

PROPOSAL

GUERRILLA USA

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THE GEORGE JACKSON BRIGADE

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We're writing to inform you of an innovative project. To complete it, we need your contribution.

The project is *Guerrilla USA: The Life and Times of the George Jackson Brigade*. Part collective memoir and part anarcho-communist true crime, *Guerrilla USA* tells the story of a cohort of '70s activists who chose to build "a movement with teeth".

The George Jackson Brigade formed in the crucible of prisoners' rights organizing which came out of the civil rights movement and mass anti-war protests of the '60s. In its three-year existence, it claimed 11 bombings, as many bank robberies, and one prisoner liberation. Targets included the Department of Corrections, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Bureau of Indian Affairs, as well as different corporate offices. The chemistry present in the group was the same that had been combusting across the country: society's most oppressed members allied with college educated youth who refused to continue their class and white skin privilege. In the case of the Brigade, women took center stage, queers challenged straights, convicts communicated with college students, and a black man enthusiastically aided whites.

The story of the Brigade takes place against a backdrop of the domestic activism of Black, Chicano, Native American, gay and white prisoners, and armed struggle in the U.S., Canada, Central and South America, Africa, Asia and Europe. Also documented is the FBI's infiltration of women's land and the lesbian community (in pursuit of Katherine Powers and Susan Saxe) and political abuse of the grand jury process.

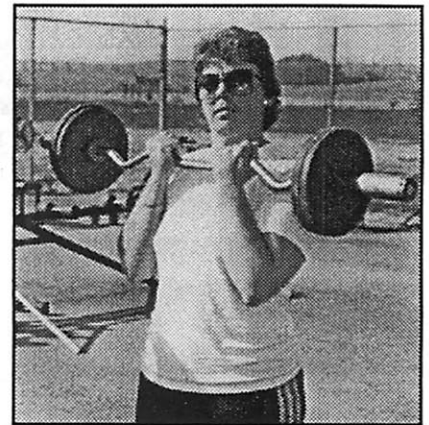
The question immediately arises: 'Is it intelligent to do a book on domestic armed struggle in the current political climate?'

We believe a critical assessment of the possibilities and pitfalls facing today's movement is essential, and that an elucidating historical perspective is crucial. Actions such as those committed by the Brigade can indicate the development of a new level of struggle, or frustration and splintering within activist communities. Distinguishing between the two is an intuition easily influenced by the passions of a time.

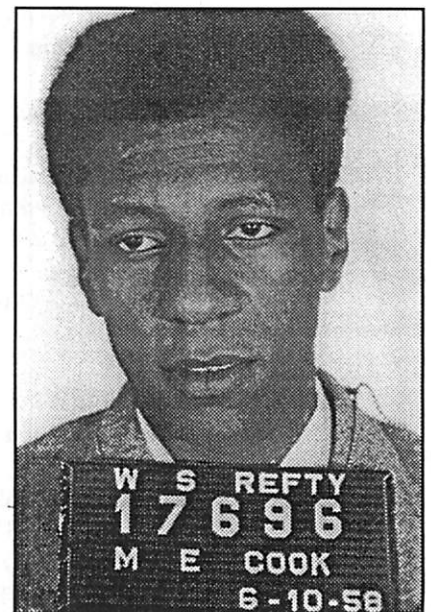
Another question follows: 'Can people talk openly about illegal actions they've committed?'

The '60s and '70s veterans we're talking to have, for the most part, done their time. This allows them to speak openly of their insights and experiences. Many activists have also had the statute of limitation pass for their actions (no deaths occurred as a result of Brigade actions). This is not to say that they don't still face retaliation for claiming their history, but it does mean that if they're willing to be open, we should listen.

The Brigade is of interest because it was ideologically diverse – including both anarchists and communists – and responsible: they're the only underground organization in the United States in the '60s and '70s to apologize for an action (a reckless pipebombing of a Safeway). The majority of its members are long-distance runners who continue to do support for political prisoners and other mass movements today.



Bo Brown pumps iron in the yard at the Pleasanton, CA, Federal Correctional Institute for Women in 1985



An early induction photo of Mark Cook