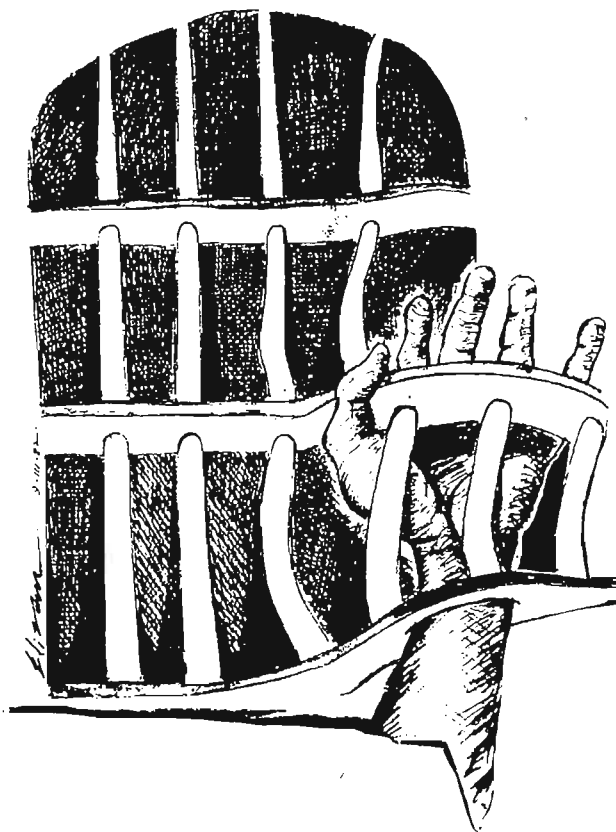
From Dr. Korn's report:

"What was not stated directly, but only hinted at by the Associate Warden, was that the power of the institution over the prisoner was total, beyond questioning and accounting, even if it appeared to violate traditional fairness or common sense. . .

Even in the limited time available (less than three hours) for face-to-face interviews, the psychological and psychosomatic effects of confinement were evident. They are summarized below.

[Here Dr. Korn elaborates on:

1. Claustrophobia
2. Chronic rage reaction, suppressed
3. Low-level to Severe Depression
4. Onset of Hallucinatory Symptoms



5. Defensive Psychological Withdrawal, Blunting of Affect, Apathy
6. Psychosomatic symptoms: loss of appetite, marked loss of weight, general physical malaise, visual disturbances, dizziness, heart palpitations.

In its effects, if not intentions, the main drift of the program has many similarities with the program at Marion, with the earlier program designed for political prisoners in the Federal Republic of West Germany, and with the still earlier Chinese program designed for American soldiers taken prisoner during the Korean conflict. . .

The program sets up a hierarchy of objectives. The first of these is to reduce prisoners to the state of submission essential for their ideological conversion. That failing, the next objective is to reduce them to a state of psychological incompetence sufficient to neutralize them as efficient, self-directing antagonists. That failing, the only alternative is to destroy them, preferably by making them desperate enough to destroy themselves. . ."

The ACLU Prison Project Report is available from CFR for \$2 to cover copying and postage. Also available is a report from the United Methodist Church on their visit to the Lexington control unit (also \$2).

"Isolation... a Continuing Confrontation" West Germany's Prison 'Dead Wings'

The following testimony by Irmgard Moller, a Red Army Fraction (RAF) political prisoner, is from the 1985 trial of her comrades; Brigitte Meinhaupt and Christian Klar. Moller was arrested in 1972, survived a stabbing in 1977 at the time when Baader, Ensslin and Raspe were killed in prison.

I want to begin by explaining how it was for me when I came into the group in Stammheim in January '77. At that time Andreas, Gudrun, Jan Nina, and Brigitte were here. I came here from a small group for the first time into a somewhat bigger group. Before that I had only been together with one other, and before that I was totally isolated for years.

Through the vitality of the group, I felt especially clearly a lack in myself -- a lack which I was only vaguely conscious of. What I came to understand at first, through Brigitte, was that one can reconquer all which had been missing; or which, through lack of consciousness about the isolation, had been destroyed or disintegrated. She recognized things in me, the same symptoms in me which she herself had experienced in another way. And the most important experience was that one cannot preserve anything; that concepts and ideas must continually be struggled for. For example, the fact that isolation is not a situation, but rather a continuing confrontation. But we had to figure that out first, because it was a totally new experience for all of us - how that isolation effected us and how we could struggle against it....

I want once again to say something about the relationship between those who are in prison and those who are struggling on the outside. That is expressed in a quote from Camilo, a Nicaraguan Indian, who was in prison under Samozá, and is the experience of all prisoners in liberation struggles, everywhere. He said: "In prison one is outside of the organization, but in the revolution."... We say that we as prisoners are an integral part and that goes also now for the resistance - that each one struggles on his own terrain with the means he has available for the same goal, with the same seriousness and consistency.

It is precisely the prisoners, who are the most openly confronted with the state's extermination intentions, directly, 24 hours a day. And no one would think of, nor say, that the war stops for me the moment I am captured. That is also completely a militaristic definition, if the war stops then I no longer have a weapon in my hand. But that expresses, above all, a limited con-

By Irmgard Muller
West German Political Prisoner



Mural painted on a building in Hamburg, West Germany. Police painted it over the next day.

cept of war, because it is the fundamental relationship in which the struggle is being carried on - from our side and theirs also. Each one who is in the struggle knows by now that war must be understood in a different way - that it really includes all levels and everyone knows that unity means that each one carries on this war from where he is and must understand himself totally, consciously in this context. And that creates the effect and the explosive nature: when all levels are struggling together - that we can then make a breakthrough as we have now experienced it.

That we are isolated in the prison holes doesn't mean that we are isolated from the war. On the contrary, we are permanently confronted with it, that is, alone in space, but not in spirit.

And that is what we are struggling for and that was what it was about in '77 here in the group - that we acquire and develop the consciousness that we don't even want to live any other way than collectively, and that that is exactly the only space in which one can and wants to live and the on-

ly place from where liberation is possible, that it all works together.

