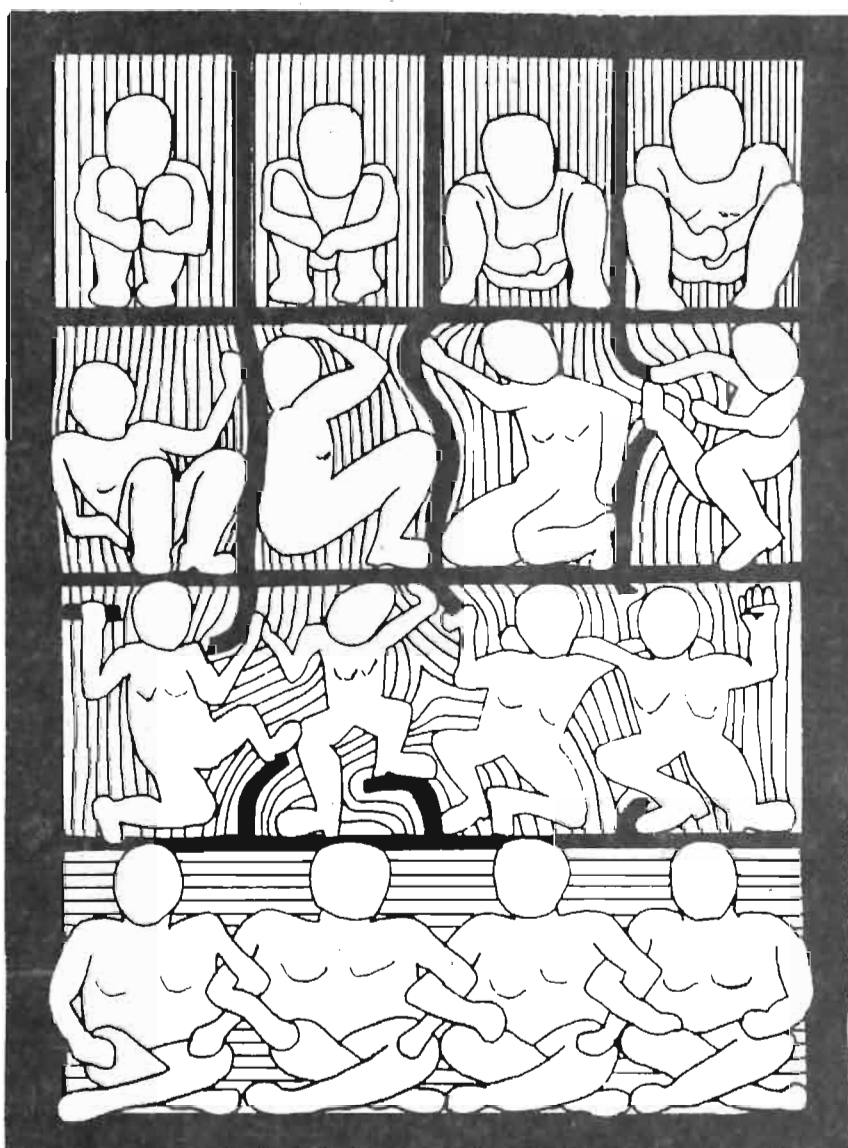


THE INSURGENT

Newsletter of the Committee to Fight Repression Vol. 4 No. 1 Winter 1988

*Celebrate International
Women's Day!*



International Women's Day 1988 Special Issue

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The Committee to Fight Repression is pleased to present this special INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY issue of the Insurgent! This is a chance for us to recognize and celebrate the spirit and resistance of women everywhere fighting for liberation. It is especially a tribute to all those women who are behind bars, and to women political prisoners and Prisoners-of-War who have sacrificed their freedom so that others might be free.

This issue of Insurgent is also special because of the contributions from various political prisoners/POW's as well as some of their visitors. The pages of Insurgent are always open to writings from the political prisoners and POW's. But, in honor of IWD, we made a special request for contributions. Thanks to all those whose poetry, statements and drawings appear here. We equally want to thank anyone who sent in a contribution that does not appear here. Due to deadline and length limitations, we unfortunately were not able to print everything we received.

Committee to Fight Repression: Who We Are

The Committee to Fight Repression is an anti-imperialist organization that analyzes, exposes, and confronts political repression. We believe that in order to build effective resistance movements we need to understand the u.s. imperialist state and the dialectic between REPRESSION and RESISTANCE. People don't automatically resist government repression. We need to learn what we're up against and learn how to resist--from each other and from movements all over the world who are fighting the same enemy.

In any movement, political prisoners are living examples that struggle requires courage and sacrifice. We believe that movements can mature and grow from creating strong bonds with their political prisoners. Who would dare to struggle if movements did not protect and defend those who are captured? We believe that the movements must consistently break through the state's isolation of political prisoners, so that we can learn from people who went before and who currently are in a high level of confrontation with the state.

For the last four years, our group has actively worked to support political prisoners and POW's--from bringing support to political trials; to participating in campaigns to fight human rights abuses, to putting out the

Insurgent. We believe that support for political prisoners and POW's -- from the national liberation movements, the northamerican anti-imperialist clandestine movement, the Plowshares, Sanctuary and peace movements -- is a critical aspect of all current activities for human rights and social justice in this country.

The over 100 political/social activists and revolutionaries in u.s. prisons today are in jail for their activities and actions, their commitments and beliefs, their politics and their refusal to back down. Many of them have led struggles and organizations. Some were captured trying to build revolutionary organizations that were armed and clandestine. Some of the Black POW's and political prisoners have been imprisoned since the 1960's, targets of u.s. COINTELPRO.

From behind the walls, they each share our visions and concerns. They daily re-affirm their commitment, sharpened by the sacrifices they have made, and the abuse, isolation and degradation they experience at the hands of guards and prison officials.

As the imperialists develop their strategies to repress resistance inside prison walls and outside, our resistance, too, must grow. DARE TO STRUGGLE! DARE TO WIN!
FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS AND POW'S!

Editorial:

International Women's Day 1988: Solidarity with Sisters Inside

March 8th is International Working Women's Day, an international socialist holiday for women. On that day in 1908, thousands of women, most of them garment workers, marched in New York City to demand better working conditions. Several years later, the international revolutionary movement took up March 8th as a holiday to commemorate the struggle of women for justice in the workplace, and for dignity -- "for bread and roses", as the labor song goes.

The *Insurgent* is devoting this issue to women political prisoners and prisoners-of-war: who they are, what they mean to our movements, what they mean to us. As you can see on the last two pages, there are women political prisoners and POW's from many movements now held in U.S. prisons. They share the conditions faced by all women prisoners: substandard food, medical care and educational opportunities; overcrowding; physical abuse and sexual harassment. They also share something with one another: all of them have committed themselves to the struggle for human liberation and, in doing so, are challenging the traditional roles and limits placed on women by this society. Our committee is composed primarily of women and lesbians, and we, as anti-imperialists, draw strength from this example.

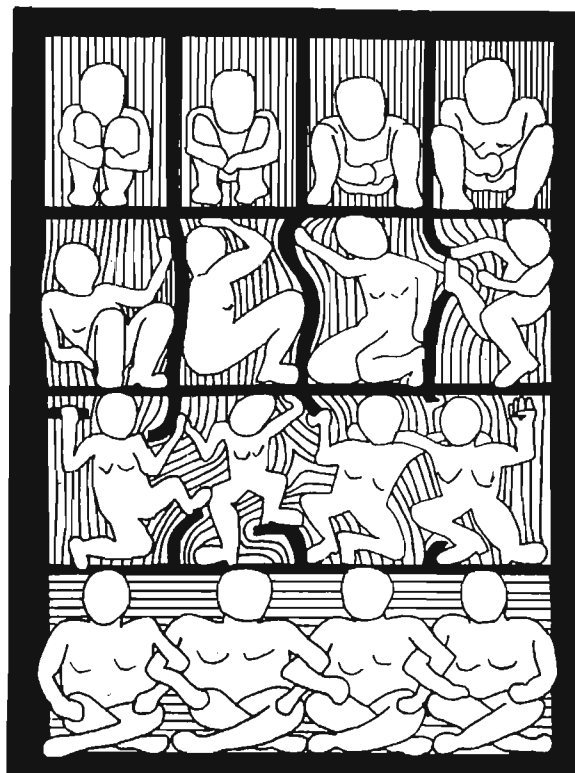
With this issue, we are making a particular call to our sisters in the lesbian and women's movements who are white, to take up support of all political prisoners and POW's and to integrate it into our consciousness and our work. We think that this will make our movements stronger as we apply the lessons these sisters and brothers are teaching us to our own struggle for liberation.

One lesson is that people always face risks when we decide to fight injustice, and that we can overcome our fear. There is a quotation from don Pedro Albizu Campos, a leader of the Puerto Rican Independence struggle for much of this century: "struggle is courage and sacrifice" ("La lucha es valor y sacrificio"). The risks and sacrifices are different: for some of us, it might mean the FBI tapping our phones and infiltrating our organizations; for some women, it means facing the bullets and beatings of "israel" soldiers; for others, it means taking up arms against the U.S. government here at home and facing prison, and possibly death. All of the women political prisoners that we salute have made the decision to commit their lives to resistance. The risks

they have taken and continue to take on the front lines within the prisons challenge those of us who work on different fronts. The daily resistance, the battle to survive and resist and maintain dignity that goes on behind the prison walls gives us strength -- for if some sisters can fight on that level, we can surely continue to fight as well.

We learn this in particular from the example of those sisters who are in the High Security Unit at Lexington -- Silvia Baraldini, Susan Rosenberg and Alejandrina Torres. Under the most severe conditions of psychological experimentation and torture, they continue to hold their heads up. They continue to assert their identities as revolutionary women despite the efforts of the U.S. imperialist state to destroy them.

We look as well to the Puerto Rican POW's who have stood fast since their arrests, for some of them for eight years, refusing to recognize the legitimacy of colonial rule over their nation or their spirits. And, to the sisters of MOVE, who have faced harassment and isolation in prison because they have refused to compromise their way of life.





As white anti-imperialists, we have a particular responsibility to and for the north-american anti-imperialist political prisoners. Our movement, like every other movement in the world, needs to defend our people who face repression because they struggle for justice. The Committee to Fight Repression attempts to defend all people who are attacked by the government because they are fighting for freedom. We think that this has to be a principle for all progressive movements.

We can also learn from the political prisoners--in this period where there is relatively little mass resistance--what it means to hold on to revolutionary principles in a non-revolutionary time. As we hear each new U.S. atrocity on the news, from the support for "israeli" occupation and torture to its backing of the terrorist contras, to the devastation suffered by Third World communities here at home, we share the frustration of so many: that a movement among white

people has yet to be built to respond forcefully. In the anti-imperialist political prisoners we see comrades who have seen that their futures are linked with the future of all humanity; that their liberation is linked to that of the most oppressed; that the terms and the timetable for the struggle for social justice are set by those who suffer most bitterly from injustice. They have looked to the national liberation movements, here in the U.S. and internationally, to find the leadership of the struggle against our common enemy, U.S. imperialism. In these sometimes frustrating times, this is a valuable example for all of us.

All political prisoners, men and women, provide us with examples of courage, but there is a particular lesson to be learned from our sister-comrades inside. They not only challenge our notions of what human beings can do--they challenge our notions of the possibilities of women. Women are taught that we are weak, that we cannot learn revolutionary theory very well, that we are too "sensitive" to fight on the front lines. We are taught to look for the protection of men and to have contempt for one another. We are taught to accept the institutionalized inequality and oppression that runs throughout this society: economically, culturally, in every aspect. And yet, in the political prisoners and prisoners-of-war we can see women who are confronting these limitations and myths, and who are fighting as full human beings.

