

As Day Follows Night



***AN INTRODUCTION TO
PRISONER SUPPORT***

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The information that follows was compiled from the Earth Liberation Prisoner Support Network, the Anarchist Black Cross, and various prisoner support groups. Individual articles can be attributed to authors listed, but were edited for clarity.

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In total solidarity.

"Let's not give free reign to our jailers, strike the tiger's heart every day, in every way, according to our differences, against the sadness and solitude of our cells of confinement."

The Importance of Supporting Prisoners

By Harold H. Thompson

April 1995

First, it is important to stress that none of us are immune from arrest and prosecution for any number of alleged crimes. Especially once we have placed ourselves into the eye of the storm of struggle against the masters of capital, who believe their station in life gives them the legitimate power to enslave us in whatsoever form they choose, to use us up, throw us away and profit by the blood and sweat we shed in their wage slave shops, factories and mills of capitalism. Once we step out in any form of protest then the power of the state may fall upon us with unrelenting force. We are subject to arrest and imprisonment at any time, most of us, simply because we choose to be who we are because we want to live the lives we choose in spite of the plans others make for us, because we dare to be different or because our eyes are open to the realities of our likely future, wearing the yoke of capitalism around our necks like beasts of burden, not equal human beings, unless we throw off the weight on our back to stand in the sun in our rightful place. Look at the person beside you, across the way from you and then fully realize that individual may one day be arrested and so may you because you dare to be different, threatening to those who seek to control us, especially your life is governed by the principles of anarchism or you believe in / have undertaken direct action against your oppressors. Getting arrested is no joke so without getting too paranoid, find out what to do in such a situation and also wise up about the police. I am often blunt to the point of pain so I do apologize if my words have made anybody uncomfortable but I think one sobering thought really needs to bring a wake-up call, feeling of discomfort with it. That thought is I am here today sitting in a steel and concrete, tomblike cage writing these words to you but sometime in the future it might be you behind prison walls, writing comparable thoughts to the outside. If they come for you in the mornings...

The 'system' and mainstream media portrays those of us within the ever increasing number of jails and prisons as being the equivalent of the proverbial biblical 'unclean people', to be feared, less than humans, and not to be bothered with or worthy any degree of outside concern or support. It amazes me how many intelligent people, including anarchists, active in political struggles, have to varying degrees bought into the disinformation put out by the system. The majority of the unfortunate residents of the gulags are for the most part just like other working class people on the outside, only through a twist of their destiny they were arrested, stood trial and were imprisoned. The system provides the sensationalist image of those behind gulag walls being a bad lot, best steered clear of because the system fears association between those inside and outside.

Inside is a potential army waiting to happen, which needs education, direction and support. The system desires nothing more than to maintain a wall of silence around the gulags isolating prisoners to break their minds and spirits. I have seen bodies broken and minds fragmented forever by the brutal hands of the keepers and their clever use of weaksuck, inmate lackeys. I have seen many men reach out to the struggles outside with heartfelt letters, eager for information about the various movements, education about them. Prisoners seeking compassion and comradeship. I have seen only a few of those who make contact, who are encouraged to learn, to grow, to realize who they are, their potential value to themselves and to the communities outside gulag walls. I have seen far many more give up and sometimes even gravitate towards the hate groups, which are now in abundance within the gulags as they are out there. These eventual recruits to the ranks of the extreme right could have been soldiers within our ranks but those who claim to be revolutionaries outside chose to ignore their very existence.

I myself tried in vain for over a decade 'inside' to make contact with like-minded people embracing anarchist politics. I was determined to reach out and refused to give up, unlike a lot of other prisoners around me. I reached out at every opportunity and continued to reach out when there was no

response, through many letters requesting political literature and anarchist books but above all, comradeship with other anarchists. My unanswered letters began in the late seventies, continued throughout the eighties and into the early nineties. Finally, a first anarchist solidarity letter was handed to me by a faceless clone of a guard at a Tennessee gulag in 1992! That letter and letters since has been like a welcome breeze of fresh air blowing through a place where the air and life stands dormant. The mere fact a fellow anarchist bothered to write brought tears to my eyes, eyes I was long convinced would never feel tearful moisture again. I've worked hard since that first communication to break down the walls between us, you and I, to reach out, to show those who write I'm not different except for my circumstances of being within the belly of the beast.

I am not saying the gulags do not hold their fair share of social predators but many prisoners do become politicized within gulag walls due to their own learning efforts. Through direct experience of the system itself, which generally treats prisoners with such blatant injustice that many soon feel only resentment, contempt and anger towards it. Repression breeds resistance. I am merely trying to point out the obvious pitfall of not supporting those seeking the tools to become politicized.

Sadder still than these social prisoners ignored by the revolutionary movements are those captured during direct or other political actions only to discover once in captivity that they appear to have somehow not been deemed worthy of support and are hence soon forgotten by their so called 'comrades'. One conceptual truth screams out in my heart to be voiced so I will state it now. Any political movement or peoples struggle, which fails to provide support to fallen comrades, is doomed to failure as certain as day follows night. Prisoner support should be considered as a top priority within all political movements and with all activists, as we, you or I, never know when gulag gates will slam shut behind us or when those gates to the outside will open again to allow our passage back out once the system has us in its grasp.