We carried on these discussions in a very intensive, open, and exacting manner. When I came here - I am now returning to the beginning - I felt as if I were frozen. That somehow a part of me had been destroyed, was no longer whole, like I was broken, de-socialized. I no longer registered whole areas. I didn't even think they existed anymore. I was unbelievably impoverished, rigid; and then I saw here how in the struggle, the others had acquired for themselves again; or had never let go of a wealth of possibilities in thinking and acting. And I relearned how to tell the difference between reality and surrogates which come from hanging on to abstractions and where the struggle is still only in one's imagination (a delusion). The determining factor is our will to struggle together for our goal, against imperialist violence, the state, the isolation and to struggle against all that with which we are confronted with here.

And so it comes together: out of the consciousness of one's own situation, the development of one's own possibilities and the capacity to really put them to use. As Andreas once said, "The bourgeoisie has no

weapon which cannot be turned against it." And the essential weapon of the bourgeoisie in the metropolis is solitude. Bringing that down again on the prisoners is the goal of isolation.

But at first we had to figure out what a contradiction that is - that it is not simply the isolation and the prisoner, but that the state uses the fact that the prisoners still have unbroken bourgeois elements in them - the state has become familiar with them in order to work with them - that the prisoner is no longer able to figure things out and is overcome by the violence in which he is held prisoner and then reproduces these structures against himself and in the relationship to others. So that is the contradiction between the bourgeois garbage in structures and habits which each one carries around, and the isolation.

We first figured out that only by intensively exchanging and examining our experiences could we express and figure it out at all. That was a long and hard process, and we can now share it with others so that each one who is taken prisoner, who is put in isolation, can use our experiences - because it is still true that each one who is taken prisoner comes into isolation until we put through our association together and crush this whole system of isolation.

Black Desk, cont'd from p. 9

in preventive detention on these charges. Defense lawyers successfully showed how absurd this was -- Robert, while facing hundreds of years in jail on the New York 8+ case, had come to court every day of that trial. He was ultimately released on bail, but Abdul Haqq was held in preventive detention for over two months before he, too, won the right to bail. All are awaiting trial on both the state and federal charges.

These arrests had a double duty: to justify the program of the Black Desk by demonstrating just how dangerous Black revolutionaries are; and to attack the Black Men's Movement Against Crack. BMMAC is a community-based organization which is organizing to drive the drug pushers out of the community, to expose and stop the participation of the police in the drug trade and to agitate for Black control of Black communities. They have played a militant role in the mobilization against racist attacks on Black people in New York City. In the words of Abdul Haqq, sent from prison:

"Brothers and sisters, the enemy wants to make examples of us because they want you to cower and quit fighting. They want people to say 'see what happens when we stand up. We can't beat the system. They'll kill us and we can't win.' . . . The enemy is moving militarily against the movement because the consciousness of the people is being raised -- that is, the Black Man's mind is being freed from the control of our enemy. . . Beautiful broth-

ers and sisters, the Black Men's Movement is calling on you to oppose your enemy's plan which is to continue the robbery of our most precious essence, our dignity, virtue and self-worth, so that he can continue the oppression of our people and exploitation of our homeland and the communities we have built throughout the Diaspora."

Geronimo Pratt, cont'd from p. 7

taped at San Quentin prison in July 1987 is available for use. The news-program "60 Minutes" interviewed him last spring and is planning to air the segment this winter.

INSURGENT encourages all its readers to join in the campaign to free Geronimo Pratt. As the petition to the UN states "...We feel that the same Counter Intelligence Program (COINTELPRO) responsible for Geronimo's imprisonment initially is currently responsible for thwarting his just attempts to self-redress within the confines of the legal/judicial system... We assert that Geronimo is a Prisoner-of-War, and we demand his immediate release as well as compensation from the state for the 17 years of his life that have been taken from him as a result of his inhumane and unjust imprisonment!" For more information on the campaign and to obtain copies of the petition, buttons, posters and brochures, contact:

Committee to Free Geronimo Pratt
220 - 9th Street, #443
San Francisco, CA 94103

Vive Che!

On the 20th Anniversary of the Death of Ernesto "Che" Guevara



Che Guevara was a revolutionary internationalist, who, together with thousands of women and men, fought to defeat imperialism in every corner of the earth--to turn dreams of liberation and socialism into reality. He lived the arrival of our dreams in Cuba. Che died together with his companeros, for these dreams in Bolivia. His spirit of proletarian internationalism will live always in the victories that grow out of defeats.

His vision has given us, here in the belly of the beast, the resolve to transform our common dreams into reality, to defeat imperialism and build a new future.

Dare to struggle, dare to win,

Marilyn Buck

Following is a poem, translated from Spanish, by Mario Benedetti, written in Montevideo, Uruguay after Che's murder by CIA agents on October 8, 1967.

Shocked, Angry

By Mario Benedetti

Let us go forward
defeating outrages
--Che Guevara



So, we are
shocked
angry
although this death is
one of the foreseeable absurdities

it is embarrassing to look at
the paintings
the easy chairs
the carpets
to take a bottle from the refrigerator
to tap the three universal letters of your name.
On the stiff machine
whose ribbon has never
ever appeared so pale.

it is embarrassing to be cold
and to draw near to the stove as always
to be hungry and to eat
such a simple thing
to open the recordplayer and listen in silence
especially if it is one of Mozart's quartets

comfort is embarrassing
and asthma is embarrassing
when you, commandante, are falling
machine-gunned
mythical
pure

you are our riddled conscience

they say that they burned you
with what fire
are they going to burn the good
good news
the irascible tenderness
that you brought and you conveyed
with your cough
with your being

they say that they incinerated
all that you are
except one finger

it is enough to show us the path
to accuse the monster and his parasites
to squeeze, once again, the trigger

So, we are
shocked
angry
of course with time the leaden
shock
will pass
the anger will remain
it will become sharper

you are dead
you are alive
you are a cloud
you are rain
you are a star

wherever you are
if you are
if you are arriving

take the opportunity, at last,
to breathe in peace
to fill your lungs with the heavens

wherever you are
if you are
if you are arriving
it will be a shame if God does not exist

but there will be others
certainly there will be others
worthy of receiving you
Commandante.