We see women who, rather than holding back because they are responsible for children and family, have fully realized that to fight for their children means to fight for a more just society for all people. We see women who have committed themselves to learning to use the tools of struggle -- political theory, political principles, and, in some cases, arms. Many are lesbians, women who have rejected the idea that only a man can "fulfill" emotional and sexual needs, and that women are "naturally" competitive and backbiting.

There is a tradition in the women's and lesbian movements of support for political prisoners--and for women who choose the path of illegal struggle--that we can be proud of. We want to build on that tradition because it can strengthen our resistance.

In the early seventies, our communities resisted the FBI hunt for anti-war fugitives Susan Saxe and Kathy Powers, even to the point of some sisters going to jail for refusing to collaborate with the grand jury. We hope that this resistance contributed to Kathy Powers' continuing freedom to this day. In the middle to late seventies, anti-imperialist white women responded to the example of courage provided by Black freedom fighter Assata Shakur and joined the Black movement's mobilizations to support her--came to her trials and then, in 1979, saluted her liberation. Now, we can share her joy at her new life, free in socialist Cuba.

Yet, even as we celebrate Assata's freedom, we need to remember that she was liberated from prison--she did not escape all by herself--and several people are serving lengthy prison sentences, accused of being part of that political/military action. (These include New Afrikan POW Sekou Odinga; New Afrikan political prisoner Cecilio Ferguson-El; anti-imperialist political prisoners Susan Rosenberg and Judy Clark; Italian national political prisoner Silvia Baraldini; and, now on trial in New York City, anti-imperialist Marilyn Buck and New Afrikan POW Dr. Mutulu Shakur.) They need our support.

Support of political prisoners and POW's can be integrated into whatever political work we do, the lessons we learn from them into our own struggle for liberation as women and lesbians. Some ideas and suggestions are:

- if we live in or near a city where political prisoners are on trial or held in jail, we can visit them, write to them, go to court dates.

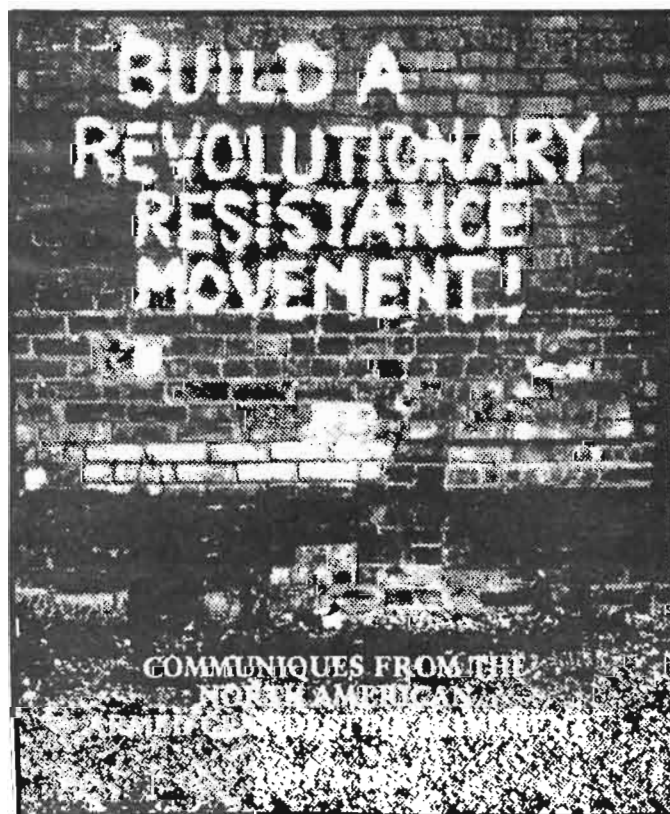
- if we work on a women's newspaper or radio show, we can interview them, solicit articles from them, cover their trials and experiences in prison.

- if we have a skill--as artists, musicians, legal workers--we can offer our help to defense committees or other groups which agitate in support of political prisoners.

- if we're part of an organization or a women's center, we can invite a speaker to talk about political prisoners.

- We can lend our energies to the national campaign to shut down the Lexington control unit, the Marion control unit and the new political prison for women being built at Marianna, Florida.

Integrating these sisters into our consciousness and work will increase the power of our struggles. They can encourage us to make a total, radical critique of this society, what is needed to change it and what we want a new society to look like. They help us to dare to struggle, dare to win.



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

Message from the Lexington Control Unit

By Susan Rosenberg, Northamerican Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoner
and Silvia Baraldini, Italian National Political Prisoner

On IWD, 1988, revolutionary love and solidarity to all the individuals and organizations who have worked and supported the fight against the isolation unit at Lexington. Our love and solidarity to all other political prisoners and prisoners of war inside the U.S.

On this day we acknowledge the particular contributions, sacrifices and leadership that women have made to the struggle for human rights around the world. From Palestine to South Africa, from the Phillipines to Puerto Rico, from NY to Northern Ireland women have fought against the barbarism of detaining children, against the vicious iron fist of occupation, for the recognition of political prisoners, and in seeking justice for the disappeared. In the past few years the demonstrations for IWD have highlighted the conditions of women political prisoners and POW's. By doing so we are building in the U.S. a tradition of anti-imperialist resistance to political repression. Our daily resistance is part of this front.

In preparing this statement we had many discussions to isolate what has allowed us to survive and resist the psychological assaults of HSU. We want to share some of our conclusions.

Fighting for our identity as political prisoners

From the minute we were transferred here at every juncture and in every interaction with the BOP personnel, we have emphasized our political status, that being the reason for our special treatment and for the experiment. We assert it in team interviews, when we refuse to be evaluated monthly by their psychologist, and in our conversation with Quinlan when he toured the unit. We also stress this with the tours who have been sympathetic with our view. This in conjunction with the work done on the outside has forced the BOP to publicly engage in double-speak as to what they meant when they wrote about our political ideas and associations being the criteria for placement (letter from M. Quinlan to Rep. Kastenmeir, Jan. 6, 1988) and locally when we refused to work because of Alejandrina's health, it was termed by an administrator as a "mutiny" and a "protest".

Collectivity and solidarity amongst the 3 political prisoners

Central to our survival has been the building of a cohesive unit, and of a united front in

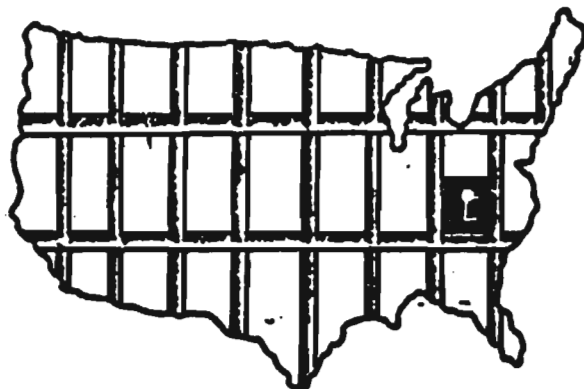
the face of consistent divide and conquer tricks by the BOP. It is important since Alejandrina Torres is a member of the Puerto Rican Independence Movement and has been a particular target of the U.S. government. The BOP refuses to recognize collective grievances and collective resistance, we refuse to be individualized and separated. An example is the original anti-unicor work stoppage. Our goal has been solidarity amongst us even when political differences have arisen.

Building bonds with the movement outside

We have suffered from the isolation imposed by the government intensely (this is a condition that all political prisoners and POW's face--Lexington is an acute example). Our only recourse has been to use our experience to advance the political goals of the anti-imperialist struggle and national liberation movements: Rather than opting for individual solutions, we have chosen a course of action that promotes and highlights the demand of Puerto Rican Independence and the overall struggle against counter-insurgency.

Internationalism

Reading about Nelson Mandela and Walter Sisulu being held in small group isolation at Pollsmoor prison, reading of the experiences of the five Puerto Rican Nationalist prisoners in U.S. prisons, reading Assata Shakur's autobiography, finding out about the experiences of the German and Italian political prisoners, and most important, the indomitable resistance of all of them, has given us solace and helped us to fight for our own dignity and to survive day by day. Our commitment to self-determination and the liberation of the oppressed nations has been deepened by this experience. Their advances have truly become our advances, and with that we know victories are certain. Any defeat of the U.S. government brings us joy and a smile.



"When you strike a woman you strike a rock"

The psychological program to create a forced dependency, and to submit to the intended criminalization of us is failing. We have acquired through the course of years of participation in our struggles strong identities as women. We spent years living a different reality. A reality defined by the human need for justice and social transformation, and for the liberation of women and gay people. Our womanness is central to our very beings, and in some ways it is this that is most feared, and therefore attacked. The premeditated and vicious sexual assault against Alejandrina Torres, and Susan Rosenberg at the Tucson prison is part of the special treatment against women political prisoners. Held by 5 female guards, supervised by Associate Warden Gibson, shackled and handcuffed, these sisters were forced to bend over while a male physician's assistant rammed his fist twice up their rectums. The women had demanded an x-ray examination and Gibson's response was "we can't get what we want from an x-ray." A precedent has been set that can be repeated at any time. Every time we are strip searched, or pat down, we live with the reality that they could do it again. This attack carries the same goal as when the military rampages through the Ilopango women's prison raping women and children. Only our strength as women has helped us come back fighting. We carry within us decades of collective militant struggle for the liberation of women--it is our rock, they will never destroy it.

On the occasion of IWD we urge the northamerican anti-imperialist movement to examine its practice towards the political prisoners. Without a unitary non-sectarian position in support of our recognition as political prisoners, we are locked into a cycle of isolated defense committees and isolated struggles over conditions. The lack of an overall political framework makes every prisoner more vulnerable to attack and reduces the resistance to a moral position instead of a political strategy. Being behind bars should not end our contribution to the growth of the movement. The isolation of Lexington has made us feel this acutely. Ultimately, it is our identity and unity as political prisoners that will allow us to overcome.

"Only justice can stop a curse"*

Long Live International Women's Day

Venceremos

Susan Rosenberg - northamerican anti-imperialist
political prisoner

Silvia Baraldini - Italian national political
prisoner

HSU-FCI Lexington

* quote from Alice Walker,
In Search of my Mothers Garden

Nora Astorga 1948-1988



Nora Astorga, Nicaragua's UN Ambassador, died in Managua, on February 14 of cancer. She was only 39 years old. One of the heroic daughters of the Sandanista revolution, Nora Astorga matured along with her nation's struggle into a revolutionary of international stature. It was a decade ago on International Women's Day that Nora Astorga set up one of Somoza's henchmen, Pérez Vega, as a hostage for a prisoner exchange -- an action in which Vega was executed. On this IWD, we join the millions who are remembering Nora Astorga, hearing and telling the stories of her life which become a legacy for us all.

Lexington Control Unit Update

The National Campaign to Abolish the Lexington Womens Control Unit has learned that construction for the new larger version of "the living tomb" for women political prisoners is well under way in Marianna, Florida. Since last reported in *Insurgent*, the situation in the Lexington control unit has deteriorated for the women inside. At the same time, Michael J. Quinlan, Bureau of Prisons director, has displayed complete intransigence to the chorus of protests from churches, human rights organizations, the progressive legal community, women's groups, concerned Congressional members, representatives from national media, and community activists from around the country. Since November, Quinlan has asserted that the unit at Lexington will be "phased out" of existence as soon as the new maximum security prison for women is completed in Marianna. Located in a desolate part of Florida's panhandle, just below the swamps of Georgia, the Marianna unit, which will be placed within a larger federal complex for men (also under construction), is due to open sometime in late Spring.