I have endured many hard years, over a decade and a half, within the gulags of this state. As I've already said I spent the first decade banging my head and heart against a wall of silence, attempting to reach out to ears that appeared to be deaf and eyes which appeared to be blind to my existence in hell. I never gave up and have earned the right to point these issues out now. I have earned the right to speak out with the shedding of my blood, the pain of this, in past beaten, tired body and my spirit of anarchism has never been broken by my keepers and never will be! It has only been in recent years that I have been acknowledged by my anarchist brothers and sisters out there. From my heart I state to you that I love you all! I will close now with these final words. Take care of each other, keep each other safe in the struggles which you face and never forget those in captivity because tomorrow's captive of the monsters of this earth may well be you. Our common enemies are the same from country to country being only different in name and face. They represent the same ideology, which sees this planet and its populace as throwaway commodities. They throw away their humanity in exchange for power and profits. Stay strong and know in your hearts I am with you in revolutionary spirit in every act you undertake against those who oppress us. We only want the earth; they will never get us all!

U.S. anarchist Harold H. Thompson died (11/11/2008) in a Tennessee prison where he was serving life without parole at the age of 66. He was sentenced in 1979 for the killing of a police informer who killed Harold's partner, and robbing a jewelry store. He was also sentenced to an additional 21-75 years for another shooting incident in Ohio, and later also given an extra 32 years for a failed armed escape attempt. He was active as a jailhouse lawyer while in prison and authored several articles and pamphlets.

The Ins and Outs of Prisoner Support

By the NA Earth Liberation Prisoners Support Network

Leafing through the Earth First! Journal, most readers have probably seen the Journal page devoted to Earth and animal liberation prisoners. Usually relegated to the nether regions of the magazine, the page contains names, addresses and short descriptions of individuals being held captive by the state for acts of Earth and animal liberation. The question that may be asked is: why does the Journal list political prisoners and why should I do anything more than give a short glance to its contents?

As the EF! and larger ecological defense movements have grown, more militant and direct actions have surfaced, particularly in the last 4 years. The introduction of genetically engineered crops, the continued decimation of the last old-growth forests and the expansion of development projects into the last wild places have spawned a new generation of warriors more likely to physically destroy the oppositions' machines and buildings than hold signs or petition the government for change. The proliferation of actions taken against industry (claimed by the Earth Liberation Front, Animal Liberation Front or unclaimed) is enough to warm the heart especially after the reactionary stances taken by many radicals post September 11th. As we have seen in the Pacific Northwest (US), every action (or dozen) has a separate and equal reaction in this case the reaction of the state to acts of sabotage against industry. The state apparatus is expanding rapidly in order to hunt down "terrorists" wherever they rear their head (this time it's the Green Scare). The FBI/ATF budget is expanding exponentially and we have to come to terms with the fact that this war being fought against industry will yield prisoners of war. It would behoove us to do more than just cheer when we hear of wild horses being freed by elves in the night, McDonald's burning down, or a beheaded Columbus statue.

The point is simple: no serious political struggle which has any chance of attaining revolutionary potential can afford to ignore its prisoners. To turn our collective backs on prisoners is to ensure that our movement will stay small, relatively mild and will never be a threat to biocidal industry. Who would want to take action if they knew their support would be minimal (or behind closed doors) if they got nicked?

In this article I want to give some ideas on the many ways we can support the prisoners that are in the Journal prisoner page as well as some guidelines for doing support work. Here are just a few of the most accessible ways that you can assist those being held captive by the state:

Corresponding with prisoners

Letters quite simply help bridge the gap between the "inside" and "outside" worlds. They help inform the prisoner of what is going on in their movements, the world and even their community. The penal system exerts a massive strain on prisoners to break ties with the outside world. Communicating with prisoners helps work against that strain and ensures that they do not feel completely isolated. Often times, people say "what would I write to someone in prison? I wouldn't know what to say." It's simple. Remember: they are human. They have needs and interests like anyone on the outside. Share something about your life with them. Ask about what life is like on the inside and what they plan to do when they get out. Offer some assistance. An unexpected letter from a supporter can be a welcome break from the daily monotony of prison life. Don't feel intimidated by the person you are writing-they are not a superhero; just someone that had the courage to act for what they believe in.

Consistency is paramount when communicating with prisoners. Commit to writing to one prisoner and do it well. They will appreciate it more than a short hastily written letter. The examples of people attempting valiantly to keep up with writing to 10 prisoners and then having to scale down to 1 or 2 are innumerable. Consistent support is always better than short-lived "flash in the pan" support. That being said, people should not feel the responsibility to commit to writing to prisoners for the length of

their sentence. Prisoners will generally appreciate a letter with some kind thoughts and may not even have the time to keep a steady correspondence with everyone who writes them.

Keep in mind that there is a very good chance that what you write will be read by any or all of the above: prison guards, wardens, other prisoners, FBI, CSIS (Canada), the new Office of Homeland security (US cabinet position) ... You should assume that what you write can be used against the prisoner, yourself and your community so be careful and have discretion.

Many prisoners are targeted by prisoncrats for being political; receiving large amounts of mail or for the "subversive" content of the mail they receive. It is important to know the guidelines concerning prisoner mail. First, ask the prisoner what they may or may not receive. Usually, they have a fairly good idea of what is appropriate to send and what will not make it past the censors. Prisons are known for having strict regulations for what a prisoner can receive e.g. new books only, first-class mail only. If that does not work, write to the warden of the prison requesting a list of regulations. A tool commonly used to disrupt prisoner support is the "Mail Violation Notice." They can (and sometimes do) reject mail for any reason they want including the presence of a "circle A" on a 'zine or the use of the word "Anarchy" in a letter. Don't be discouraged by these tricks-either file an appeal (which you have little chance of wining), modify the package to appease them (easiest and most likely to work), or send it again (hoping a different mail censor sees it). Whatever you do, do not give up and allow them to further alienate the person inside.