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English Only Campaign = Cultural Genocide

Interview with Ricardo Romero

The following is an interview with Ricardo Romero, National Coordinator of the Mexican Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional (National Liberation Movement). The Mexican MLN is a revolutionary organization that is fighting for the socialist reunification of Mexico--the restoration to the Mexican nation of the land that was attacked and occupied by the United States in 1848--now comprising the states of California, New Mexico, Texas, Colorado, Utah, Nevada and Arizona. Ricardo Romero also served 27 months in jail for refusing to collaborate with a grand jury investigating the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional (FALN), an armed clandestine Puerto Rican independence organization within the U.S.

Insurgent: You are organizing among Mexicans within U.S. borders to oppose the "English Only" Campaign. Could you tell us about this?

Ricardo Romero: They picked five states that they made the target states to try and implement English Only, English as the official language. And those five states are New York, Texas, California, Florida and Illinois, that are the five states that have the largest concentration of Latin population in the country. They picked California as the testing ground because California probably has 6 million Mexicanos; it has the largest concentration of Spanish-speaking people, and it probably has the most people of color of any state in the nation.

The English Only Campaign is headed by a man named John Tantum who is a medical doctor from California, and the state coordinator is S.I. Hayakawa. And anyone who remembers the 60's and San Francisco State College remembers who S.I. Hayakawa was--who supposedly put down the whole New Afrikan uprising there by himself. So we know that his politics are strictly conservative and ultra right-wing. The whole political structure of California--Dukmajian, the governor, came out opposing this bill. McCleary, the Lieutenant Governor, Cranston; Bradley, the mayor of Los Angeles; the mayor of San Francisco, Diane Feinstein; the Los Angeles City Council; the teachers union--a whole cross-section of the different political parties came out in opposition to it. So, the people who were spearheading the Campaign went ahead and put it on a referendum, because they knew that it wasn't going to pass any other way through the legislature. What they did then was test the waters, and the referendum passed overwhelmingly. This shocked a lot of people. And, the reason that it passed, in our opinion, was that white supremacy, racism, is alive and well in the States. The people who are behind this have been able to build these fronts, "U.S. English" which has a membership of 300,000

people; and the other group which was started by the same John Tantum and is named FAIR, the Federation of American Immigration Reform. This group has another 300,000 members in it.

In the Mexicano communities, we have to build a grass-roots campaign against this bill. We are working with the older Mexicano people, ancianos, or senior citizens. They are the people most responsible for preserving our language, our heritage and culture. So we start there because we want to maintain the tradition of respect for our families and our elders.

Insurgent: Who have you discovered is behind the English Only Campaign?

Ricardo Romero: In August of 1986, there was an article that came out in a Mexican newspaper, Uno Mas Uno, about this group that did a study on the Chicanos/Mexicanos in the U.S., in the occupied territories. This group is called the Council for Interamerican Security (CSI). We did some research, and we eventually found the actual document--the name of it was "On Creating an Hispanic America: A Nation Within a Nation"--there was this whole distortion of our history, and basically they came down to equating bilingual education with terrorism. It was a study done about the Mexican Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional



saying that we posed a major threat to the United States. Not because we are such a powerful organization, but because of the relationship that we have to the Puerto Rican Independence Movement and to the Northamerican anti-imperialist movement, and to the New Afrikan movement and to other revolutionary forces around the world.

The CSI is headed by a retired Army General named Gordon Sumner. The document itself was written by Rusty Butler, who used to be with the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. There's an introduction by Senator Steve Symms from Idaho. Where is the call for the new Aryan Nation? Idaho! A publication called Contra-Watch did a piece on the CSI gang; then we discovered some other people. Dolf Droge, who is tied to the State Department and the Agency for International Development (AID); General John Singlaub, the leader of the World Anti-Communist League; Adolfo Calero, leader of the contras; and others, like the ex-Ambassador from Nicaragua under Somoza, to the U.S. So that gives you an understanding of what is happening with this English Only Campaign.

Insurgent: How is your participation in opposing the English Only Campaign strategic to your overall view of Mexican people in the United States?

Ricardo Romero: The way we view it is that in a colonial situation, nationalism is revolutionary. What has happened in our particular case is that we have been colonized by the United States for over 135 years so too many of our people are born into colonialism and don't even know that they're colonized--from the time they are born to the time they die. So, we have to be able to maintain our culture and our heritage and our traditions, and language is an essential part of that.

What is transpiring now is that the projections for the population growth is that by the year 1995, Texas, California, New Mexico, Arizona and Colorado will be over 50% Mexican. So, there's this big push to bring us in, into the system, to assimilate us completely.

Insurgent: How do you see this campaign fitting into U.S. strategy right now, considering the counter-revolutionary war they are fighting and backing in Central America?

Ricardo Romero: The way we see it is that U.S. English is also U.S. imperialism drawing the lines--we are either with them or against them. You are an American citizen, not a Mexican; you are an American citizen, you are not Salvadoran; you are an American citizen, you are not Nicaraguan; you are an American citizen, you are not Colombian--you are not any of these other people. And, they feel they have to do this with us at this point because, face it, there's more than 20 million of us within the confines of the U.S.

And, I'd say that maybe 85% of Spanish-speaking people will tell you that they cannot participate in a war in Central America.

The state is making a big push at this time because they fear the population growth of our people; and also, the national consciousness that we have about maintaining our culture, our language, our heritage and our traditions. We feel it's essential that we organize around this question--we feel that people have not understood this question of English as the official language. We feel in particular the left has missed the boat completely on this because they haven't come out and said anything. In their silence they are actually condoning the actions of the state.

Insurgent: How does the new Immigration Reform and Control Act affect the Mexican people in the occupied territories?

Ricardo Romero: In 1987 there have been three major attacks against our people: one is the new INS Act and the employment sanctions--now we have to prove that we are citizens just to get a job. It's created this whole fear and paranoia of the Mexican working class in the southern half of the United States.

Secondly, in the state of Colorado, the Supreme Court ruled in a case against three Mexicans that if you are a non-white person, and you are in an all-white neighborhood, the police have a right to stop and search your person, your car, whatever.

And, thirdly, English as the official language. I think we're just at the beginning stages. We're going to see a mass exodus of Mexicans being deported, and probably some of us who think we are U.S. citizens are going to be put into a bad situation if things continue to escalate. And, the situation that is happening in Latin America is going to have a direct effect on the Spanish-speaking population in the United States.