For the last month, within the Lexington unit, a struggle has ensued between the 3 political prisoners, Susan Rosenberg, Alejandrina Torres, and Silvia Baraldini, and the prison authorities over the continually abusive treatment of Alejandrina, who suffers from several heart ailments. She has refused to work, cleaning and scrubbing the unit, and has demanded a medical idle. The authorities, to this point, have not granted Alejandrina this. In solidarity with Alejandrina, Susan and Silvia have also refused to work. All three were placed in the hole, which under the already stark circumstances, means complete lock-down, no cigarettes, no personal papers, no TV, no contact with even each other, fewer phone calls. In other words, even more heightened isolation. While some resolution of the situation is pending, and further medical evaluation of Alejandrina ensues, Susan and Silvia are convicted of refusing "the order to work" by the prison, a serious charge.

Meanwhile, demonstrations on International Womens Day, focusing on the demand to shut down the Lexington control unit, are planned for Chicago, New York City, and in San Francisco. The San Francisco demonstration will take place outside the gates of the FCI Pleasanton, where currently 4 Puerto Rican women POW's (Carmen Valentin, Haydee Torres, Dylcia Pagan, and Lucy Rodriguez) and two women northamerican anti-imperialist political prisoners (Laura Whitehorn and Linda Evans) are imprisoned.

As *Insurgent* goes to press, a federal lawsuit is about to be filed in Washington, D.C. federal court against the Bureau of Prisons and the U.S. Justice Department by the women at Lexington for cruel and unusual punishment. (Alejandrina Torres, because of her position

as a Prisoner-of-War does not recognize the rights of the U.S. courts to determine her situation, and so is not an actual plaintiff in the lawsuit.) The landmark lawsuit is being prepared by the American Civil Liberties National Prison Project, the Center for Constitutional Rights, and the women's individual attorneys. The lawsuit asserts that the BOP has violated the women's human and constitutional rights through incarceration in the "living tomb" and the use of psychological torture, because of their political views and activities. The lawsuit will be effective in raising media attention to the situation, in targeting the federal Bureau of Prisons, based in Washington, D.C., and in exposing the BOP's new plans for women political prisoners in Marianna, Florida.

At the same time, interest continues to grow among concerned members of Congress, as family members, churches and others press Rep. Robert Kastenmeier (Chair of the House Judiciary subcommittee that deals with prisons and human rights abuses) for a Congressional hearing on Lexington and the soon-to-be-opened Marianna unit. A "20/20" (ABC news) team went to Lexington on Jan. 21 to interview the women prisoners and prison officials, in preparation for a planned segment on the show.

For more information on the ongoing activities of the National Campaign, contact the NCTATLWCU, 294 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11201.

INTERNATIONAL WOMENS DAY MARCHES & DEMOS

CHICAGO

Tuesday, March 8

Starting at 12 Noon

Gather at the Federal Building (Dearborn & Jackson).

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA

Saturday, March 5

Demonstrate at Pleasanton Federal Correctional Institute (30 miles west of the Bay Area), at 2 p.m.

For more info on carpools and directions, call: (415) 420-7939.

SF Bay Area demo sponsored by Women Against Imperialism and IWD Coalition.

NEW YORK CITY

Saturday, March 5

Starting at 1 p.m.

Gather at Washington Sq. Park (4th Street and University Pl.). Women march to Metropolitan Correctional Center at 150 Park Row. Rally for women and men in front of the MCC at 3:30 p.m.

An Essay on Moral Courage

By Alberto Rodriguez
Puerto Rican Prisoner of War.
FCI Lewisburg

With the phrase "La Patria Es Valor Y Sacrificio" (The fatherland is courage and sacrifice), Don Pedro Albizu Campos revealed the fundamental characteristic of the Puerto Rican revolutionary. Unfortunately the understanding of this character has been simplified and distorted. Courage is construed to emphasize its physical aspect ignoring the more important moral element, while sacrifice is given a quasi-mystical attribute. I have always felt uncomfortable with this interpretation. It took my experience of being imprisoned with the patriot, Alejandrina Torres, in the Chicago M.C.C. to witness vividly the true meaning of the Albizuista dictum.

One's first experience with imprisonment floods the mind and senses with distressing and perplexing impressions. This was aggravated by our isolation, being secluded in sensory deprivation cells. It was agonizing knowing that Comrade "Alex" was confined in an all men section and to compound this outrage in the infamous "box cars".

Over a month passed when a guard escorting me to the showers took me into the section that Alex was in. As I walked down the tier I peeked through the cell's porthole. Finally I saw this slight figure sitting on the bed, nose buried in a book. I tapped on the door and when Alex saw it was me she jumped up off the cot and ran to the door. We laughed, joked, conversed seriously and in less than five minutes shared a lifetime of love, hope and faith in the righteousness of our struggle. At that moment her youthful smile, optimism and high spirits lifted me up and gave me the valor to continue. Now with hindsight I recognize that much of my special concern over Alex in those first few months in the "hole" was rooted in my own sexist perception of women.

Through the next two years we shared many experiences. I saw her physically deteriorate due to the horrible conditions of her confinement along with the petty harassments she endured daily. I saw her after two brutal and vicious attacks by prison guards, inflicting to her mind and body what the yankis have perfected in Chile and Argentina. We also shared intense and emotional political struggles which brought anger, passion and tears to us. But for Alex this was not a weakness but a strength, a reaffirmation of our humanity and courage.

Alex's sacrifice of her personal liberty, a life which encompassed an illustrious family and a rich participation in people's struggle, was never seen by her as a privation. She viewed sacrifice for freedom as no sacrifice at all for a worse sacrifice is to live deprived of freedom. Alex taught and continues to teach through example that courage and sacrifice is not something one does at special occasions but something done every day. It is an attribute which guides the revolutionary's life in all aspects. Her commitment to the strategy of people's war which she manifests in the finest manner through the position of prisoner of war, is an example of moral courage greater than any instance of physical courage.

Alejandrina Torres - woman, mother, wife, soldier, patriot and prisoner of war - is our generation's contemporary demonstration of the Albizuista conception that the supreme quality of humanity is courage.



Drawing by Mary Patten

Poems

By Marilyn Buck

Northamerican Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoner

MCC/NY

TO WOMEN WHO WORK

In the winds of whirling dust
whipping New Yorker streets
Myriad women
tossed by the tangible
which determines our lives
Young old

Old
women sitting on stoops
stooped by lives of labor
bearing children in tenuous tenements
bent over assembly lines
cleaning washing cooking
for old women
who whirl through Bloomingdales
spending shopping searching for
chalices of youth and beauty
obsessive desperation over depreciation
and obsolescence
oblivious to value

Old young
women sitting on stoops
too young babies in arms
singing strident sonatas of dreams
dreams burdened by blues burning blues
in eyes mirroring expectations
lived by young women
dancing dreams of vogue
miss amerika
too much for too few
while old women
and young women sit on stoops
needing
slaving in sweatshops in Savannah
San Juan Seoul
spinning out the desires of
old women young women of class
who need nothing
and want everything.

"UNTITLED"

Tawanna, young Black woman
your people kidnapped raped enslaved
by men who proclaim manifest destiny
to rape the world to reap millions
from you children of Africa
whose nightmares built this empire
your dreams swallowed by ocean depths
you who arose from death beds of slave ships
to cold chained captivity
claimed by cotton kings and klansmen.

Tawanna, young Black woman
born in Amerika
still you must flee
klansmen carrying badges hiding
in back rooms of police stations
they rape they torture
recalling deadly nightmares of centuries
to shatter dreams of justice

Yanira, young Salvadoran woman
your nation, raped tortured ransomed
by men who proclaim they are saving you
from you

workers campesinos
you who bear the scars of too much and
too little
crushed in riverbeds of bodies young and old
Some who breathed scarcely a moment
some whose breath was tortured
by a lifetime of Death Squads and duenos.

Yanira, young Salvadoran woman
fleeing nightmares of death
to fight the deathly silence
your footsteps followed by Death Squads
cloaked in CIA silence
to rape to torture
to shatter dreams of justice.

Rape torture
can not kill
the seeds of justice nurtured,
by our tears rage resistance.

Letter to Judy Clark

By Sara Kaplan

The Insurgent invited me to write about my experience visiting a political prisoner, i.e. you. In 500 words or less. How can I describe what it is like? Being asked by the armed guard to show my I.D., "state my business," leave my purse and newspaper in the locker, wait for him to call someone else before they open the gate. Do not pass go, do not collect \$200, show my I.D., give your name, empty my pockets, walk through the metal detector, and go into the jail. More guards, more guns, more waiting. I hear your laugh before you come through the door. And then, you're here! Now that you're not in segregation we don't have to sit right in front of the guard station. You tell me they've doubled the population of Bedford in the last 2 years but haven't expanded the visiting room or visiting hours. I study your face, getting used to seeing you again, and listen to your wonderful Brooklyn accent.

So nu? How to share a year's worth of living in a few hours. Tears and laughter. We get snacks from the vending machines and joke because last year I called you a cheap date and burned the popcorn in the microwave. Sometimes, deep in conversation, I forget that I am sitting inside a prison. A guard passes by. He makes a joke, and you laugh. Then you ask when you are going to the dentist. You've been asking for 2 months. It's a good thing it's not too serious, you say, your voice rising. Another woman died yesterday, due to lack of medical care. The guard shrugs and walks away.

Many of the women say hi to you as they walk to meet their visitors. One is getting out next week. You congratulate her and smile at her daughter. So your mommy's coming home soon! Amazing, you say, smiling at the woman. I look away, thinking about you and Harriet.

"Visiting hours are over in 5 minutes." You talk faster. We don't get up until the last minute. Hug goodbye again, trying to stop time. You walk away from me, stop and turn and wave and smile. I wave back. I try to keep from crying until I get out of the building. I tell my lungs to breathe and my feet to walk. Look back at the rows of chain link fence topped with razor sharp barbed wire. It's a beautiful day: blue sky, yellow and red leaves, green grass. Even the razor wire glitters in the sunshine. Right now I feel like it's wrapped around my heart.

Poems

by Judy Clark

Northamerican Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoner
 FCI Tucson

NOT YET A NEW YEAR POEM

No way to write a poem
 perched on a precipice,
 suspended in a vacuum
 sealed waystation on a
 journey charted by
 madmen and machines
 When I find my way
 to make it my own
 Then,
 it will be a new year
 and I will write my poem

1-2-88 Judith Clark

The Sgt. said
 "You're going on a trip."
 My knees threatened to buckle
 as they clamped the black-boxed
 shackles round my waist and wrists.

No time to pack
 I travelled light.
 Yet heavy laden
 with home
 - and the Box -
 safely secured
 where I can't be
 pillaged.

1-22-88 Judith Clark

Judith Clark is a Northamerican anti-imperialist political prisoner who is serving life in prison. She had been at the NY prison for women at Bedford Hills for 4 years, the last 2 in solitary confinement for "conspiracy to escape". Two months after her release from the hole, she was unexpectedly transferred to the federal prison at Tucson, Arizona.

Assata: An Autobiography

Excerpts

Assata, An Autobiography, opens with a vivid description of the events of May 2, 1973. On the New Jersey Turnpike state troopers pull over a car. Inside were three Black revolutionaries - Assata Shakur, Zayd Malik Shakur, and Sundiata Acoli. There was a shoot-out. Zayd was killed. Assata was wounded and captured. Sundiata escaped on foot.

"There were lights and sirens. Zayd was dead. My mind knew that Zayd was dead. The air was like cold glass. Huge bubbles rose and burst. Each one felt like an explosion in my chest. My mouth tasted like blood and dirt. The car spun around me and then something like sleep overtook me. In the background i could hear what sounded like gunfire. But i was fading and dreaming.

Suddenly, the door flew open and i felt myself being dragged out onto the pavement. Pushed and punched, a foot upside my head, a kick in the stomach. Police were everywhere. One had a gun to my head.....

I felt myself being dragged by the feet across the pavement. My chest was on fire. My blouse was purple with blood. I was convinced that my arm had been shot off and was hanging inside my shirt by a few strips of flesh. I could not feel it.

Finally the ambulance came and they moved me into it.....

The hospital is glaring white. Everybody i see is white...Two detectives come in. I know they're detectives because they look like detectives....