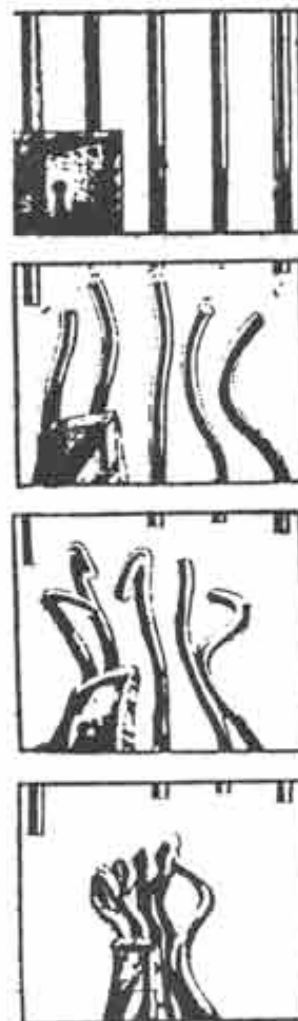
Fundraising

If there is one thing that all prisoners and those on trial need, it is a large amount of financial assistance. Legal fees are exorbitant and many political individuals will not receive any reduction in these fees based on their principles or the action they took. Prisoners often need assistance with setting up legal defense funds that will be maintained by trustworthy individuals that are prepared to make hard choices with little money. Because of their imprisonment, the act of setting up a bank account is impossible. It is important to set up a way for people in the movement to help out financially. Ideally, these accounts would exist already in cases of emergencies, but that is rarely the case. Setting up a bank account, a PO Box for people to send checks to and a person/name who will act as a recipient of those checks is key and should be a high priority. The prisoner needs to be fully informed and in control of the money that is raised on their behalf. Never underestimate the generosity and solidarity of our movement and your own community. Thousands of dollars have been raised for people facing imprisonment from small benefit shows and zine/T-shirt sales.

Keep in mind that prisoners are always in the position of having to buy from the incredibly expensive (and monopolistic) prison commissary, which is the only place, a prisoner may buy envelopes, stamps and even soy milk. A consistent flow of funds into their books is one of those things that makes prison life bearable. A contribution of as little as \$10 a week can cover a prisoners' postage fees thus allowing them to communicate with supporters and friends on the outside. Often times, funds can be sent directly to the prison and deposited into the prisoner's account.

Solidarity Actions

Many people will feel drawn not to writing letters or raising funds but to continuing the struggle that the prisoners are fighting. Some call this concept revolutionary solidarity-an action committed in solidarity with a prisoner that may or may not focus on a similar target. When anarchist prisoner Nikos Maziotis was sentenced to 15 years for the attempted



bombing of the Greek Ministry of Development, others committed multitudes of actions in solidarity with him. Maziotis' sentence was reduced from 15 to 5 years on appeal partially because of the threat of continued attack should Maziotis be held captive any longer. (He ended up serving 3.5 years) Similarly, when Rod Coronado was sentenced for action relating to the ALF's Operation Bite Back, many felt that his jailing would stifle actions taken for animal and Earth liberation. The ALF responded with a series of fur farm liberations throughout the Midwest US dedicating them to him. Former prisoners have commented that the only thing that freed them was the pressure on the streets and the threats of continued action. A former Black Panther and Political Prisoner had this to say about this premise:

"But I learned that the movement in the streets determines whether you languish in prison or are released, not the State. If it becomes strong enough it can compel a favorable outcome, even if the officials swear that you will be executed or die in prison."

Here comes the tricky part: there really is no way to know the effect that an action or a communiqué can have on a prisoner's case. For example, three days prior to Jeffrey Luer's (Free's) trial, 36 SUV's were torched at the same car dealership that Free and co-defendant Craig Marshall (Critter) took action against a year prior. The communiqué that came out stated that the action was done in solidarity with Free and Critter and against their unjust imprisonment. There is no way of knowing the impact of this statement prior to Free's trial but these are Free's observations (reprinted from the Break the Chains newsletter #9):

"My critique is this: this act would have been just as significant and more beneficial to me if my name was not mentioned in the communiqué. That said, I would like to extend my revolutionary thanks to those persons unknown. To those responsible for these actions, please know my gratitude".

This is not meant to be a criticism of this action just a reminder to people that we all need to proceed with caution when it is other people's freedom and well being that we are dealing with.

Work on projects that are prisoner-directed

The most successful prisoner support projects are those that are conceived of and directed by the prisoners themselves. Two examples of such projects are the Victory Gardens Project in Maine (started by NY3 political prisoners) and the Anarchist Prisoner Legal Aid Network (APLAN- started by anarchist prisoner Rob Thaxton). They are successful and long-term because the prisoners themselves are leading them and working in conjunction with outside support to achieve their aims. Another prisoner directed project is the publishing of prisoners writings and artwork in 'zines. This could include receiving the letters, typing, copying, distribution and fundraising. It's a big task but many examples exist of excellent prisoner directed 'zines like *Strong Hearts* (done by Rod Coronado while imprisoned) and the South Chicago ABC group, which publishes tons of prisoner 'zines.

Some Prisoner Support Guidelines

Support prisoners and people facing imprisonment (and their choices) unconditionally.

Barring a major transgression such as snitching on a co-defendant or other individuals, those facing heavy sentences for actions need to be fully supported and without the "carrot and stick" approach that some prisoner supporters use. For example, lets say that a well-known activist gets busted for a number of different actions and is approached by supporters who want to help with her legal situation. When the activist decides that she knows what is best for herself and wants to take a plea bargain, she is attacked as not being worthy of support or righteous enough. This dynamic, albeit exaggerated (not by much), has played itself out before between people being held in jail and others who claim to want to lend assistance. People need assistance about legal options but do not need to be told what

to do nor how revolutionary their choice is. When it comes down to it, they have to deal with being in a cage, not you.