Insurgent: How would you define the tasks of Northamerican solidarity with your work?

Ricardo Romero: I believe that Northamerican solidarity work would really be essential in this campaign, and the reason I say that is that Northamericans are the only ones, or are the ones that have to reach out to the Northamerican population in general. They have to start trying to transmit some of the analysis that we have made around U.S. English, and what is happening to the masses of the Northamerican population. We're in for some very dangerous years from now until the year 2000, so we really have to do some work around the English Only Campaign, and I think that the Northamerican left has an essential role to play in this.



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Christic Institute Sues 'Secret Team'

The Christic Institute, a faith-based public policy law group located in Washington, D.C., has filed a lawsuit against the "Secret Team" a group of U.S. military and CIA officials. This team, according to the Christic Institute, sometimes acting with U.S. government approval and sometimes acting on their own, has for 25 years "waged secret war, toppled governments, trafficked in drugs, assassinated political enemies, stolen from the U.S. government and subverted the will of the Constitution, the Congress, and the American people." The suit, filed in May 1986 in Miami federal court, names many of the same key characters in the Iran-Contra arms deal, subject of the Contragate hearings. The case, which is suing 29 defendants under the RICO (Racketeer Influence and Corrupt Organizations) Act, is seeking to bring to justice the members of the illegal Contra support network involved in gunrunning, drug smuggling, murder and other crimes. The defendants range from Major General Richard Secord and Major General John Singlaub, to secretive international drug dealers, CIA operatives such as Ted Shackley, shady businessmen and soldiers of fortune (mercenaries). The complex and immense case is due to go to trial around the spring of 1988.

The lawsuit is brought on behalf of Tony Avirgan, a network cameraman, and Martha Honey, a journalist and Avirgan's wife. Avirgan was severely injured in a bomb blast that ripped through a small hut in La Penca, a Contra base camp in southern Nicaragua, in May, 1984. The blast occurred moments before Contra commander Eden Pastora was about to make a statement to the assembled press, to denounce a rival Contra group and the CIA for its deep involvement and control of the war against Nicaragua. Three journalists died in the bombing, and 20 others were seriously injured, including Pastora and Avirgan.

Investigation of the La Penca bombing by Honey and Avirgan led them to the trail of the "Secret Team". They combined efforts with chief legal counsel of the Christic Institute, Daniel Sheehan and its Executive Director, Sara Nelson. The break in the La Penca investigation occurred when Honey and Avirgan were contacted by a source named "David", a young Contra who was part of the group responsible for the bombing. Through him, they learned that many Contra activities were based out of a ranch in Costa Rica owned and operated by John Hull, a U.S. CIA operative and a wealthy rancher. They learned that Hull's ranch was also a mini-airport and a major conduit for drugs and weapons. Over a ton of cocaine a week was flown into the U.S. and then sold in order to fund the Contras fighting to overthrow the government of Nicaragua. As Avirgan and Honey got

closer to the truth, David was kidnapped and murdered, and they themselves began getting death threats. That's when Avirgan and Honey went to the Christic Institute for help in filing a lawsuit to expose and to stop the criminal network.

Nelson and Sheehan are speaking around the country to get the facts about the "Secret Team" out to the people, particularly because the drugs-weapons connection and FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Act) were suppressed in the Congressional hearings (see Insurgent editorial, this issue). They have urged people to take action against the "covert warriors" and the shadow government. According to Nelson, the significance of the lawsuit is highlighted by the fact that "the junkies on the street, or even your kids, your family members, are hooked because North, Secord, and others are responsible for bringing in drugs." For more information on the lawsuit and the speaking campaign, contact:

The Christic Institute
1324 North Capitol St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20002
(202) 797-8106



'We're the Central Intelligence Agency only on the flight south;
we're Cocaine International Airlines on the flight back.'

From Behind the Walls: "The Issue is Courage. Whether to Flee or Fight or Seek Accomodation"

By Raymond Luc Levasseur
Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoner
Hartford FDC

In conventional military forces it is an axiom that a soldier never lets his/her rifle fall to the ground. There are several reasons for this: to avoid accidental discharge, to prevent damage to the weapon and to avoid contamination with dirt.

To drop one's weapon is also symbolic of defeat.

The unconventional soldier - or guerrilla - is armed with more than a rifle. S/he is also armed with ideology and a will to fight that is rooted in the class and national character of those whose liberation we risk our lives for.

The guerrilla is a political-military soldier. Revolutionary in orientation; military in operations. When the captured guerrilla loses his rifle s/he is neither weaponless nor defeated. Even imprisonment or death cannot rob us of the ideals and principles upon which we base a lifetime of struggle. National liberation and socialist revolution cannot be snuffed out so easily. The most serious defeat we can suffer at the hands of the enemy is to surrender our principles for then we have stripped the will to fight from our hearts. If there is any rehabilitation program in the minds of our captors it revolves around capitulation.

The enemy designs propaganda and isolation units to break us down and destroy our spirits. They will exploit any sign of weakness and maximize our losses. They kill some of us and bury others with decades of time. They play on white supremacy, sexism and the brutality of prison. They isolate leaders and selected individuals while trying to rub our noses in the dirt. They attempt to disarm us, realizing that we are revolutionaries, not criminals.

The guerrilla is no armchair revolutionary. One does not rely on university degrees, class privileges or artificial bravado to carry out one's duty to make the revolution. This applies whether in the field or in the penitentiary. We must recognize that it is the intention of our captors to make us suffer for our political commitment. As in the 'Myth of Sisyphus' they have sentenced us to what they think is hell on earth - a futile lifetime of trying to reach the top of a mountain whose peak always seems beyond reach.

But these are fools with their hierarchical way of thinking. Time and conditions change but some things do not and one is the essence of the guerrilla which flows from the hearts and minds of people willing to resist and wage war against imperialism. We are never without means to resist unless we're clinically dead or abandon our principles.