"I know you can hear me and I know you can talk, and if you don't hurry up and start talking, I'm gonna bash your face in for you."

My eyes fly open in spite of myself. Immediately they are all in my face, throwing question after question at me. I say nothing. After a while, i close my eyes again.

"Oh, she doesn't feel good," one of them says in a sweet, mocking voice. "Where does it hurt? Here? Here? **HERE?**"

With each **here** comes a crash. I look around wildly, but no one is there. More thumps and punches, but none of them hurts as bad as my chest is hurting. I try to scream but i know immediately that that's a mistake. My chest erupts and i think i am gonna die. They go on and on. Questions and bangs. I think they will never stop....

On the third or fourth day, most of my troubles came to an end. Well, not really, but the punch, bang, poke, and prod part of my troubles ended. A nurse with a German accent came to my aid....

"Anytime you need me or need anything from the nurses, just press this button," she said. "Don't be afraid to use it," she added, giving me a knowing look....

Two Black nurses were very kind to me. When they were on duty, they would go out of their way to make sure i was all right. They made frequent trips to my room, for which i was especially grateful during those first days.

"If you need anything, just ring," they said knowingly.

One night one of the nurses came in and gave me three books. I hadn't even thought about reading. The books were a godsend. They had been carefully selected. One was a book of Black poetry, one was a book called **Black Women in White Amerika**, and the third was a novel, **Siddhartha**, by Hermann Hesse. Whenever i tired of the verbal abuse of my captors, i would drown them out by reading the poetry out loud. "Invictus" and "If We Must Die" were the poems i usually read. I read



Watercolor by Tim Blunk
Northamerican Anti-imperialist
Political Prisoner
USP Marion

them over and over, until i was sure the guards had heard every word. The poems were my message to them.

When i read the book about Black women, i felt the spirits of those sisters feeding me, making me stronger. Black women have been struggling and helping each other to survive the blows of life since the beginning of time. And when i read *Siddhartha*, a peace came over me. I felt a unity with all things living. The world, in spite of oppression, is a beautiful place. I would say, "Om" softly to myself, letting my lips vibrate. I felt the birds, the sun, and the trees. I was in communion with all the forces on the earth that truly love people, in communion with all the revolutionary forces on the earth.

I was definitely getting better. They were even unchaining me so that i could hobble to the bathroom every now and then, with the help of the nurse. I was still weak and when i returned from the bathroom, i would flop on the bed as if i had just accomplished a great physical feat. But at least now i knew what was wrong with me. During those first days i could barely ask, and when i did, they acted as if my condition were some top secret

information i was not privy to. I had three bullet holes. There was a bullet in my chest (it's still there); an injured lung with fluid in it, a broken clavicle, and a paralyzed arm with undetermined damage to the nerves. I kept asking if i would be able to use my hand again. One or two doctors said, flatly, no. The others said, "Maybe yes, maybe no."

Anyway, i was gonna live.

STORY

You died.
I cried.
And kept on getting up.
A little slower.
And a lot more deadly.

Excerpted by permission of Lawrence Hill & Company: Westport, CT.

Sister Mona Africa

by Mumia Abu-Jamal
Black Political Prisoner
Huntington, Pennsylvania



Drawing by Mumia Abu-Jamal

Militant, fiery, foe of this system,
Advocate of resistance, dead set against them;
Sister Mona went to battle,
No slave, yet free -
Never chattel!

Fighting for freedom,
Hers and others,

She sought freedom of MOVE
Sisters/brothers;

For this they burned, framed,
Gave her time,

Proving that, in America, survival is
a crime.

January, 1988

From the Women of the Ohio 7

Poems of Patricia Gros-Levasseur
Northamerican Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoner
Hartford FDC

On Getting Organized in Cayahoga County Jail

Cleveland
April, 1985

I was looking at you
Sister Braiding
that ancient art
and all I could think of
was "Strange Fruit".

All that intelligence
those wise eyes
spent in card games
undeveloped.

You read about Jorge
killed in his cell
you know how it happens -
been happening
Far as you know -
400 years
Hey - "I'm serious"
you told me
your cousin was
Beaten and
Strangled and hung and
Buried
Quickly.

Ain't none of us suicidal -
you organized me.
Makes me think of
"Strange Fruit".

Been thinking of our last house
in clandestinity
in Freedom -
it had a big porch and in the summertime
We would stay up late on Friday night.
Mama would have some wine and sing
Rocking with her girls.
Traffic would race by
That dark highway -
We were so anonymous.
The Fireflies and the stars.
Now to capture the warm sweet caresses
Without the pain.

July 11, 1986

Ed Note: Pat and Ray Levasseur, both
Northamerican anti-imperialist political
prisoners, and part of the Ohio 7, have
three daughters.

International Women's Day 1988

By Patricia Gros, Barbara Curzi-Laaman and Carol Manning

We send our love and solidarity to all of you
here today on this International Women's Day.
We wish to take this opportunity today to sa-
lute our beloved sisters and fellow politi-
cal prisoners who are locked down behind the
walls of america's prisons. We extend our
hands to you all - for you are us and we are
you.

Of the three of us women from the Ohio 7,
Carol Saucier Manning is already designated
to the Lexington Control Unit for political
prisoners. As political prisoners we all re-
cognize that at any time any one of us can
and will be re-designated to the control
units of this country.

We continue to resist the insidious program
of the BOP that has as its "mission" the
isolation and destruction of our spirit, our
unity and our commitment to Women's Libera-
tion and Socialism. Resistance for us has
meant REFUSING TO RELINQUISH:

OUR WILL TO FIGHT CRIMINALIZATION,
OUR DIGNITY, OUR HEALTH, OUR SISTERHOOD
OUR SENSE OF HUMOR AND
OUR HUMANITY.

Through our experiences as mothers and con-
scious revolutionaries in our time, we have
a great love and respect for the people of
the world. We have hope that we can contin-
ue to contribute to the struggle towards a
world of justice, where all people can devel-
op to their full human potential.

We want real change in our country, for all
oppressed peoples. We feel a responsibility
to work for that change. Responsibility-to
effect the world our children must inherit...

Now as we begin our trial in Springfield,
Mass., charged with Seditious Conspiracy,
RICO Conspiracy and substantive RICO, our
dignity and strength remain intact. We know
we are not criminals but political prisoners
who have always stood for life affirming
principles. Our spirits are stronger be-
cause we also know that you are all here with
us. (excerpted by permission)

On March 7, the Seditious Conspiracy trial
of the Ohio 7 will begin in Springfield, MA.

Mamère (Grandmother)

By Raymond Luc Levasseur
 Northamerican Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoner
 Hartford FDC

the blues say if you born under a bad sign
 you got trouble
 you born in the shadow of the mills
 you born near a river
 and you got more trouble still

memère walked thru that shadow
 to work at 13
 to work you understand
 as a child
 to breath that dust
 work that machine &
 find her husband
 who'd been there since 13

an unlucky # you say? no
 french-canadian french-speaking catholic
 proud sensitive loving hardworking &
 exploited

1 of 11 children
 who had children
 who took in other children &
 bro & i
 when the next generation of women
 went into the mills and shoe factories

that alone should tell you something bout
 strength

she read the cards &
 told the fortunes
 for those with broken hearts
 dismal jobs & uncertain futures

when urban renewal flattened their apt
 they built a small house in the country
 that was pleasant for a spell till
 the mill caught up with pepere &
 he'd breath hard & shake & sometimes fall
 in the chicken coop
 then i'd come to lift him in my arms &
 put him in the kitchen
 where memère cleaned him up &
 rolled a bull durham
 which she had to hold
 cause his hands shoök so much

she took him to the v.a.
 but neither could stand the shock
 of neglect
 so he came home to die

the govt gave her the coffin flag &
 \$22 a month pension
 not enuff for eye drops she'd say
 then the little house was gone &
 to avoid the poor house on the hill
 she moved in with her daughter, my ma
 who worked 2 jobs to keep the wolf
 from the door

memère burned the holy candle
 when i was in 'nam &
 put it out with relief
 when i returned only
 to light it again
 the day i got out of prison



she loved all her children
holding each of us
to her bosom
over decades of time
thru each sickness
celebration &
bout with the blues

her dream was that
we'd finish school
("no quittin" she'd say)
& make the great escape
from the mills
which some did & some didn't
back home where women still
hold up half the sky
but without unions
on assembly lines
that boss says is for
"soft brains and nimble fingers"
makin circuit boards 'stead a shoes
with husbands more quick to split &
where stamps help feed the kids

she died while i was underground.
the fbi hangin from trees
at catholic cemetery
cause they knew i was close
to her
but i wasn't there
didn't even know she'd died
till some pig laid it on me
trying to pry out information

before death she'd been sick
with the feds at the docs
probing how much could she take
how many questions to ask
an old mill woman
of the doc
who'd received their flyer
with our kids on it
saying snitch if these kids
come to you sick

but all she said was
"I hope I see him before I die"
see - with her eyes filled with
glaucoma & cataracts & cornea trouble
damn near blind
pigs gone she'd retrieve
her magnifying glass &
look at the pictures
of underground children
i'd sent her
incl her namesake
simone eva
that she'd never met
but loved
cause we felt it
cross the shadows &
troubles
memêres love
helped hold us strong.

For more info on the Ohio 7, contact the
Sedition Committee, P.O. Box 1418, Cathedral
Station, New York, NY 10025

Liberation

By Dylcia Pagan
Puerto Rican Prisoner of War
FCI Pleasanton

I send a revolutionary embrace to all of you
celebrating today, International Womens Day.
My spirits are high knowing all of you out-
side continue to struggle against U.S.
Imperialism. Conditions here change daily,
consistent with the inconsistency of prison
life. Sometime in the not too distant
future, we will be moved to our new locale,
Marianna, Florida. Usually after years of
imprisonment, eight for us,* conditions
improve, but not within the federal system.
What awaits us is a new model "contol self-
contained unit." Nevertheless, we remain
strong and extend a special salute to our
dear comrades confined in the Lexington
control unit. I would like to share this
poem I wrote with you.

Liberation

Liberation comes from within
One must first realize oppression,
close differences
the conditioning of both men and women.

I am because I feel
I feel because I am aware of the differences
Yes we are equal, different but can grow
to express
the same emotions and commitment.

All genders feel
Men and Women cry
Men and Women can struggle together
Men and Women can fight together and
create a new way of seeing.

Years of oppression have created a
separateness
that solely benefits the elite (those with
economic power)
Liberation is about both of us together
being able to envision a new society
and taking the responsibility to promote
change.

Come comrades, stand by each other
side by side, growing, sharing together
Creating a human wall of Resistance
relentless, prepared to fight, that leads
to the beauty of Liberation.

Long Live International Womens Day
Palestine Lives
Viva Puerto Rico Libre y Socialista!

*Ed. note: Dylcia Pagan, is a Puerto Rican
Prisoner of War, who along with 9 comrades,
was arrested in April 1980, in Evanston, IL
and convicted of Seditious Conspiracy. She
is currently at Pleasanton FCI in California.

About my Sister Linda Evans

By Susan Putter

Before I began visiting Linda at Pleasanton in California in the fall of 1987, I perhaps would have been able to write my "reflections on women political prisoners" as you suggested. But now ... well, now that seems too abstract and I can only write about this woman political prisoner: my friend, my compañera, my sister Linda.

Our comradeship has become so un-abstract! We talktalktalk for hours on end about our lives. And our lives are our work, our friends and lovers, the struggle of the Palestinians, Brian Wilson and the struggle in Central America, my clients, her quilting and writing, our thoughts about everything big and little in our lives. We talk about my new life about to begin in Texas with my boyfriend and of how he and I will visit her in Pleasanton, in Florida, wherever we will be able to see, and talk, and touch, and hug and kiss each other. Wherever we will be able to share ourselves with each other.