Drop your lifestyle issues

One thing we need to get past regarding supporting prisoners is the focus on issues relating to the prisoner's lifestyle whether before their arrest, on the run or while in jail. For example, the ALF Support Group has a policy of only recognizing a prisoner as an Animal Liberation Front member/prisoner if they fulfill clause #3-"one must be vegan or vegetarian." This archaic clause (written presumably by the people who started the ALF in England) creates a really absurd basis of support. What if a person eats meat but decides that they are going to destroy 12 vivisection labs, liberate 5,000 mink, spike a few timber sales and sab hunts? If they get nicked, who will be lifestyleist enough to tell them "No, sorry. You are most definitely NOT a member of the ALF and will not receive ALF prisoner support. Please refer to clause 3". This sounds exaggerated like other examples previously used but it really isn't too far from an actual example and could happen again in the future. If we are going to enter into relationships with prisoners, we need to understand that they are not going to be carbon copies of ourselves. They will eat things we don't like, do things we don't like and we may even have enough time sitting around to endlessly dissect the merits of their action. Those items are irrelevant when it comes to providing principled and strong support for prisoners. On that note, I would strongly suggest that the ALF support group (in every country it exists in) drop that clause as a basis of their support.

For more information on how to support Earth and animal liberation prisoners, for a copy of our newsletter, Spirit of Freedom, or if you know about a Earth and Animal liberation prisoner that needs help, contact us at: elp4321@hotmail.com

Writing to Prisoners

One of the main problems that puts people off getting involved in supporting prisoners is a feeling of being intimidated about writing to a prisoner for the first time. It is very hard to write a letter to someone you don't know: people find that they don't know what to say, they feel there are things they can't talk about, or think that prisoners won't be interested in what they have to say. Well this is a problem most of us have had to get over, so we've drawn up some suggestions to help you. Obviously these aren't rigid guidelines, and we don't pretend to have solved all problems here, different people will write different letters. Hopefully they will be of some use.

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Some prisons restrict the number of letters a prisoner can write or receive, and they may have to buy stamps and envelopes: and prisoners aren't millionaires. So don't necessarily expect a reply to a card or letter. A lot of prisons allow stamps or self-addressed envelopes to be included with a card or letter, but some don't. Letters do also get stopped, read, delayed, 'diverted'. If you suspect your letter has been or will be nicked by the screws, you can send it Recorded delivery, which unfortunately costs a lot but then they have to open it in the prisoner's presence. Also you should put a return address, not just so the prisoner can reply (!), but also because some prisons don't allow letters without a return address. Of course it doesn't have to be your address, but be careful using PO box numbers, as some prisons don't allow these either!

WRITING FOR THE FIRST TIME

Say who you are, and if it's relevant that you're from such and such a group. Some people reckon it's better to be up front about your politics as well, to give prisoners the choice to stay in contact with you or not.

Say where you heard about them and their case. The first letter can be reasonably short, maybe only a postcard. Obviously, when you get to know people better you'll have more to talk about. If you are writing to a "framed" prisoner, and you believe them to be innocent, it helps to say so, as it gives people confidence to know that you believe them.

Some people when they write to prisoners, are afraid to talking about their lives, what they are up to, thinking this may depress people banged up, especially prisoners with long sentences, or that they are not interested in your life. Although in some cases this may be true, on the whole a letter is the highpoint of the day for most prisoners. Prison life is dead boring, and any news that livens it up, whether it's about people they know or not, is generally welcome. Especially if you didn't know them before they went to prison, they want to know about you, what your life is like etc. Use your sense, don't write about anything that is likely to get a prisoner in shit with the screws, or get you or anyone else in trouble with the cops.

THEY'RE IN THERE FOR US, WE'RE OUT HERE FOR THEM

For people imprisoned from our movements and struggles it's vital to keep them involved in the ongoing resistance - telling them about actions, sending them magazines if they want them, discussing ideas and strategies with them. Use your head though. Some people will just want to keep their head down till they get out.

This was adapted from a leaflet produced by the Anarchist Black Cross

Ways To Contribute to the Support of Prisoners

Letters

Nervous about your first letter? Don't be! Prisoners often say how much they enjoy hearing about someone's day-to-day activities and interests. This is often the easiest and most important thing you can do to support people in prison. Many say they also enjoy receiving news articles (photocopied or printed from the web). The most important thing is to just get the letter in the mail. Once you send that first letter, each one that follows will be easier to write. Send a postcard, artwork, talk about your day, just please remember a few things:



- All letters must have a return address on the envelope.
- Please also put a return address on the letter itself, as prisoners are almost never given the envelopes.
- Please do not mention other nicknames you might know them by.
- Do not discuss their cases or anything related to illegal activities. Keep in mind that all mail is read by authorities.
- Pictures are allowed, but must be 4x6 size or smaller. No Polaroids.
- Most facilities will NOT accept stamps or envelopes mailed to prisoners. Please check with the institution prior to doing so.
- Avoid using white-out, stickers, tape, colored ink or glitter.
- Written correspondence and drawings may be in pencil, standard ink pen, typewritten, or computer generated. No felt pens, markers, crayon, or colored pencil, etc.
- All personal artwork must be in black & white, copied pages can be in color.
- PLAIN cards are allowed. However, you must write something inside of the card, as blank ones will be returned.
- Most facilities do not allow torn pages from books, magazine or newspaper clippings. Photocopies, however, are accepted
- Please always remember that, even if unsolicited, mail can still result in sanctions against a prisoner.