The FMLN (El Salvador) began with two .38 pistols; the Vietnamese with a half a dozen rifles and the Sandinistas with not much more. The resistance in Azania has continued to grow in the face of the most vicious fascism on this earth and we are all aware of the heroic beginnings and victory of the Cuban revolution. Each of these struggles suffered extraordinary setbacks but never lost sight of their goals or a simple fact of life that they would rather die fighting than to live on their knees. To paraphrase Fidel - you don't have to be a communist to be a revolutionary but you damn well better be ready to fight.

While we look for our weapons left behind to be picked up and utilized by others, this is not always the case. The struggle ebbs and flows based on many factors and we must adjust to this reality. The level of support for captured combatants and political prisoners is not what it could or should be. To some degree this is directly related to mass organizations' unwillingness to integrate the political prisoner/POW issues with national liberation/class struggles. While this can be discouraging and requires more analysis and planning, we must not let such a decline in mass struggle at a particular point in time dampen our efforts to advance ourselves as revolutionaries. We need to redouble our efforts to put the plight of political prisoners/POWs on the agenda of mass organizations.

The urban jungle does not field soldiers with camo's, field packs and M-16's. It produces armed guerrillas with the political and military skills to wage a protracted struggle that can lead to mass mobilization and people's war; cadre that must develop fundamental skills, organization, moral character, courage and commitment. All under conditions that are far from ideal.

This process does not end when we are captured. We do not waiver at the first sight of the interrogator or in the face of beat-

ings, separation from our children and comrades or the years in isolation cells. If one thing the guerrilla experience teaches it's to overcome the odds - by any means necessary.

In the camps we must summon up the same skills and commitment that have enabled us to elude and battle the enemy for extended periods of time in clandestinity. Resistance isn't a strategy we begin at the time of capture, it's a strategy we continue in spite of being captured. The more severe the isolation, the greater the challenge to persevere, and it is a challenge we must spare no effort to take on.

Within the camps political prisoners/POWs naturally gravitate to each other. We are natural allies. The camp commanders are aware of this and if they don't break it up with transfers or control units they put it under surveillance by their lackeys. We need to be aware of this while recognizing that solidarity among political prisoners/POW's is one of our foremost weapons.

We do not collaborate with the enemy. The intense propaganda battles called trials are the first step after capture to fight

criminalization and let our voices be heard. The demands of clandestinity are well suited to the camps. Security has always been paramount to avoid eyes and ears; without initiative we know we cannot succeed and we must be innovative and flexible; we recognize the importance of self-discipline, political education, strong bodies and maintaining our health; we emphasize moral character and respect the more spiritual needs of some of our comrades; we share old skills and learn new ones; we learn who to trust and who not to trust; we analyze and criticize and learn from our errors; we acquire patience, and we adjust to being without and make the most of what we have when we have it; we learn to go it alone when necessary in hostile environments but know the day will come when "... dawn is no longer beyond our reach."

In conclusion, I am reminded of something told to me many years ago by a fellow worker. He said that it takes as much courage to carry a lunch pail to a sweatshop every day to feed your kids as it does to shoulder a weapon. There's an element of truth to this little parable, and we would do well not to lose sight of it as we continue the fight for political recognition and survival.

Kazi Toure on Trial

The trial of Kazi Touré (slave name: Chris King) has begun in Boston federal court. Mr. Touré is charged with seditious conspiracy (attempting to overthrow the government or to impede the laws of the United States). The government contends that Mr. Touré, along with the Ohio 7, participated in a series of bombings targeting the military/industrial complex -- actions which were claimed by the Sam Melville-Jonathan Jackson Brigade and by the United Freedom Front.

Mr. Touré has been a community activist for his entire adult life. He was a staff person at the Haymarket Foundation, a foundation which funds community and progressive organizations; in 1979, he was one of the key organizers of the Amandla Freedom Concert in Boston which raised funds for the liberation struggles in Africa. He later participated in the Amandla People's Security Force, a community-based group which saw it as a necessity for the community to defend itself against the increasing number of attacks against Black people and women in the Boston area.

The key witness for the government was Felipe Noguera, who participated in both the concert and the People's Security Forces. Noguera, who testified for days in front of the grand jury and then again at Touré's trial, named 34 individuals and 21 organizations -- including members of his family and organizations he had been a member of. His testimony was the basis for more subpoenas in the Boston community; Cameron Bishop (whose subpoena was later dropped) and Carol Hill (who served

months in jail for contempt) were the only two who refused to testify, out of at least six people who were subpoenaed. Mr. Touré also offered an example of non-collaboration when he refused a \$200,000 offer that the police made to him after his arrest to cooperate in the investigation. He refused.

Mr. Touré is currently recovering from a neck injury he sustained when a federal marshal's car drove into the back of the car carrying Mr. Touré to court. He is being held in preventive detention through his trial, which is expected to last into the winter. The federal trial of the Ohio 7 on the same charges will begin when Mr. Touré's trial ends, in Springfield, Massachusetts.



Jacobin Books

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Prisoners Organize to Fight AIDS

Dostoyevsky observed that if one wants to understand a society, one should look at its prisons. This currently rings true as the AIDS epidemic shows its many faces within the nation's prisons, while the government allows the virus to silently spread and manipulates the fear to serve its own purposes. In regions like the Northeast, AIDS is now the leading cause of death in prisons. Prisoners are disempowered and dehumanized, with little support from outside communities. They face the AIDS epidemic with little information and no one to trust. AIDS in prison surfaces in rumor and panic. All the pre-existing divisions among prisoners, between prisoners and guards and between prisoners and administrations are compounded by hysteria, often fueled by racism and anti-gayness.

The prisoner with AIDS confronts a devastating future. The human suffering of AIDS is staggering under the best of circumstances in which decent health care and loving family and friends buffer the pain of a progressively debilitating disease. The prisoner with AIDS dies in half the time of his/her counterpart on the street. This fact is an indictment of prison conditions in general and the prison health care system in particular. It also seriously raises concerns about the self-conscious policies prisons are implementing concerning AIDS. But beyond the torment of dying while locked up in prison, without one's basic freedom and separated from family and loved ones, is the added horror of dying in total isolation from fellow prisoners, and suffering their disdain and the stigma of the illness.