That is what is different now than before I began visiting Linda every week: now it is all about our lives with no pretense that we can separate our loves and losses personally from our loves and losses politically. We think together as equals, argue as equals, cry together as equals, and comfort each other as equal friends and comrades. I am blessed over and over with her involvement in my life and like to think that she feels the same about me. Equals.

Knowing this woman, my friend and sister Linda, inside Pleasanton has helped me to become increasingly less disinterested in the passage of time and the need to take full advantage of the gift of our friendship. She has had to shelve alot of control over her life; I am even less patient with this aspect of prison than she appears to be...perhaps because I have the luxury of walking away from it all at the end of our visit. And yet a piece of me remains there as I cook dinner and wish that she was sitting at the table, fork in hand...or take a bath and think of her with so little privacy...or walk the beach and see the sunset and long to have her at my side sharing the moment. I am not a patient person and continually wonder at her ability to live a life with so many restrictions. And to have to struggle so hard for news and conversation with those of us outside who can share with her in such a way as to be a part of her continuing life as a deeply political person.

Again to you, my friend, my compañera, my sister: my commitment is lifelong. I am smiling up at you from your morning tea and in some way always with you...as you are always with me.



Linda Evans

STATEMENT FROM LINDA EVANS

Women political prisoners and POW's are very much a part of this struggle, part of developing a revolutionary resistance. We all have a strong commitment to women's liberation. We have come from the same movements that you, our sisters, are part of. The decisions we made to dedicate our lives to the struggle for liberation is being made by thousands of women around the world. Every time one of us makes this decision--to fight for freedom with her whole life--we all get stronger, and victory comes closer. Women political prisoners are in prison in every country where revolutionary struggle is occurring, yet prison has not stopped any of us from fighting. Instead, our resistance is renewed daily, and our commitment grows stronger--and hopefully will also strengthen you.

(excerpted by permission)

By Marilyn Kalman

I first went to see Linda Evans because a mutual friend kept bugging me to do it. I contacted her, (I must admit reluctantly) offering my services as a local counsel. We met for the first time shortly thereafter, (early Nov. '87) and have seen each other almost on a weekly basis since. The new connection continues to have its profound effects.

Before going to see Linda, I had never been to a Federal Prison and never personally knew anyone who was a political prisoner. The experience has opened my eyes and my heart.

I found that the severe repression creates a sense of urgency that allows you to cut through all the bullshit and be openly compassionate. I'm acutely aware that she could be moved in the middle of the night without advance notice, or denied access to visitors arbitrarily at any given time. So much effort the cops expend in scheming on how to fuck with your head. We haven't had one

visit that's been incident free. Even though our visits are classified "attorney/client," they have cut them short, prevented me from giving her legal materials, admonished her for greeting other visitors, hassled her for picking up my pens, and on one occasion hassled her for not wearing a bra. The prison officials have developed such expertise in robbing power and dignity. Through it, Linda maintains the spirit of a revolutionary woman; it's very inspiring.

Although I've been a political activist for many years, I feel like I've been "reorganized." My consciousness has been sharpened so that in struggling against any form of oppression I understand the need to support political prisoners. What the cops do to political prisoners and prisoners-of-war is merely reflective of the general political climate. We must stop them dead in their tracks... Linda Evans obviously continues to be an organizer.

Sister

By Larry Giddings
Northamerican Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoner
USP Leavenworth

January 24, 1988

Hello y'all!

Hope this finds you well. I'm enclosing a poem for the Women's issue. I've been very close to women that have been in prisons, jails and detention centers since I was a teen. There is no doubt that our mutual experience has helped to fuel our desire for a more sane and healthful world.

The struggles of Palestinian women, Salvadoran, Philippine, Native American, South Afrikan; the struggles of all women, are known to me by way of those that are close to my life. My love and regards to all those that teach me.

Siempre,
Larry

Sister

Your voice
A heart beating
Your eyes
Reflecting on a future
Movies on a wall
A cell
in New York
in Kentucky
in California
in Arizona
in Virginia
in ...

Your love singing
through the cracks
in cement blocks

I know you
and in this
I find hope

Your song
reaches my ears
and I know
that we share
the endless thought
the hours of vision

Emotion and idea
Alive
you struggle
to survive

I am filled
with your
wonder

I am startled
by
your joy

Together
we are the wings
of love
soaring

Puerto Rican Woman of Struggle

By Carmen Valentin
Puerto Rican Prisoner of War
FCI Pleasanton

"A rosy-cheeked woman, here I am fighting side
by side with you men,
On my shoulders weighs the hatred that is
common to us.
The prison is my school, its mates my friends,
The sword is my child, the gun my husband."

-- Minh Kai, executed by the
French, Vietnam, 1941

My dear friends, comrades,

The best-kept secret in the Bay Area is being exposed today by your presence here. Yes, there are two anti-imperialist political prisoners and four Puerto Rican Prisoners of War being housed right here at FCI Pleasanton. It is by design that the enemy has attempted to keep our presence and our existence a secret. We are living proof of the conflicting situation of our country -- Puerto Rico. They consistently try to cover up the Puerto Rican reality, but the work of the revolutionary masses make this an impossibility. Their calculated plan is to put us away in their deepest tunnel, bury us alive. The most concrete example of the US government's plan of secrecy and destruction is Lexington High Security Unit. We know that presently three women, who are cornerstones of historical development -- Silvia Baraldini, Susan Rosenberg and Alejandrina Torres -- languish there. These women are the personification of people's liberation struggles. The government response to daring to struggle is destruction. Our own incarceration in this prison system is no more than a daily, clear threat of destruction. Lexington, however, is a promise of death fulfilled. Some very meaningful and creative actions must be taken to bring our clear message across -- Shut Down Lexington and Marianna Control Units! You must continue to work and reveal to the world all the imperialists' secrets of destruction.

The best way to salute women is by demonstrating concrete support today, right here, outside the very gates that keep our revolutionary spirits caged away from you.

We cannot express to you adequately the gratifying effect of these types of concrete actions. We are sure the enemy is well aware of its consequences and therefore will not allow you to come any closer to the institutions. They want to make sure that we don't get that direct charge of energy from you. Ironically, the same enemy allows a yearly sing-along of hundreds of religious fanatics to come within close proximity of us, right to the first fence, to sign religious songs to the inmate population. They will never



Carmen Valentin

miss an opportunity to feed opium to the masses. Most people here would gladly welcome your presence instead, because they know you have their interest -- freedom -- at heart.

Nevertheless, in spite of all the obstacles, raise all the freedom banners high, "Let the Puerto Rican Flag Stand Alone!" Let the revolutionary chants be heard, loud and clear. We will be with you no matter the physical distance. Presente!

Every year, March 8th is celebrated and women are paid special tribute for all the contributions in the struggle. In all corners of the world, countless heroic women are praised. I would like to mention some of the women that are the asource of my strength and inspiration: Nora Astorga from Nicaragua; Vilma Espin from Cuba; Comandante Nelida Anaya from El Salvador; Rigoberto Menchu from Guatemala; Winnie Mandela from South Africa; Assata Shakur from the Republic of New Afrika; and my own Lolita Lebron from Puerto Rico. I salute them today!

I, as a Puerto Rican woman of struggle, am proud of being a woman! I am proud of my endurance as a mother, as I am of my military participation in the struggle. My pride includes identifying with the victories of these women all over the world.

Most of these women, as most of us, joined in the revolutionary struggles of our respective countries because we saw that our own survival and liberation depended on reaching the two inter-related goals. We realized that in the grain of people's struggle everywhere is interwoven the demand for women's liberation.

We have also come to terms with the fact that when women are effectively working with those that are struggling to defeat imperialism, then and only then will our demands be successfully won.

I truly value the efforts of all women who are engaged in the women's liberation struggle: this is absolutely necessary. Yet I will reiterate that it must be interrelated to the struggle against imperialism; otherwise it is definitely counterproductive. Years of traditional oppression exerted by generations cannot be wiped out until the root of oppression is uprooted. In order to promote women's liberation, you need a real revolution that upsets the old social order founded on male hegemony and contempt for women.

To think that the problem of equality between the sexes is a simple one is definitely a mistake! Equality means a thoroughgoing revolution because contempt for women dates back thousands of years. It is deep-rooted in the thoughts and attitudes of everyone. It cannot be done away with by coercion. This must involve heart-searching by each one of us and must involve the whole.

That is why I take this opportunity to congratulate the Movimiento de Liberacion Nacional on their recently-adopted resolution on the question of women. It has resolved "to advance the joint struggle of women and men against submission and 'macho' tendencies." This is a very meaningful resolution and must now be put to work in the daily revolutionary practice. Another resolution "reaffirms that the struggle for liberation of women is not separate from the struggle for emancipation and humanization of all people. We recognize that the revolutionary process is the only vehicle to attain the emancipation of women." I wholeheartedly support this resolution! As our movement advances, the fight for change within it will take on a richer meaning!

For Laura Whitehorn

Writing about you is like writing about
my life.

The little things. Familiar.

Not all of us are poets

words into pictures

telling a story

I have lots of stories though.

When we met "on the land"--D.C., Mayday 1971

That first embrace "in public" on the

Cambridge footbridge...

Celebrating victory in Vietnam...

So many years, so many struggles, marches,

demos, leaflets, meetings, conferences.

Compañeras.

Our love. We thought like no other. We

thought to grow old together. We thought.

When we saw each other again

You were captured.

Visiting you behind plate glass, we shouted

to hear the little things.

Everything around us, unfamiliar.

Daily and all over the world we see the active participation of women increasing. Just a few weeks ago the Israeli authorities were forced not to make any arrests of women in the current rebellion, partly because they didn't have the facilities to detain them, but also because of the known sensitivity among Palestinians to such a tactic. Palestinian women held marches, sit-ins, they also protected the children with their bodies, held Palestinian flags during demonstrations, interfered with arrests and beatings, and suffered the most during the long curfews. Long Live the struggle of the Palestinian People!

Women are destroying the bourgeois myth that we are weak and passive. We are taking our destinies into our hands and helping to build nations. After eight years of captivity, I reaffirm my commitment to the liberation of my country and to the destruction of US imperialism. I grow daily and only regret not having had more time for military action in the name of my country's liberation and for our liberation as humans. Life is not long enough to ever accomplish all our important goals, but it is satisfying enough for me to have done my utmost.

Long live the armed clandestine struggle!

Long live the FALN!

Long live a free and socialist Puerto Rico!

Long live the many anonymous women combatants worldwide!

Shut down the Lexington and Marianna Control Units!

In Struggle Forever,

Carmen Valentin

I saw your hands, your eyes, your soul
Political Prisoner.

You cheered me up, telling jailhouse stories.

Our years of womanlove/comradeship floated us
through those first years. Rebonding.

You always gave all to the Struggle.

Now freedom.

And we never even thought we really had it.

Freedom...if I could give you some of mine.

A small sacrifice, worth giving.

But it doesn't work that way.

This is as real as staying up all those
nights. Boston. Black families' homes,

waiting for the racists to attack.

This is real.

Bringing us closer now, us and the other

comrades, to the rest of the peoples of

the world. Fighting. Sacrificing.

Losing freedom. Winning it.

We will grow old together. Stronger.