Care Packages

Despite all of the mail regulations above, there are still plenty of things you can send to a prisoner to brighten their day! In fact, with a little effort, you can send prisoners at even the most stringent facilities care packages. Print-outs, color copies and pictures leave a lot of options. Here are just a few ideas for materials that you can include in an envelope to send to a prisoner as a care package (keeping in mind the above mail regulations):

- Yoga Postures- many prisoners are confined to their cells for up to 22 hours a day and have very little access to exercise facilities. Yoga can be practiced in a very small area and is both relaxing and beneficial to their health. There are many online websites that offer step-by-step guides for you to send.
- Comics/humorous articles- breaking up the gloom of prison always helps! Photocopy the best of the Sunday paper's comics, or do a simple online search.

- Essays/Writing excerpts- ask someone who their favorite authors are, or topics they enjoy reading about. Again, you'd be amazed what you can find online and this is a simple way to send prisoners lots of reading materials cheaply.
- Word Search games- and of course, prison is incredibly boring. (Word search game resource - <http://www.sjbaker.org/wordsearch-o-matic/index.html>)
- Describe a hike- spend the day outside hiking, take some pictures and then send them to a prisoner with a story about your hike. Remember that prison is sensory deprivation to the max, so use a lot of description (sight, sound, smell, everything...)
- Pictures- send pictures of wild places, ones that are vivid in color and show a lot of detail. Remember that Polaroid's are not allowed.
- Photo-copies- photocopy everything: pictures of beautiful paintings, other artwork, large photos, newspaper articles, book pages, 'zines, and anything else you can think of.

Donating

There are two ways to contribute to the prisoners' defense and support funds: You can send donations to the support groups (please contact the support groups for more information) or you can put donations directly into their commissaries. Commissary money is very important to prisoners, as it allows them to purchase stamps, envelopes, phone-cards, extra food, as well as other necessities. Please consider sending a donation!

Books

Ordering books is an easy way to directly support the prisoners. For book suggestions, please contact the various support groups. Also, try to let them know which books you are ordering, so that repeat orders are not made. For all prisoners, some basic rules apply:

All books must be new, paperback and come directly from the publisher or an online distributor, such as Amazon. Please have the books sent to the same address that you would use to mail them letters, making sure to include their ID number. Remember to keep the topics of books focused away from subjects that could potentially cause problems for prisoners, and can actually result in the books being seized. You can also send them reading material directly by including up to 10 pages (photocopied front and back) in an envelope. Some facilities, although few, will also except used books. For detailed instructions on sending books to a particular prisoner, please email their support groups directly.

Visiting Prisoners

Restrictions and criteria for visiting Federal and State prisons are different. Generally, it is easier to visit state prisoners. Visiting conditions are usually better at Federal prisons. Listed below are some of the different guidelines for visiting Federal/State prisoners, and some guidelines useful to visit any prisoner.

To visit Federal prisoners, you must first be approved by filling out a form that the prisoner must send you in advance. Only people who say they had a relationship to a federal prisoner prior to their imprisonment can be approved. Usually, the prison will not approve people who say they visit other prisoners. Once you complete and mail the form to the prisoners counselor, the prisoner will tell you if you have been approved or denied.

Some state prisons require you to be placed on an approved visitors list but most do not. Contact the state prisoner you want to see and have them fill you in on the procedures of the particular prison they are held. Some state prisoners may receive food packages. Check with the prisoner for restrictions on what they can receive.

Before visiting any prisoner, write to them, be considerate and send a postal money order made payable to the prisoners name and number so they can buy stamps to reply. (Most prisons DO NOT allow you to send stamps). Ask all questions through the mail before your visit. Ask about visiting days/hours, dress codes, maximum number of visitors allowed per visit, about getting photos of your visit, and anything else you can think of. You wont be allowed to visit without presenting a valid photo ID like a driver's license or county ID. Bring small bills or change for the vending machines in the visiting room.



Federal Prison 101

By Peter Young
Fall 2006

In our endless discourse on animal liberation theory and practice, there has remained since the direct action movement began a frightful specter, kept in the closet and rarely spoken of, whose power as a deterrent from the simplest of actions to correct the most horrible of crimes is supreme. The unmentionable is prison. Inaction cannot with honesty be credited to a lack of knowledge or skill—every address and methodology is for our taking in this information age—and we would more correctly attribute our nights at home to the exaggerated threat of prison.

What follows is intended as a brief summary of the life that awaits an activist convicted of federal charges. My experience extends only to the federal system, however a look at the prisoner's page of this publication will show it is this system, which is of chief relevance to animal liberationists in the United States. Look at our history: all but a few animal liberation prisoners were prosecuted federally. As a final disclaimer, I am unable to comment on life inside maximum (USPs) security facilities—a fate not to be ruled out for those convicted of more serious offenses. However, very few activists have ever seen the inside of a USP, even for arson.

If you, as I, suffered pre-trial detention without bail in a county jail, arriving in prison will mark the end of your darkest days. County jail is the worst time you will do—your most comfortless living, your most difficulties with food, and your most problems with both staff and inmates. You've arrived at prison and it's time to exhale.

DETAILS

The activist convicted of a federal crime will serve 85% of their sentence with 54 days of good time offered per year. The last 6 months will be spent in a halfway house with work release privileges.