Now, federal prisoners are targets of the Far Right's agenda for the AIDS epidemic: 1) Mandatory blood testing to identify people carrying the HIV virus, 2) isolation and quarantine of prisoners with AIDS and with positive blood test, and 3) a proposal that prisoners eligible for parole be detained if they have a positive blood test. Already mandatory testing has been implemented and federal prisoners with HIV virus are being segregated in an isolation ward in Springfield, Il.

"It feels like we're sitting on a time bomb," said David Gilbert, an anti-imperialist political prisoner at Auburn Correctional Facility in New York. He, along with inmate leaders, Mujahid Farid and Angel Nieves, have initiated a program at Auburn to fight AIDS. They understood that the direction of the AIDS crisis will be determined more by politics, than science. Gilbert stresses that the Meese/Reagan agenda is not simply an inadequate and repressive program for fighting AIDS. It is basically not a pro-

gram to fight AIDS at all. The Reagan administration, along with other sectors of the right wing, including fundamentalists and the Catholic Church hierarchy, propagate the stigma that AIDS is a punishment for sin. In fact, they have allowed the virus to smolder murderously among the stigmatized gay and bisexual male population and intravenous drug users (IVDUs). "What Meese is doing," says Gilbert, "is very parallel to their program around drugs. They use very real fear and serious concerns of the public as a platform to further Reagan/Meese's own police state agenda. They use the fears as a pretext for their step-by-step program to take back traditional civil rights and liberties. The bitter irony of Meese's police state agenda in the name of, or under the rhetoric of fighting AIDS, is that it has helped to create an atmosphere that makes it much harder to do so effectively. Because of the right wing offensive, much of the public debate has polarized into advocating mandatory



blood testing or quarantine (supposedly as part of a comprehensive health program) versus individual liberties. In reality, it is the gay movement and some left groups who from the beginning took up the public health issues, while the government did not. But it is precisely because of the homophobia and stigma, to which Reagan/Meese have contributed so much, that it is so difficult for any sort of testing program to work. That is, you could imagine a society where there was routine testing of high risk groups without any stigma or problems. As it is, it is very difficult to even have a voluntary testing program work half-decently given the level of stigma and bias."

While the government is blaming the victims and intensifying repression from above, Gilbert, Nieves and Farid are responding to the

crisis by promoting initiative and education by and among the oppressed themselves. They formed the Prisoners Education Project on AIDS (PEPA) to unite and empower prisoners to deal with the AIDS epidemic.

In order to understand the specific Auburn experience, more background information on AIDS is pertinent. The HIV virus responsible for AIDS is spreading worldwide. But its patterns of spread are specific to each society in which it is found. In the United States, the majority of people with AIDS live on the East and West Coasts. 65-70% are gay and bisexual men. About 20% are I.V. drug users (IVDUs). 8% are both IVDUs and gay or bisexual. The remaining 10% include people who received blood products such as hemophiliacs or blood transfusion recipients, as well as the heterosexual partners and children of people with the HIV virus. However, the statistics for new cases are showing a change in pattern: there is a higher rate now of new cases among IVDUs and their sexual partners and children. Because the drug plague has primarily devastated oppressed communities, over 80% of these new cases are among people from Black and Latino communities. Women and children with AIDS are 80% Black and Latino. Black and Latino people are also disproportionately incarcerated. So AIDS in prison reflects these newer changes in the way AIDS is spreading.

Although the greatest AIDS toll remains among gay men, the new statistics show that the gay community has been able to slow the spread of AIDS. Despite having little support from public health institutions and suffering the stigmata of AIDS, the gay community has accomplished this by organizing itself to fight the disease. Education has been its prime weapon, since there is no cure or vaccine. The gay community taught people the importance of practicing safe sex in order to stop the transmission of the virus. People with AIDS or any of the HIV related diseases have taught each other how to fight to live, not prepare to die. The hopelessness is lifting as traditional and non-traditional forms of treatment are being explored and support groups and networks are being organized for self-help.

The increase of AIDS among Black, Latino and other oppressed people is an extremely grave challenge. Progressive and revolutionary sectors of these peoples have consistently said that their people face genocide in the U.S. They have exposed the role of drugs and alcohol as part of a history of chemical warfare. They have exposed that the deteriorating conditions of life like the poor quality of health care or education are products of their peoples' colonization by the United States. The deadly spread of HIV virus through the IVDU's shared needles and then to their sexual partners and children is proceeding with virtually no official support for community education or public health offensives. The fight against AIDS in these communities is the newest front in a struggle against genocide of whole peoples.



The newest statistics from New York state show these changing patterns in prisons. According to the NY State Commission of Corrections (Newsday, 9/22/87, p. 33) 438 inmates died of AIDS between 1981 and June, 1987. From 1985-86 the number of deaths increased from 114 to 143--an increase of 25%. Furthermore, the Commission said that 12 inmates died while incarcerated for more than 5 years, suggesting that they might have gotten the virus while in prison. 45% of AIDS deaths were Hispanic (only 28% of the prison population), 43% were Black (50% of the prison population). 95% were IVDUs. 5% were gay men.

On December 13, 1986, one more prisoner at Auburn died from AIDS. His death had a particular impact because he was Kuwasi Balagoon, a New Afrikan Freedom Fighter and revolutionary, respected and loved at Auburn. Several of his friends turned their grief into an attempt to fight this deadly disease. David Gilbert (a political comrade and co-defendant of Balagoon), Muhajid Fared and Angel Nieves initiated the PEPA proposal. In their initial press releases, PEPA estimated that 25% of state prisoners may be carrying the virus. They write, "While drugs and sex in prison are officially prohibited, these activities are not uncommon. The conditions in prison mean that those who use hard-to-come-by needles are likely to share them widely, and without much access to proper sterilization. Sexual activity is likely to occur without proper safeguards and often with multiple partners. These realities indicate that the ongoing spread of this deadly disease is a very grave problem within N.Y. prisons. Any serious program of AIDS education must include three basic goals: 1) Save lives by curtailing high-risk practices; 2) Counteract the hysteria and divisions among prisoners caused by fear of casual contact; 3) Promote humane treatment for people with AIDS. While the lead goal is to save lives, all three of these goals must reinforce each other to achieve a rational and humane program."

