

ATTICA: THE STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE CONTINUES



Speakers:

Frank “Big Black” Smith was Chief of Security for the rebelling Attica prisoners. When the prison was retaken the prisoners were beaten and tortured. Big Black was especially singled out for his leadership role in the rebellion. According to the NY Times, he was forced to walk over broken glass, beaten with batons, burned with cigarettes, continuously struck in his testicles, and told that he would be murdered or castrated if he let a football drop from under his chin after being forced to hold it there for five hours. Big Black nonetheless survived, was eventually released from prison, and has remained an activist and one of the most prominent spokespersons for the Attica Brothers. To be in his presence is to be in the presence of the 1200 prisoners who rebelled at Attica.

Michael Deutsch has been a lawyer fighting for justice for 30 years. Among his clients have been the Puerto Rican Nationalists, prisoners at Marion, environmentalist Judi Bari, rebelling prisoners at Pontiac, and many, many more. He, along with a few others, has been a lawyer for the Attica Brothers for 26 years — and still has not been paid. Michael has a unique perspective on the Attica rebellion and its relationship to prison oppression.

Lourdes Lugo is a member of the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War. She is also the niece of Oscar Lopez Rivera, one of the POWs who has been held for 11 years at the federal government's two control unit prisons — USP Marion and USP Florence. The link between Attica and Marion and Florence is an intimate one that Lourdes will discuss in detail on behalf of her uncle.

Date: Saturday, October 4, 1997

Location: The Temple; 77 W. Washington, Chicago, IL

Time: 7:00 pm

Donation: \$5; All proceeds to the Attica Brothers Defense Committee

Child Care Provided **Wheelchair accessible**

For more information contact:

The Committee to End the Marion Lockdown

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ATTICA = RESISTANCE

On August 21, 1971 prison officials in California gunned down George Jackson on the yard of San Quentin prison. Jackson was one of the best known prisoners in the United States, an official of the Black Panther Party, and a leading member of the Black Liberation Movement. Across the United States, prisons trembled in protest. Less than a month later, on September 9, 1200 prisoners at Attica prison in upstate New York seized the main yard.

In what would become the greatest prison rebellion in the history of the U.S. the prisoners held the yard until September 13. During these four days the prisoners constructed a model society, protected their hostages, and tried to negotiate with prison officials in front of the eyes of the watching world. During these four days many observers were allowed into the prison, as was a film crew which took the footage of the unfolding rebellion which would later become the movie "Attica."

The prisoners proclaimed: "WE are MEN! We are not beasts and do not intend to be beaten or driven as such. The entire prison populace has set forth to change forever the ruthless brutalization and disregard for the lives of the prisoners here and throughout the United States. What has happened here is but the sound before the fury of those who are oppressed."

Then-governor Nelson Rockefeller refused to negotiate and on September 13, 1971, 26 years ago, he sent in the "law enforcement" officials who ruthlessly murdered 39 prisoners and guards in retaking the prison. Once the prison was retaken, the police systematically beat and tortured more than a thousand prisoners. One of them was Frank "Big Black" Smith (see front page). In 1973 Big Black and 1200 other prisoners sued the state of New York along with countless responsible prison officials.

On June 5, 1997, 26 years after the rebellion and 24 years after the law suit was filed, Big Black won a judgement of \$4 million dollars for the damage done to him after the prison was seized. Many of the other prisoners have since died, and Big Black is not expected to see the settlement any time soon if at all. Yet, the Attica Brothers and their lawyers, who have not been paid in these 26 years, continue to battle on.

We invite you to attend this program. Hear Big Black speak of his experiences on the yard at Attica and in the 26 succeeding years. Hear the account of the continuing law suit and the ensuing struggle.

Support the Attica Brothers! Every cent raised by this event will go to the Attica Brothers Defense Committee.

From the yard at Attica the brothers presented the following to their jailers:

The Fifteen Practical Proposals

- 1. Apply the New York State minimum wage law to all state institutions. STOP SLAVE LABOR.**
- 2. Allow all New York State prisoners to be politically active, without intimidation or reprisals.**
- 3. Give us true religious freedom.**
- 4. End all censorship of newspapers, magazines, letters and other publications coming from the publisher.**
- 5. Allow all inmates, at their own expense, to communicate with anyone they please.**
- 6. When an inmate reaches conditional release date, give him a full release without parole.**
- 7. Cease administrative resentencing of inmates returned for parole violations.**
- 8. Institute realistic rehabilitation programs for all inmates according to their offense and personal needs.**
- 9. Educate all correctional officers to the needs of the inmates, i.e., understanding rather than punishment.**
- 10. Give us a healthy diet, stop feeding us so much pork, and give us some fresh fruit daily.**
- 11. Modernize the inmate educational system.**
- 12. Give us a doctor that will examine and treat all inmates that request treatment.**
- 13. Have an institutional delegation comprised of one inmate from each company authorized to speak to the institution administration concerning grievances (QUARTERLY).**
- 14. Give us less cell time and more recreation with better recreational equipment and facilities.**
- 15. Remove inside walls, making one open yard, and no more segregation or punishment.**

Sponsors: Anarchist Black Cross, Committee to End the Marion Lockdown, CROSSROAD Support Network, 8th Day Center for Justice, National Campaign to Stop Control Unit Prisons, National Campaign to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War & Political Prisoners, National Lawyers Guild-Chicago Chapter, and the Not On the Guest List Coalition.