FEDERAL INMATES

The reputation of federal prison playing host to mostly white collar criminals and bank robbers is greatly antiquated. Since the 1980s, federal prosecutions have taken a sharp shift toward drug and gun possession crimes. Currently larger volume drug dealers comprise over 80% of federal inmates. At my facility, I would estimate drug, gun, and immigration cases make up 95% of the inmates. Others include bank robbers and large scale fraud cases.

CUSTODY LEVELS

Federal prisons are divided into 4 custody levels: Camps, Lows, Mediums, and Max's (USPs). The basis for the public's image of a federal prison is the minimum security camp. Although the comfort at these prisons have been greatly scaled back since the 1980s due to backlash from "tough on crime" zealots, features such as tennis courts and movie theaters are still very much a reality. These "prisons" lack even a fence. Camps are reserved for low-risk inmates with less than 7 years to serve and have the largest percentage of white collar criminals. Lows are for inmates with 20 years and under. As with camps, they have an open bunk/dorm setup in place of cells. Mediums are for those with 30 years or less and are much closer to the standard image of a prison. USPs are for inmates with 30+ years or those deemed a security risk due to trouble at lower security facilities or violent crimes. It's important to note that any sentence of any length for any crime can result in designation to any security level. Your prison experience and the type of people with whom you live will be most heavily defined by the security level of your prison. Many factors contribute to one's custody level, including criminal history, severity of crime, history of violence, etc. Small details can have a significant impact.

The Bureau of Prisons (BOP) has a fairly efficient system for moving violent and predatory inmates to

USPs. Often a single fight can raise one's custody to USP level. This creates a (relatively) relaxed climate even at Medium Security facilities. For the purpose of animal liberationists, most property crimes are likely to result in a designation of medium security or lower. With crimes involving arson, history has shown it's a coin toss, with USP designation a possibility. Numerous factors weigh in. Josh Demitt and SUV-torcher-turned-snitch Billy Cottrell were both convicted of arson with no criminal histories. Josh went to a camp, while Billy sits at a USP.

THE PRISON

As a sample of the physical components which make up a federal prison, a breakdown of the facility where I reside: Dining hall, laundry services, barber shop, commissary, mental health, library, chapel, visiting room, mail room, the hole, rec center (with band, yoga, and arts and crafts rooms, workout machines, ping pong, basketball courts and TVs), rec yard (with soccer field, handball courts, baseball diamond, and track) and housing units

THE MYTHS

The "survival of the fittest" reputation of prison life is largely obsolete. Most commonly held beliefs on prison life are either echoes of a convict culture long since deceased or applicable only to maximum security facilities. These media-induced horror scenes form the basis for the public's perception of the prison experience simply because knife fights and gang rapes make for good material. The reality of thousands of men playing cards and watching pro-wrestling doesn't sell books. Sexual assault is non-existent. If improvised weaponry exists, it's invisible to my eyes. And in my time in prison, I've neither seen nor been in a fight.

FOOD

(Note: the B.O.P. overhauled underwent a food service overhaul since Peter's release, and as such some details below may no longer apply.)

Among the most mentioned perks of federal prison is the food. The B.O.P. is surprisingly liberal in this regard, requiring a vegetarian substitute at every meal and extensive commissary options. However, in prison as in jails, veganism as an ethically motivated diet is not recognized and safely navigating the hazardous food landscape requires effort.

An overview of veganism behind enemy lines:

Dining Hall: Food in the dining hall can be divided into two parts—the "line" and the self-serve bar. I generally skip the line about half the week. Vegan items served at my facility include French fries, pasta, apples, and potatoes. I find the vegetarian meat substitute is vegan about half the time, and dishes served include vegan chicken patties, soy fajitas, and sweet and sour tofu. The food service manager is usually accessible to answer questions about ingredients. Self serve bar: At my prison this includes an AYCE salad bar, rice, beans, as well as rotating items such as cabbage, corn, and salsa. It is my understanding that all federal prisons have a salad bar.

Commissary: This is the prison store which is visited once a week. Vegans will find it desirable and perhaps essential to supplement their diets through commissary. Selection varies, but common denominator items will include oatmeal, peanut butter and trail mix. My facility also sells organic granola, tortillas and beans, and even soy chorizo.

Common Fare: This is the name for the BOP's meal plan for people with religious diets. Common Fare is comprised of foods that are common to all religions recognized by the B.O.P. Generally, it is two trays of raw sliced vegetables and whole fruits given at each meal. Other items such as the kosher meats and breads are given but can be refused. Inmates are only placed on common fare if they ascribe to a faith which calls for adherence to certain dietary laws such as Judaism or the 7th

Day Adventist faith. It should be noted there exists a curious phenomenon of new arrival inmates being divinely possessed by the power of the Holy Ghost and experiencing sudden spiritual conversion at or around the time of filling out their paperwork in Intake. Many later find this to have been much to their advantage.

Black Market: It is a secret to no inmate or staff member that the prison black market is huge and its largest segment is food. The prison economy works on stamps, which are money. There is simply no food item in the prison which cannot be purchased and the vegan with money will find themselves wanting for little. Well off inmates can quite literally purchase cases of Boca Burgers or have vegan pumpkin pies made and delivered to their cell, should they have the stamps.

STAFF

The savage, abusive prison guard is among the staple prison images I was pleased to find mostly false. At my prison, guards are so far in the background, were it not for the daily mail call, I could go for weeks without speaking to or thinking about a guard. Among the realities of prison I find most frightening is being at the mercy and under the care of profoundly stupid people. From guards to most executive staff, you will live under a group whose ignorance is rivaled only by the inmates themselves. I once had to cut short a conversation with a high-ranking staff member because his speech was so thick with slang I was unable to understand him. My ungrantable request that he speak plain English almost earned me a stay in the hole.