The PEPA proposal was submitted to the Department of Corrections Services (DOCS) for approval. Gilbert, Farid and Nieves are prepared for a difficult, ongoing engagement with DOCS. Up to this time, DOCS has not had an effective program to fight AIDS in prison. Yet they say, in all their public relations statements, that they believe in the educational rather than the repressive approach to the problem. But their educational approach boiled down to distributing to prisoners the State-issued pamphlet, "100 Questions and Answers on AIDS." In the pamphlet there is only a single question that addresses AIDS in prison. This is dangerously misleading because it states that there is no apparent spread of the disease within prisons. PEPA knew that this pamphlet covered up the problem, and would be no help in fighting AIDS. PEPA also anticipated that DOCS would oppose prisoner initiative and potential control of an educational project.

In August, DOCS rejected the application to form PEPA. After further struggle and exchange, the Auburn administration, while not granting the whole PEPA proposal, appears to be willing to go along with a significant level of prisoner-to-prisoner education. (Details of a compromise agreement were being worked out when Insurgent went to press.)

Gilbert, Farid and Nieves are committed to continue from the inside to build an effective program. They must constantly fight the prevalent public attitude (that finds root among the prisoners themselves as well) that people with AIDS are the dregs of society and deserve to die, and prisoners with AIDS are certainly not worth fighting for. They are trying to replace this attitude with new values that recognize the innate, non-negotiable human right to live and die with dignity.

We urge readers to establish direct communication with the organizers at Auburn. Information from the outside is vital to their efforts. We urge other prisoners to share their experience and consider their own initiatives. An effective fight against AIDS can certainly be built with scientific information, an analysis of the government's

repressive program, a struggle against racism and all forms of genocide, and a defense of lesbian and gay rights.

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PEPA PROPOSAL, AUBURN

Background:

AIDS is now by far the main cause of death in the N.Y. State prisons. Yet, many prisoners remain woefully uneducated about the true nature of the disease and how it is spread. On the one hand, there is periodic panic over forms of contact that don't transmit the disease; on the other hand, high risk practices continue.

The front-line of defense has to be education. For such education to be effective in changing high risk practices, it must be thorough and ongoing and involve (with proper training and direction) considerate inmate-to-inmate counseling.

Overall Goals:

The main purpose is to save lives by providing inmates at Auburn Correctional Facility with health education on how AIDS is spread and how to prevent it. With systematic and qualified prisoner-to-prisoner education, we can significantly curtail the spread of AIDS among inmates as well as to the outside community to which most prisoners eventually return. A related goal would be to provide counseling and support for inmates already afflicted with AIDS.

Specific Goals and Programs:

- a) Have a number of inmates trained as AIDS education counselors.
- b) Set up specific and thorough seminars with appropriate groupings of prisoners (e.g., the various inmate organizations).
- c) Develop an educational presentation that would become part of the ACF orientation program and thereby eventually reach every inmate at Auburn.
- d) Sponsor special educational programs such as movies, slide shows, skits and speakers.
- e) Prepare a special pamphlet that speaks directly to prisoners -- about their concerns and in their language.
- f) Write articles for the Auburn Collective.
- g) Establish an information and counseling office.
- h) Work with Pre-Release in their efforts to provide information and to encourage a sense of responsibility among released prisoners.
- i) Coordinate AIDS educational work with existing substance abuse programs.
- j) Provide counseling and support for those inmates already afflicted with AIDS.
- k) Fulfill other needs and goals that will emerge from these initial efforts.

Conclusion:

Because of the urgency of the situation, we hope that this project can be approved and commenced as soon as humanly possible so that we can stop today's ignorance from sowing tomorrow's death. This is very simply about saving lives.

FACTS ABOUT AIDS

AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is caused by the HIV virus. The virus can live in a person's body for years before the immune system is weakened enough to be susceptible to germs that cause AIDS. Not everyone who has the virus will get AIDS, but the proportion is high. But everyone with HIV can transmit it to someone else. Most people with HIV are healthy and don't know they are infected. HIV is found in blood, semen, women's genital secretions, breast milk, saliva, tears, urine and feces. But blood and semen are responsible for most of the transmission of HIV.

HIV is spread by sexual contact, sharing of needles or through transfusion of infected blood products. The risk of acquiring the virus is increased by having multiple sexual partners, either homosexual or heterosexual, and sharing needles among intravenous drug users (High risk practices). HIV may be transmitted from infected mother to infant before, during or shortly after birth.

AIDS is hard to catch, even among people at highest risk. The risk of transmitting AIDS from daily contact at work, school or in living situations is non-existent. In virtually all cases, direct sexual contact has led to the illness.

PREVENTION OF AIDS

*Don't have sex with multiple partners or with persons who have had multiple partners.
*Avoid sex with persons with AIDS, members of high risk groups, or persons with a positive HIV test.
*If you have sex with a person who might be infected, protect yourself by preventing contact with the person's body fluids.

- Use condoms.
- Avoid practices that may injure body tissues and cause bleeding (for example, anal intercourse).
- Avoid oral-genital contact.
- Avoid open-mouthed, intimate kissing.

*Don't use intravenous drugs. If you do, don't share needles or syringes.

Is It Bork Yet?

Although it was clear by the second week in October that judge Robert Bork would never make it to the Supreme Court, his nomination by Reagan signaled an on-going battle over the court's direction. A massive and broad coalition of human rights organizations, labor, women's rights, broad forces from the Black movement, civil liberties organizations, Jewish groups and mainline Protestant denominations effectively defeated Bork. They let liberal Senators know a vote for Bork would be going beyond the scope of their support. This broad resistance was a significant barometer of progressive breadth and strength, yet it will have to be consistently activated to keep a Bork clone out of the Supreme Court. In the aftermath of the ContraGate scandal, Reagan has made his intentions clear--to leave a legacy of repression and the destruction of human rights and civil liberties for oppressed and struggling people in the U.S. An analysis of Robert Bork shows why this is so central to the domestic aspects of the Reagan Doctrine.

Robert Bork follows the legal philosophy called "intentionalism"--that court decisions should follow the original intent of the framers of the U.S. Constitution. That puts the debate about whether Bork is a "conservative activist" or an "ideologically neutral" judge in some perspective, when you consider that the "fathers" of our country agreed that Black people should count as three-fifths of a human being for calculating votes; that women should have no civil rights at all and be considered the property of their husbands and fathers; and, though they didn't mention it, that the common colonial and European practice of burning gay people at the stake was tolerable, if not praiseworthy.