By Susie Waysdorf

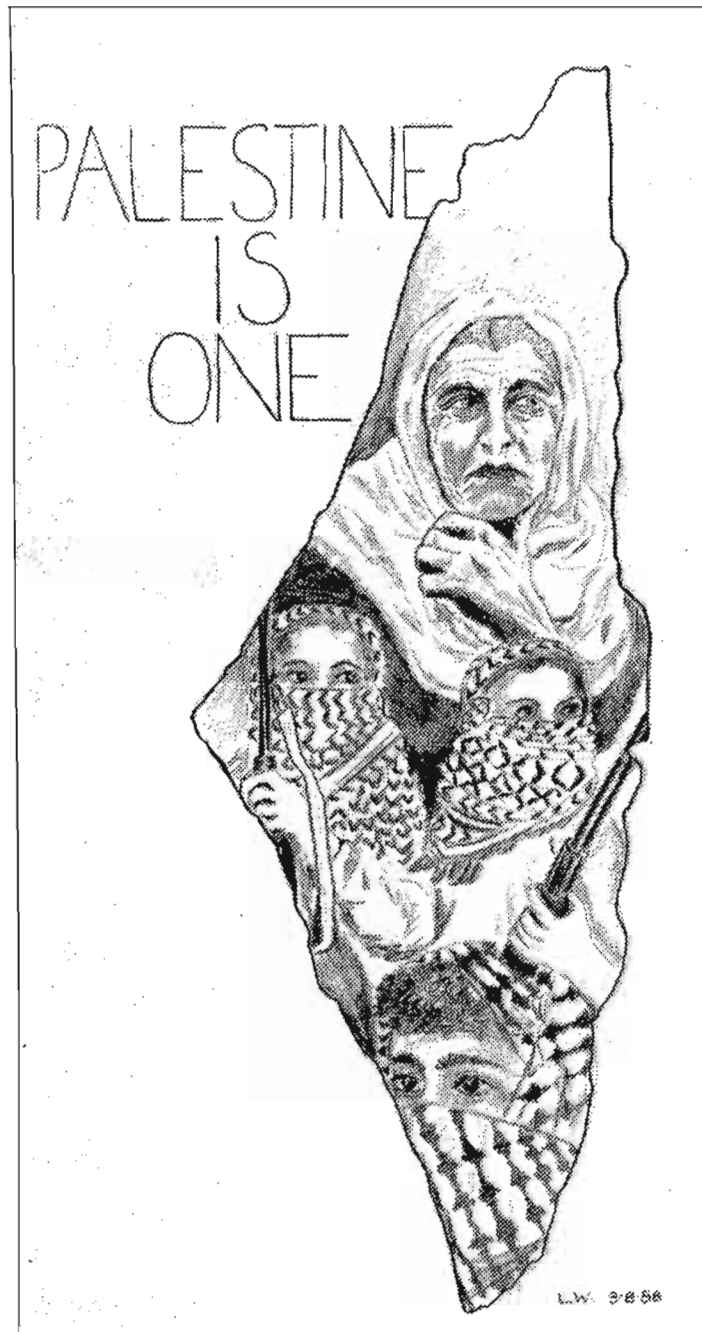
To Fight for the Future

By Laura Whitehorn
Northamerican Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoner
FCI Pleasanton

A year ago, as International Women's Day approached, I was at MCC-NY together with Marilyn Buck, Susan Rosenberg, Pat Gros, Barbara Curzi-Lamaan, and Carol Manning. Yvonne Melendez and Lucy Berrios had recently (finally!) been bailed out. This year, I am with Carmen Valentin, Lucy Rodriguez, Dylcia Pagan, Haydee Torres, and Linda Evans. The only good thing I can say about the BOP is that it has given me the opportunity to know all these amazing women. One thing that characterizes all the women political prisoners and POW's is that the fire that burns in their eyes--visible to all who meet them, whether friend or enemy--is a reflection of the future. The determination and vigor that makes women political prisoners and POW's seem "dangerous" to the BOP, FBI, judges, etc., stem from an unquenchable desire for liberation and justice, and from the demonstrated willingness not just to sacrifice for the struggle, but to fight for the future. When women exhibit that level of revolutionary ability, rejecting all the constraints we're expected to accept and obey, we become a big threat, both individually and collectively. Not only don't we abide by the 'rules,' but I think the rulers themselves know that, despite all the layers of sexist brain-washing and conditioning, and, for white women, despite the material force of racism and white supremacy, women, as the most oppressed sector within the oppressed nations and the working class of the oppressor nation, ultimately have more reason to look at revolutionary women as their allies and potential comrades for examples, than as the "terrorists" the government wants to make us into. And if other oppressed women become our comrades, it will be in the context of growing revolutionary anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist movements. Every day of experience I've had in jails and prisons for the past almost-three years has convinced me more that women of the u.s. and its colonies need revolution.

I want to send love and special solidarity to my sisters in the Lexington HSU, and to all the POW's and political prisoners. Since we're not permitted to correspond with one another, I can't send my greetings more directly. To the comrades in the HSU, I want to say that I think your resistance and strength inspire all of us to take on the renewed struggle, harder and longer, to shut down Lex and to fight the transplanting of the control unit to Marianna.

I want to send revolutionary greetings to sisters celebrating International Womens Day in clandestinity or in exile.



Drawing by Laura Whitehorn
(Done from memory)

IWD is a day to celebrate all women in struggle for human rights and liberation, and so it makes me think particularly about Black and New Afrikan women resisting the offensive of racism and white supremacy in New York and the Northeast--women under attack like Tawana Brawley, resisting racist depravity with courage and dignity. And of Palestinian women's resistance in the current uprising inside the occupied territories--like the women we saw on the TV news blocking the path of 'israeli' soldiers invading Palestinian homes.

Maybe this should be the place for some stirring slogans about the revolutionary struggle for women's liberation--and there are many, because women in national liberation struggles around the world have forged the path and made heroic strides in overturning centuries of oppression. But, instead of slogans, I'd like to say the women political prisoners and POW's have been trying, in the midst of very difficult conditions, to study and struggle over the question of revolutionary strategy and women's liberation. I think that's important because, speaking as a northamerican anti-imperialist, our movement has a lot of work to do to develop revolutionary strategy and put it into practice. Those of us inside are continuing to be a part of that development. Venceremos!



Laura Whitehorn, Pleasanton FCI

Sometimes it's the small things

By Kathy Boudin

Northamerican Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoner

She needs toilet paper
but
it's after 10:00 lock-in.
The guard won't answer her call.
She has to beg him ...
for a piece of toilet paper.

It's sunny outside
How nice to share some broccoli and cheese
with a friend in the yard
but it's not allowed.
The guard stands with her binocular eyes
peering at each piece of joy
in order to burn it.

Five to a table in the dining room--that's
the rule.
There's 6 left at the tail of the line
so she says, "I'll sit with her."
The guard says, "5 at a table!"
and number 6 eats alone
in the company of 5 empty chairs.

And then there's you, a guard with a son
the same age as mine, 6 springs.
And you take a photo of my son
and put it on the bottom of a brown
paper bag
and put it on the bottom of a brown
paper bag

and on top of his laughter and corduroy cap
you load tin cans, wet packages of cheese
and raw vegetables still
with earth crumbling off--
20 pounds of groceries on a child's face
by you, who say,
you're a mother, too.

Sometimes it's the small things
that get to us.

Surviving the big things takes all the inner strength that you can possibly find and develop. Outside support makes all the difference because it can change the conditions. The support that International Women's Day can express will help change these conditions--for these sisters and for others who have experienced in other prisons similar repression. But, needless to say, we have each learned through hard experiences that there is a relentlessness to the changing but continually appearing difficulties facing political prisoners. Specifically, while focusing on the present, the future, Marianna, has begun to come into focus. Support will make a difference.

International Women's Day Message by
Kathy Boudin, Bedford Hills Women's Prison

Conviction in Chicago "Conspiracy to Escape" Trial

On New Year's Eve, the jury in the Chicago "Conspiracy to Escape" trial returned guilty verdicts against Puerto Rican independence activists, Jaime Delgado, Dora Garcia, Puerto Rican Prisoner of War Oscar Lopez-Rivera and New Afrikan Political Prisoner Kojo Bomani-Sababu. Jaime Delgado, a leader of the Puerto Rican independence movement and the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War, and Dora Garcia, also an active independence activist, were convicted of three counts each of conspiracy and other charges related to an FBI-enhanced escape plot to liberate Lopez-Rivera and Bomani-Sababu from Leavenworth federal penitentiary. POW Oscar Lopez-Rivera was convicted on 5 counts of conspiracy and related charges, and Kojo Bomani-Sababu was found guilty of the general conspiracy charges. Delgado and Garcia face a maximum 15 year sentence, Lopez-Rivera, a 25-year sentence, and Bomani-Sababu a maximum 5 year sentence. Both Lopez-Rivera and Bomani-Sababu are already serving lengthy federal prison sentences for revolutionary activities in the U.S.

Dora Garcia was allowed to remain out on bond pending their sentencing on February 26, 1988. However, Jaime Delgado was imprisoned immediately after the New Year's Eve conviction. At a bond hearing held on Monday, January 4, Judge William T. Hart denied Delgado's request to remain out on bond pending the sentencing. As a result, Delgado continues to be held in segregation at the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Chicago.

Government and FBI misconduct (see last issue of Insurgent) which marked the entire trial

and "investigation" became even more blatant towards the end of the trial. During jury deliberations, a piece of evidence against Dora Garcia which had previously been ruled inadmissible by Judge Hart, was slipped into the jury room "mysteriously." When this came to light and the defense asked for a mistrial, the Judge refused. In another instance, the FBI case agent, Michael Heard was shown to have taken important defense notes, a blatant violation of the defendant's rights. Yet, when the FBI agent asserted that he only picked the notes out of a wastebasket, the Judge refused to question him further or to call a mistrial. Showing his collusion with the prosecution and the FBI's counterinsurgency program against the Independence Movement, Judge Hart denied a mistrial, saying that if notes were in the trash, they didn't belong to anybody!

Despite the hostile atmosphere of the court, the extreme security measures taken out against supporters who came to court, and the attempts at intimidation, the courtroom was full of spectators throughout the ten week trial. After the jury announced the verdict, and the judge immediately revoked Delgado's bond (he had been out on bond during the entire trial), the packed courtroom of supporters rose up in unison to sing "La Borinquena", the Puerto Rican national anthem. As Delgado, Bomani-Sababu and Lopez-Rivera were led away to detention by the federal marshalls, the throng of singing, protesting supporters were herded out of court by the guards.

Thanks to Libertad for the information contained in this article.

Puerto Rico: Actions from Clandestinity

On January 12, 1988, offices of Citibank and Mexican Airlines were firebombed in San Juan, Puerto Rico. These actions were claimed by the Pedro Albizu Campos Revolutionary Forces. A communique was received by television station WAPA. The communique, which was left in a public phone booth, took responsibility for this "military operation against the Mexican government and the Northamerican imperialist bank." The firebombings were to protest the decision of a Mexican judge who ruled that William "Guillermo" Morales could be extradited to the United States. Morales is a Puerto Rican POW from the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional (FALN), who escaped from a u.s. prison and was recaptured in Mexico.



Filiberto Ojeda Rios: "Immediate Trial or Immediate Release"

On Jan. 26, Filiberto Ojeda Rios stood before a Hartford courtroom overflowing with supporters and contended that the u.s. federal court has no jurisdiction over a Puerto Rican patriot and that his prolonged preventive detention was cruel and unusual punishment. He is one of the Puerto Rico Independence 16. Ojeda cited United Nations resolutions asserting the legitimacy of struggles against colonialist domination and racist regimes by all means necessary, the right of self-determination and the guaranteed release of all persons imprisoned as a result of these struggles. He quoted the U.N. definition of international terrorism and the U.S. genocide convention and asked, "Who is acting as true defenders of human rights, and who is destroying human rights and applies terrorism." He listed u.s. actions from Hiroshima to the aggression in Central America. He described the u.s. colonization of Puerto Rico and the repression on Puerto Rican resistance. As he compared this history to the actions taken in defense of human rights by liberation forces such as the Macheteros, the answer became clear. "The United States is the greatest terrorist on earth."