With exceptions, the average administrative staff member is little more than a glorified savage, with military or street thug background and all the bad grammar, bullying nature, and lack of education these descriptions suggest. My experience strongly affirms a sentiment expressed by George Jackson in *Soledad Brother*, that one of the worst mistakes a prison can make is to assume their jailers have a heart. Too many times I have attempted to appeal to the conscience of a staff member in my dilemmas regarding such things as food, to find my politeness mistaken for weakness and my condition worse off than had I instead beat my chest and barked a demand. In mentality, nothing separates staff from inmate. The same “code of the street” mindset prevails, with macho posturing rewarded and attempts at cordial dialogue crushed. Any lingering hope for a core of goodness and reason existing deep within all people will find its swift death in prison.

CONVICT CULTURE

More than the loss of freedom or friends, I found the shock of a new culture that seemed insane to its very core to be the greatest challenge of prison. Spared a constant physical battle per the common myth, the new prisoner will find instead a psychological battle of life among new customs, manners, language, and priorities. It would be a great disservice to the reader to soften reality with detached sociological language and a tone of cultural relativism so fashionable in discussions of prison. Instead, the facts: On average, prisoners are loud. They are uneducated. They hold women in the lowest regard, tell bad jokes and possess the maturity of 15 year olds. They also have the rest of us very outnumbered, thus it is the primary goal of the prisoner to win their favor without becoming one of them. Therein lies the most difficult task of prison—tolerance, and a certain level of conformity. What is crucial during the weeks after arrival is to watch. Sit back and take in every detail, from where people sit to how beds are made. Most important is a healthy fear that things can go very wrong at any moment. The smallest transgression can sour one’s reputation in a way that can be impossible to reverse. Seemingly tiny infractions such as spending too much time in one’s cell can quickly become large problems. Creating one enemy can, in effect, be creating dozens within hours, and should be most crucially avoided. While it takes a certain effort to get beaten up, there is a much less desirable alternative which requires no skill at all, and that is to be shunned. While it would be my preference to never speak to most everyone in prison, it is inadvisable to keep completely to oneself. There is deep suspicion and a subtle contempt extended to the withdrawn newcomer. Upon arriving, to become

friendly with those in your housing unit quickly is wise insurance. After several weeks of establishing acquaintances and allowing others to be comfortable with me, I then felt comfortable scaling back my socializing and settled into a more isolated routine of reading and letter writing. Even now, I spend 15 minutes or so a day sitting by the TV and talking with other inmates to avoid drifting towards outcast status. This is a smart investment.

Your best asset is something I altogether lack and was forced to learn: social versatility. In all likelihood no one in prison is anyone you would be friends with or even talk to under other circumstances, but now there is no choice. To those with whom you share an address, everything that was important to you on the outside is nothing. They do not care about the Hardcore band you roadied for, chocolate almond milk, or your convictions. Prison is a Twilight Zone of NASCAR and Maxim Magazine, and learning to force conversation and connect with diverse groups is of great value. However, at the end of the day, you may find as I do that your only true friend is your radio. The political prisoner enjoys a significant advantage over the average prisoner. Social standing in prison is based on one vague form of capital called “respect,” and keeping with prison’s simple-minded ladder of priorities, respect is given for things that defy explanation by a functioning brain. Among them is mail. There is a powerful effect in receiving the large volume of mail an animal liberation prisoner can expect. Without any frame of reference, inmates assume one to be “something big” on the outside, and extend respect accordingly. Most animal liberation prisoners can expect to have a website set up, and with a majority of inmates having no internet experience, to say you have a website is to say you have your own billboard in Times Square. Additionally, having a case looked at as “exotic” gives one an immediate reputation. Being looked upon as someone into things not fully understood by most inmates places your origins as being in some foreign world, lessening the pressure for conformity—a pressure which can otherwise be stifling. Overall, the political prisoner enjoys a unique situation, which can be exploited to his/her benefit in the convoluted world of prison.

CONCLUSION

Pulling the curtain away from the specter of federal prison, we find its fiercest threats to be its most hollow. While the hardships of prison should not be downplayed, its realities should not be exaggerated. And with prison demystified, we find one less thing between us and animal liberation.

This article was originally published in Earth First Journal in 2007.

Revolutionary Solidarity: A Challenge

By Wolfi Landstreicher

The tendency to fall into a defensive attitude in the face of repression is best counteracted by developing an understanding and practice of revolutionary solidarity.

Revolutionary solidarity is, above all, a revolutionary practice. What this means is that it carries within itself the aims of revolution. For this reason, as anarchists, we cannot base solidarity on any authoritarian or economic foundations. It is not a matter of obligation, duty or debt. No one owes anyone solidarity, regardless of what they have done or what they are going through. Rather the basis of solidarity is the recognition of one's own struggle in that of others – in other words, complicity. This is of major importance. If solidarity is the recognition of my own struggle in the struggle of others, it is carried out in practice precisely through continuing that struggle, continuing to attack this social order, and doing so with a focus on what unites my struggle with that of others.

In this light, it should be clear that revolutionary solidarity is not merely support. On the practical level, it is obviously necessary to correspond and visit our imprisoned comrades, and to find ways to help them take care of various needs. But if this becomes the focus of what we call “solidarity”, then we have reduced solidarity to mere charitable social work. The maintenance of connections, of friendships and comradeship in the midst of repression is one important factor for maintaining support. But what is most significant is active solidarity with the active revolt of our comrades who are locked up or otherwise suffering focused repression. It is within this context that the specific activity of support (letters, visits, financial support, etc) can become a part of the practice of solidarity as the help to maintain communication between all of us fighting against this system.