In practical terms, Bork has loudly attacked Roe v. Wade, the Supreme Court decision that legalized abortion. He has upheld the right of the U.S. military to dishonorably discharge gay people. He has repeatedly attacked affirmative action, and has said that the original framers of the Constitution had no "intent" to protect women from discrimination. Bork has stated that the 1st Amendment right to free speech does not extend to any speech calling for the violation of laws.

According to this view, speeches calling for civil disobedience to oppose U.S. policy in Central America or leaflets calling for the blockade of a university building to oppose investment in South Africa would be grounds for arrest. Bork's views go well beyond the court rulings that now apply, where there has to be a "clear and present danger" that people will break the law--

that's what backs up laws against "inciting to riot", for example.

Not only does Bork have strong views about what the courts should do, he has strong views about who should get to go to court in the first place. In 17 out of 17 decisions on the D.C. Court of Appeals that were not unanimous, Bork voted to throw out lawsuits on legal technicalities--including those brought in the interests of the homeless, veterans, Medicare patients and Haitian refugees.

Bork is also the man who, as Solicitor General, followed Nixon's orders to fire Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox, when Attorney General Elliott Richardson and Deputy Attorney General William Ruckelshaus resigned rather than be the hatchetmen for Nixon.

Bork testified for five days before the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee as part of his confirmation hearings. His performance on live TV was called "repackaging" by the New York Times, and might have been called lying by some, as Bork attempted to explain away his most reactionary positions as "academic" and assure the American people that he is really a middle-of-the-roader. But, if you can tell where someone stands by who their friends are, let Jerry Falwell speak for Bork: "We are standing on the edge of history. Our efforts have always stalled at the door of the U.S. Supreme Court and the [Bork nomination] may be our last chance to influence this most important body."



UPDATES

This summer, incidents of violence in Los Angeles against the Salvadoran community indicated the beginning of CIA-backed death squad activity in the U.S. that parallels the recent resurgence of death squad violence in El Salvador. Public opposition to and exposure of this emergence of overt death squad activity in the U.S. has steadily grown, both in the Los Angeles area and nationwide. These brutal assaults go beyond--but alongside--the over 60 suspicious break-ins at the U.S. offices and homes of groups and activists critical of U.S. policies in Central America, which have occurred since September, 1984.

On July 7, Yanira Corea, a Salvadoran refugee and political activist in the Central American movement in Los Angeles, was kidnapped from outside the CISPES (Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador) offices, by three men. She was raped and tortured in the brutal attack. A month earlier, she had also been beaten by two other men, after receiving death squad-style threats in the mail. On July 10, while CISPES held a press conference condemning the assault on Yanira, another Salvadoran refugee and activist in LA, Marta Alicia Rivera, received a similar death threat letter, targeting 13 women and 6 men, mostly Salvadoran. By July 24, 60 people had received similar threats. CISPES asked the U.S. Congress to investigate Yanira's kidnapping and attacks on other Central American activists in the U.S. The movement has also been pressuring the FBI and the Los Angeles Police Department to seriously pursue their investigations, which they opened; but so far no arrests have been made.

Yanira Corea courageously began appearing in public again on August 22, when she spoke to a Los Angeles rally. "Terror will not stop us," she said, "All of this has only made our struggle stronger every day, and we are going straight for victory." Since then, Yanira has been speaking and traveling nationwide, exposing the U.S. death squad activity and building support for the people of Central America. We salute her bravery, dignity and example.

A new control unit, called Shewangunk, has been opened in the New York State prison at Walkill, New York. Among those first sent to the unit at Black political prisoners Herman Bell and Basheer Hameed. Reports are that the front doors of all cells in the unit are made of plexiglass and that mirrors are arranged so that a single guard can see into all of the cells. In the next issue of the Insurgent, we will have a longer article on Shewangunk and other control units that are being built around the country.

On August 17, the Socialist Workers Party won a further victory in their 14-year legal battle with the FBI. Judge Thomas P. Griesa issued an injunction which bars the FBI and other government agencies from using information that they obtained illegally by spying for 20 years on the Socialist Workers Party. The ruling permanently forbids any use of information obtained either by FBI informers or from FBI burglaries into SWP or Young Socialist Alliance offices or members' homes, thus assuring their right to privacy. The injunction is the latest development in the landmark suit by the SWP and YSA against Attorney General Edwin Meese, the Justice Department, and other government agencies. In his original opinion in the case, issued in August, 1986, Judge Griesa found that the FBI had systematically violated the rights of the two organizations, their members and supporters. He awarded the SWP and YSA damages of \$264,000 and also ruled that the groups had grounds for an injunction against any continued use of material contained in the illegally obtained government files. The FBI alone possesses almost 10,000,000 pages of such files.

By issuing the injunction, Judge Griesa has completed his decision in this case, but the FBI and Meese et al have 60 days to file a challenge to the decision, which is expected. The SWP and their attorneys believe that this decision will have important implications for all political activists. Leonard Boudin, the leading lawyer for the SWP said this is a "momentous decision and one of the most important rulings in the 14-year-old litigation.

Sahar Bin-Wahad (wife of Black political prisoner Dhoruba Al-Mujahid, formerly known as R. Dhoruba Moore) has been the target of government harassment. Her home in Brooklyn, New York was recently broken into (the culprits apparently possessed a key to the supposedly "pick-proof" lock), and files relating to the Organization of Muslim Political Prisoners in the United States were tampered with. Dhoruba's attorneys will take this matter to court as an example of continuing counterintelligence activities against him.

A report was recently issued by the Israeli government alleging that Palestinian prisoners have been subjected to a pattern of torture, fabrication of evidence, and lying to the courts carried out by the Shin Bet, the internal security forces in Occupied Palestine. While condemning such practices, the government commission which had made the study o.k.'ed the use of such techniques of "interrogation" as depriving prisoners of sleep for long periods of time, keeping them with hoods over their heads, holding them in cells with 24-hour-a-day fluorescent lights and other methods.

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