In his argument against preventive detention Ojeda noted that it will be at least five

years of imprisonment before the jury could render a verdict. Clearly this law is solely repressive. He pointed out the absurdity of the government's contention that he was "a danger to the community" and a "Cuban agent". He described his years living in Cuba where he was a teacher and said that the Cuban revolution is a symbol of hope, dignity and self-determination for other oppressed peoples. He explained how living in Cuba gave him pride in being a Puerto Rican because he saw a people learning the value of their own history and culture. As to being a danger to the community, he said, "I resisted arrest. There was a shoot-out. An FBI agent was wounded. This I will not deny. But am I a danger to **my** community? No. In the first place I have stated that when I assumed that militant stand, I was exercising a right. The home of a Puerto Rican family was attacked by alien forces. This is a collective right - the strength came from a people who have resisted for 89 years. I have no doubt **my** community is in no way condemning that. The only danger in my community are the maintainers of colonialism."

Filiberto Ojeda Rios demanded immediate release or immediate trial.

BOP Abruptly Transfers Political Prisoners

In the midst of the Chanukah and Christmas season, several northamerican anti-imperialist political prisoners were transferred without warning. Judith Clark was taken from New York State custody into federal custody and is being held in FCI Tucson. One cruel consequence of this unprecedented move is that Judy was abruptly separated from her 7-year-old daughter, Harriet, who has visited her mother weekly from the time she was 10 months old. The State claimed that the move was carried out to put Judy in higher security while the perimeter of Bedford Hills was under renovation. The feds said the once she was in their custody, they were in charge and hinted to an eventual designation to Marianna.

David Gilbert was moved from Auburn to Clinton on Dec. 22, in the middle of his son, Chesa's, holiday visit from Chicago. David had been actively participating in a prisoner's project at Auburn to fight the AIDS epidemic. (See p. 27)

Alan Berkman was transferred to Marion Federal Penitentiary from the prison hospital at Springfield, MO, on Dec. 23, the day his wife and daughter, Sarah, were scheduled to depart for a holiday visit. He was initially designated to Marion in October, directly

from sentencing, without a prior record of prison infractions (a BOP practice that, to our knowledge, has only been carried out with political prisoners). However, a legal and political campaign temporarily stopped the transfer. As we have reported in past issues, Alan Berkman, has Hodgkin's lymphoma, a cancer that is currently in remission. This disease requires regular, thorough and often high-tech medical exams. Marion can not provide this necessary care. The BOP doctors in Springfield rubber-stamped his transfer to the locked-down Marion. This benign neglect is a way to aid the possibility that Alan Berkman will not leave prison alive.

These transfers serve to remind us that the BOP/FBI strategists continue to implement a program for political prisoners at the highest levels. These transfers show some of the key aspects of isolation and denial:

- Isolate from the humanizing and strengthening relationships of families and others who love and visit prisoners.
- Isolate at times of heightened psychological impact and vulnerability, such as the holiday season when loss and separation are more acutely felt.
- Isolate and prevent political prisoners from being effective organizers inside, such as transferring David Gilbert in the midst of his work and concern about the AIDS danger.

Trial of Dr. Mutulu Shakur and Marilyn Buck Continues

The RICO conspiracy trial of Dr. Mutulu Shakur and Marilyn Buck continues before Judge Haight from Mon.-Thurs. from 9:30 to 4:30 in New York Federal Courthouse.

The prosecution opened with their star witness, traitor Tyrone Rison, who tried to construct the framework of the conspiracy. To date the government has been presenting evidence concerning several armed robberies/expropriations which they say were actions of a unit of the Black Liberation Army. They also presented evidence about the daring prison liberation of Assata Shakur, which was claimed by the BLA. The defense will probably not begin its case until late March.

Early in the trial, Dr. Shakur's attorneys gave oral arguments for a Prisoner of War motion. Dr. Shakur is claiming P.O.W. status. In a carefully documented motion, Dr. Shakur argued that Black/New Afrikan people in the u.s. constitute a nation. Furthermore, he presented evidence that the united states has continuously waged war with this nation and that people resisting this undeclared war are P.O.W.s.

Mutulu based his arguments on international statutes of law governing these issues. The Geneva Convention was signed in 1949 by the vast majority of nations, including the United States. The protocols concerning P.O.W. status and treatment dealt with conventional warfare with regular, uniformed armies. In the ensuing era of unconventional, anti-colonial guerrilla warfare, liberation movements and emerging Third World nations recognized the necessity to revise these conventions. Algeria spearheaded this process and in 1977 additional protocols were proposed for the Geneva Convention. These additional protocols addressed new standards that would recognize status for guerrilla and irregular armies. For example, a liberation/resistance movement does not have to be formally recognized by the power that they are at war against in order to apply the Geneva Convention.

The u.s. initially signed these additional protocols in 1977; this this had to be ratified by Congress in order to be a formal treaty. The Congress dragged its feet for a decade. Finally, in 1986 Reagan argued that this treaty would pose enormous difficulties to the imperialists, if signed. For instance, international bodies could recognize movements, such as the Puerto Rican Independence Movement or Black liberation movement, who were fighting against u.s. colonialism within its own territory. The Congress voted it down in 1986.

Mutulu argued that these 1977 protocols are applicable regardless of the united states' self-serving refusal to ratify the treaty because they are part of a recognized international body of law.

The government refused to answer the motion in written or oral form, saying that the defense motion was frivolous, considering the stand of the u.s. congress. In response to Mutulu's motion, Judge Haight issued a decision ordering the government to respond to whether the additional protocols of 1977 are applicable. This response is still pending.

Dr. Shakur made an additional argument to advance the recognition of political prisoner status. He analogized from the "political offense exception", which is well-recognized in extradition law by the u.s. and other countries, to this case. According to this certain offenses are purely political and not criminal. Dr. Shakur argued that the liberation of Assata Shakur clearly fit all the criterion in the "political offense exception" and should be recognized as a political act.

Update: Geronimo Pratt

A new effort on behalf of Black POW Geronimo Pratt requesting the U.S. Congress to hold Congressional hearings on Geronimo's case has been initiated. Congress has the power to subpoena FBI witnesses and the voluminous records which would expose the COINTELPRO conspiracy against Geronimo which put him behind bars. As Insurgent reported in our last issue, Geronimo's case is going before, the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in the very near future, but because of the past history of the courts in his case, and their refusal to deal with the FBI attacks and targeting of Geronimo, efforts have now been turned towards Congress.

Express support for Cong. Hearings by writing Congressman Ronald Dellums from Oakland, CA and Congressman Don Edwards of California.

The Honorable Don Edwards
2307 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Ronald Dellums
2136 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
Attn: Charles Stevenson

Please send copies of your letters to Geronimo's lawyer, Stuart Hanlon, 241 Duboce Ave., San Francisco, CA 94103.

Plowshares Activist Goes Underground

Gregory Boertje, who was convicted last September for his role in a 1986 Plowshares disarmament demonstration at the Willowgrove Air Base in Pennsylvania, failed to appear at his sentencing November 17, 1987. Boertje has announced that he has gone underground. Boertje was found guilty of conspiracy to damage government property, willful damage to government property and entry into a naval military installation to damage property. Boertje, along with three others, Thomas McGann, Lin Romano, and Dexter Lanctot-- the Epiphany Plowshares--went through four trials before getting convicted. The first two ended with hung juries, and the third was declared a mistrial after numerous courtroom disruptions by the defendants' supporters. Lin Romano was sentenced to two years plus 100 days, and she began serving time at the federal prison (not the control unit) in Lexington, Kentucky on November 27. The Revs. McGann and Lanctot both pled guilty to trespass after the second trial, had their felony charges dismissed and served 100 days.

Statement by Greg Boertje

It is written, in the book of Deuteronomy, "When you have plenty to eat, and live in fine houses of your own building, when your herds and flocks increase, and your silver and gold and all your possessions increase too, do not become proud and forget the Lord your God who brought you out of Epypt, out of the land of slavery. You must not say to yourselves, 'My own strength and energy have gained me this wealth.'

"If you forget the Lord your God and adhere to other gods, worshipping them and bowing

down to them, I give you a solemn warning this day, that you will certainly be destroyed."

Our country is destroying itself. We worship the bloody god of military might. We are drunk on the blood that flows from Third World intervention and nuclear war preparation.

In the Persian Gulf, our warmaking diverts accountability for the Iran-Contra scandal. War criminals reign in Washington and in the military. They have plans to escalate Gulf war actions to a nuclear flashpoint.

In Central America, we are responsible for the continued regional flow of innocent blood.

In Europe, the treaty on intermediate range missiles does nothing to alter the danger of plans for a 1st-strike attack. The intermediate range land idols are being replaced by nuclear cruise idols deployed at sea. Also, Star Wars research expands the current crisis by preparing for a 1st-strike from the heavens.

Although resistance can continue in prison, going underground is a direct way to say no to the criminal courts which safeguard the bloody crimes of our government. In a short while, I hope to witness by nonviolent direct action and will wait to be arrested. I believe that this course of action will fulfill the responsibility to resist death and to choose life.

For more information, contact, Epiphany Plowshares Support; MCCPSJ; P.O. Box 246, Ambler, PA 19002.

New Indictment of Sanctuary Movement

On December 27, 1987 the federal government renewed its assault against the sanctuary movement, by handing down indictments against a New Mexico minister, a freelance writer and journalist, and a Salvadoran lawyer, allegedly for their role in helping two pregnant Salvadoran women enter the U.S. These new indictments are the government's first major legal action against the sanctuary movement since May 1986, when eight sanctuary workers were convicted in Tucson federal court. The indictment is also the first to be handed down in a "sanctuary state". The entire state of New Mexico was declared a sanctuary for Central American refugees by its governor in 1986.

Glen Remer-Thamert, a Lutheran minister and well-known Central American solidarity activist was indicted along with a lawyer from San Salvador, Luis Ventura-Rivas. Ventura-Rivas had helped Remer-Thamert and his wife adopt a Salvadoran child last summer. At the time, two Salvadoran women had entered the U.S. to arrange adoptions for their unborn children. The reporter, Demetria Martinez, also indicted, became involved in the case while researching the sanctuary movement for the Albuquerque Journal and the National Catholic Reporter. She is the first journalist to be indicted in a Sanctuary case.

A Tale of Two Policies

By Prisoner Education Project on AIDS
Auburn Correctional Facility, New York

TO: News Media
FROM: Prisoner Education Project on AIDS
RE: Press Release (PEPA)
DATE: January 17, 1988

A TALE OF TWO POLICIES

What kind of mentality would remain indifferent to the mounting casualties in prisons due to AIDS because those dying and at risk are basically poor, underprivileged, Black and Puerto Rican?

AIDS is now the number one threat to the health and well-being of New York State prisoners. In 1986, 124 state prisoners are listed as having died of AIDS, while all other deaths that year totaled 62. (N.Y. Times, 3/5/87). Given the pattern in society-at-large, we can expect the number of AIDS related deaths in prison in 1987 to be considerably higher when the figures are released.

Health professionals generally agree that the front-line defense to prevent the spread of AIDS--in prison as well as society--should be education. The New York Department of Correctional Services have made many public statements affirming its commitment to AIDS education. (See e.g., DOCS Today, I:1; Star Gazette, 7/6/87). Yet, the actual policy in place is one of neglect, promotion of ignorance, and the utilization of various tactics to suppress prisoner initiative for education every step of the way. As a prisoner at The Auburn facility who has been struggling for effective AIDS education programs, I speak from experience on the latter policy.

In June 1987, prisoners David Gilbert, Angel Nieves, along with myself (Mujahid Farid), submitted to the Auburn Administration a proposal for a Prisoner Education Project on AIDS (PEPA). While the PEPA proposal outlined a fairly broad area to be addressed, the crux of our proposal entailed a three-pronged criteria that would be necessary for any program to be effective: 1) That the educational initiative be thorough, ongoing and persistent; 2) That there be substantial prisoner-to-prisoner education and counseling; and 3) That the educational initiative be sponsored by an outside (of DOCS) organization. Because we understood that it would be an up-hill battle to gain approval of the program, we had dozens of community-based groups and professionals send enthusiastic letters in support of the project to prison authorities. The Central New York AIDS Task Force also agreed to sponsor the PEPA proposal.

In August, DOCS rejected the PEPA proposal. However, we were invited to participate in a tripartite liaison group that was being formulated by the administration. In substance, the administration's group was designed as a top-down approach with little, if any, direction coming from the prisoners, and the program had all of the characteristics of a placebo. We decided to participate so as to build on their proposal. At an August 27th meeting of the liaison group, Auburn Staff requested David Gilbert to coordinate the prisoner aspect of the tripartite group. By all accounts, David did a superb job and carried out his responsibilities with tact and diplomacy. With amazing patience and understanding, David sought to reconcile the concerns of the administration with the genuine needs of the prisoners. David always kept a level head and remained steadfast to his commitment; even in the face of having numerous stumbling-blocks and bureaucratic red-tape placed in his path. Officially David Gilbert was praised for his efforts. Unofficially, he was punished. On December 22, 1987, in the early morning hours, prison officials came for David Gilbert and transferred him to the Clinton prison near the Canadian border. His transfer was a serious loss to the PEPA initiative and his skills will be missed by many who sought the implementation of a humane AIDS education program at Auburn. However, we do find some consolation in knowing that his spirit will touch others wherever he may be.

It once occurred to me that there is possibly some significance to the fact that "Copper John"--the sentry that has stood atop Auburn's administration building for over 100 years--has his back to the yard and faces the main entrance to the prison. This statute could be symbolic of the history of prison administrators' desire to keep public scrutiny out of the prisons; a desire that has sometimes dwarfed security measures to keep prisoners in. This perhaps, because the policies in place are not those that are written. "Copper John", standing atop the Auburn administration building like the Roman god Janus, need to be confronted with the contradictions.

At the date of this writing, an education program on AIDS has yet to be established at Auburn. The initiators of PEPA are convinced that prison administrators will never willingly implement the necessary educational programs and must be forced to do so. We urge all concerned citizens to take up the challenge to insure that the correct policy of fighting AIDS is in place in the prisons.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Friends at CFR:

I am writing in response to your editorial "Fighting White Supremacy! No Justice, No Peace." You say a lot of important things: about the struggle against white supremacy in NYC and nationwide, about Black power and leadership, and the issues/challenges we white people face in doing anti-racist organizing. But something jarred me the first time I read it, and I've been re-reading it to try and analyze and share some of my thoughts with you. I think the work you are doing is important. As you say in the editorial, you are involved in trying to reach more white people to fight white supremacy and to be anti-imperialist.

There is a book about Black Women's studies called "All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, BUT SOME OF US ARE BRAVE." That was part of the feeling I got from reading the editorial. The pictures show Black women and Black men demonstrating in NYC. From what some of you have told me, and what I read in WomanNews, many of the Black students involved in the Columbia protests are women. And of the white students who are participating in the anti-racist struggle, many are women, and many of them are lesbians. But you don't talk about either Black or white women's specific involvement, even though you seem to be making a particular argument to white women. The graphics of white people show a white woman and child and men in the klan, and white men demonstrating against the klan.

From your article and what I've read in WomanNews and the Guardian, I understand that the white men who beat up the Black students are notoriously racist, sexist and anti-gay. As you say, "It's a package deal." Who has made them an issue? If the reality and struggle against their sexism is emerging because of the struggle against their racism, this seems like a real live example of the leadership of Black people: women and men, straight and gay, in challenging all oppression. I don't know the situation the way you do. From 1000 miles away it seems like a complex of racism and sexism, who is targeted and who is fighting back. I'd be interested in knowing more of the facts about this.

When you say (as many people, including myself say) that the Civil Rights Movement "birthed" the women's movement, we are talking about and should specify Black men and Black women in the Civil Rights Movement. It was Black women in SNCC who started talking about Women's Liberation. And the leadership of Black women in standing up saying "Won't take it no more" was and is very important. Both to Black people's struggle and to showing white women the possibility of change and the necessity of challenging white supremacist institutions and individuals that are also male supremacist.

I agree with your point about how oppression dehumanizes the oppressor as well as violating the human rights of the oppressed. And I respect the work and mourn the death of James Baldwin, a great radical Black gay writer. But I find it alienating to only read the quote about how we are all brothers and nothing about how we are also all sisters. I would have included a quote from a Black woman, such as Fannie Lou Hamer, who in a speech that is printed in Black Women in White America, addresses a white woman and says "her freedom is tied in chains to mine."

The whole analysis of the Houston conference and where the women's movement was before and has been since is complex. The Third World women saying that liberation means fundamental change in the economic and political order included women from inside and outside u.s. borders. It's true that white women do opt for privilege. But it is much more than a parenthesis "You (or at least some of you) can be a corporate executive..." What is usually called the women's movement in this country has been by, for and about predominantly middle class, predominately white women. That leaves out a great many women, probably the majority of women in this country.

Sara Kaplan
Chicago, Illinois

To the editor, The Insurgent:

I'd like to enter a rejoinder to Alan Berkman's letter on terrorism (Winter '86) and add my own thoughts. I think there are questions of both morality and political strategy to be discussed here, as well as the role of violence in a political movement.

First, the word "terrorism" has tremendous power in our society in 1987, due in major part to the propaganda campaign of the US government, of most media organs, and of international allies of the US, both private and governmental. Under this campaign, all major liberation and/or guerrilla movements—the ANC, the Sandinistas, the PLO, RAF, to name just a few — are redefined as the source of violence. They become the excuse for extraordinary "security" measures, which means everything up to massacres of tens of thousands of people (e.g., Lebanon, 1982). No small part of this campaign has been aimed at criminalizing the Palestinian national movement and has drawn on and perpetuated racist images of Muslims and Middle Easterners in general. So it is easy for any act of violence connected with the Middle East to be labeled terrorism—whether it is an accurate label or not. Most of what is labeled "terrorism" is simply not that, although it may be related to political violence. It is not my purpose to go into it fully here, but where the targets are clearly military, or involve only property damage, or target specific political, military, or industrial individuals, this kind of violence is not terrorism.

The fact that in some cases it IS an accurate label should not be surprising. Terrorism is a political strategy, and can be analyzed at that level. In the hands of a (relatively) small group, it seeks to either (1) coerce an authority to yield on certain demands, or (2) instill enough social chaos so as to bring about full-scale rebellion/revolution. This is to be accomplished through (usually clandestine) violence directed at arbitrary groups of people, or people whose only point in common is being in a specific area at a specific time. (Terrorism in the hands of a government, as in Chile or South Africa, has much different goals and even means, having a whole army and police force at its disposal. As political strategy, terrorism thus seems extremely weak to me. In the first case, it is absolutely dependent on the ability to coax morality from the state being opposed, i.e., how many deaths of innocents will it take until the state gives in. A curious position to be in for those who oppose the state exactly because it is so callous toward human life. The second case hinges on very volatile factors: the response of the government to the terrorism; the response of people in general; the possibility of other (right-wing) elements exploiting the chaos.

On the practical level, I see very few armed groups whose strategy is built around pure terrorism. The "Committee in Solidarity with Arab and Near Eastern Political Prisoners", which claimed eight of ten terrorist bombing attacks in France in 1986 is one such group. I do not think they have contributed to the world anti-imperialist struggle; I do not see how they have effectively contributed to their own; and as Berkman said, their actions may validate some of the charges the enemy makes about all guerrillas.

Some groups have engaged in terrorism and criticized themselves. The IRA a few years back, when they bombed Herrod's department store in London, comes to mind. Another case not too well known this side of the Atlantic is the RAF's execution of a US soldier (named Pimental) in order to secure an ID, allowing them to plant a bomb in a US base near Frankfurt (1986?). There was serious criticism from parts of the pro-armed struggle left in Germany, namely that it was not necessary to kill the soldier simply to get his ID (which the RAF admitted to doing) and that it exaggerated the current level of confrontation to justify killing him simply because he was a soldier. Such discussions are equally important in struggles in the industrial centers as in the Third World. Critical analysis is called for, and we should not shy away from discussing, debating, and criticizing political lines, tendencies, or actions which hide behind a progressive name but have little or no revolutionary content. It is our responsibility neither to give rubber-stamp approval or blanket condemnation, or silence, but to take on the complex issues so that we can participate in a politically and morally sound strategy for the defeat of imperialism.

W. Kendall
Boston, MA

Dear Insurgent,

As lesbian/gay liberation activists and anti-imperialists, we want to protest two of the Insurgent's guidelines for "Prevention of AIDS" which accompanied the excellent article "Prisoners Organize to Fight AIDS" (Fall 1987). In a well-intentioned effort to give cautious advice, the Insurgent adopts some of the most ill-conceived "warnings" put forward by the medical establishment and mainstream media. These statements do not contribute to AIDS prevention, but could fuel an already rampant AIDS hysteria-- and the resulting racist, sexist and anti-gay discrimination.

The Insurgent writes: "Don't have sex with multiple partners or with persons who have had multiple partners." and "Avoid sex with persons with AIDS, members of high risk groups, or persons with a positive HIV test."

Like the government's line which they adopt, these "warnings" fit perfectly into the right wing's anti-gay, anti-sex moral agenda. In the name of health, people are urged to adopt monogamous (single-partner) relationships and avoid sex with gay and bisexual men and IV-drug users (members of so-called "high-risk groups"). The implication for women is to wait to have sex, get married, and stay that way. And gay men are consigned to the inhuman burden of lifelong abstinence. Both are dictates promoted for centuries by the church, the state, and the right wing -- and long fought by the feminist and gay movements, especially since the 1960s.

The Insurgent's guidelines make the mistake of focusing on who is safe or unsafe to have sex with, rather than what acts are safe or unsafe. It's true that if you're having sex with any of the listed categories, you should assume -- to be on the safe side -- that they may be capable of spreading AIDS. But that doesn't mean having no sex with those people; it just means practicing safer sex. Vaginal, anal or oral sex can be made safer by proper use of condoms (or for lesbians, dental dams). And "sex" is not limited to acts of penetration: there's also finger and hand jobs, body rubbing, massage, caresses, and many other creative ways to make love. It's not the number of sex partners but the type of sexual acts which increase the risk of spreading AIDS.

Gay/lesbian, Black and Latino communities have learned through years of hard work that the best tool in stopping the spread of AIDS is prevention education -- which the U.S. government and medical establishment have criminally neglected. But the information we provide must be medically sound, non-stigmatizing, and practical. Asking anyone to give up sex forever is not only unnecessary and discriminatory, it also won't work. Even worse, some people may become so distrustful of such absurd rules that they throw all prevention rules out the window.

For more detailed AIDS prevention guidelines (in brochure form or by phone), contact: Gay Men's Health Crisis, Box 274, 132 W. 24th St., New York, NY 10011, phone: (212) 807-6655; ADAPT (Association for Drug Abuse Prevention and Treatment, a Black and Latino ex-addicts group offering bilingual literature), 85 Bergen St., Brooklyn, NY 11201, phone: (718) 834-9585; Women's AIDS Project, 8235 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 201, West Hollywood, CA 90046, phone: (213) 650-1508.

In struggle,

Bob Lederer
Marion Banzhaf

P.S. One important addition should be made to the Insurgent's correct warning to IV-drug users not to share needles or syringes. If needles must be reused, it is possible to disinfect them by thorough soaking in bleach. For exact procedure, contact ADAPT.

[Editor's Note: Bob Lederer is the author of an investigative report on the controversy over what factors produced the AIDS epidemic. His in-depth two-part article, "Origin and Spread of AIDS: Is the West Responsible?", appears in Cover Action Information Bulletin, Summer 1987 and Winter 1988 issues, available for \$6 each from CAIB, Box 50272, Washington, D.C. 20004.]

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