So revolutionary solidarity is the complicity in revolutionary struggle between individuals in different specific situations who can nonetheless see that their revolutionary projects coincide. Let's consider the project of revolutionary struggle against the prison system. Comrades inside prison will inevitably involve themselves in struggles against the specific conditions of their imprisonment – for example, the ongoing struggle against the FIES (special isolation units) in Spanish prisons. There are various tactics used in these struggles. Underlying all of them is a refusal to cooperate with the prison regime. Thus, various sorts of strikes, collective revolts, riots and the destruction of prison property have all been used. But one of the most common tactics is the hunger strike. The reasons this tactic is so common among prisoners is that it can be used collectively or individually, it is completely in the hands of those using it and it puts a great deal of pressure on the prison authorities. At the same time, the effectiveness of the hunger strike – especially when used by one or only a few individuals – depends on a situation of permanent conflict on the outside, ongoing battle against the structures and individuals responsible for repression. In practice this can include flyers, demonstration and graffiti campaigns expressing solidarity with the comrades inside, but also in sabotage and other forms of attack against the police, judiciary and prison systems. Os Cangaceiros, a group of rebels in France, provide a fine example. From 1984 into the 1990's, they were involved in active sabotage of the prison system in solidarity with a number of prison revolts that were occurring in France. Along with a variety of acts of vandalism and sabotage and the theft and distribution of the plans for a major prison building project in France, they published significant analyses of the prison and justice system and their relationship to society as a whole. And many others chose to imitate their activity of sabotage against the prison system.

The sort of activity described above shows a principled approach to the struggle against the prison system and the practice of solidarity. They share a few things in common: they can be used autonomously outside the framework either of the institutions of the state or the institutions of the left (parties, unions and the like); they involve no delegation or mediation to be carried out; they do not

involve negotiation or any sort of compromise with those in power. Of course, they do require a movement committed to an ongoing battle against the entire society of prisons, a movement in permanent conflict with the present social order. The lack of such a movement makes it easy to compromise one's stance whether because one is in prison oneself or because those one cares for are. But anarchist principles are not essentially moral, but have their basis in a logic of practice. When we put our time and energy into petitioning, negotiating, litigating and so on, this is time and energy taken away from the project of destroying the society of imprisonment and law. Furthermore, these practices are based in the institutions of the state, in the legal and judiciary system. Thus, they make us dependent upon the goodwill of the state and its institutions. This can only end up strengthening the very institutions that we claim we want to put an end to. In addition, this dependence on the state as the very precise effect of undermining any trace of self-determination in our activity, thus undermining our capacity for direct action as well. How far this goes in deteriorating one's perspective and critical capacities becomes evident when the concessions granted by the state in these contexts – minor reforms or simple applications of existing laws – are proclaimed to be victories. Here the reformist mentality has come to dominate one's practice – the idea that one can use the most compromised means as long as they are "effective" in the most immediate sense. But for those who seek the destruction of the entire system of domination, these are not victories, but defeats, because they point to resignation in the face of a system that seems unassailable, moving one to use its means to achieve what, in the long run, can only be its ends.

So the practice of revolutionary solidarity presents us with a challenge. Repression is growing as is specific focus by the authorities on anarchists. We will likely see more and more of us under investigation, facing trial and spending time in prison. It is very easy in such situations to simply retreat, to let things blow over or, worse, to distance ourselves from comrades facing prison or from actions that frighten us. This response would be a major victory for the state. So the challenge we face is that of developing the strength within ourselves to act on our own terms against the state and against its systems of repression while also learning to coordinate these actions without compromising ourselves. Since revolutionary solidarity, at least from an anarchist perspective, is the practical recognition of one's project of struggle within the struggle of another, it requires that we each act as we see fit against this order, as we are moved to act by our own confrontation with its oppressive power in our daily lives. But it also requires that we learn to weave these actions together in a way that strengthens them and makes their meaning clearer. There is no panacea, no organization or program, that can provide this, because all such panaceas require that we adjust ourselves to their requirements. Rather it is necessary to develop the clarity and candor from which relations of affinity can develop, spreading their complicity in revolt further and further and maybe even flowering into insurrection. This is the challenge we confront in the face of an increasingly repressive system of domination.



Revolutionary Solidarity

By Pierleone Porcu

There are many ways to demonstrate solidarity to comrades who are being criminalized by the State, each one of which is a direct expression of the way one intervenes in the social clash in general.

There are those who see solidarity as lending a social service to this or that arrested comrade, and that is the way they carry out their activity: looking for lawyers, sending money and clothes to prison, visiting and so on. This purely humanitarian solidarity also translates itself into the constitution of defense committees and relative campaigns aimed at influencing public opinion.

Then there are those who see solidarity in a strictly political key and play at making a heap of "distinctions" aimed at not compromising the image of their own activity. So for reasons of opportunity they defend and show solidarity to those who declare themselves innocent, not to those who Claim responsibility for their actions.

Others still, if they see there is something to be gained in terms of political propaganda, immediately bring out flyers and leaflets in formal solidarity with the comrade or comrades arrested, i.e. they declare solidarity in words, while in practice there is no trace of it.

Then there is solidarity in an ideological context. This is the case of the marxist-leninists in the revolutionary combatant party version. They show solidarity with those with positions similar to their own, and are in contrast with those who do not share or recognize their political line or strategy, often using censorship and ostracism against those they consider inconvenient.

What do we think we should mean by revolutionary solidarity then? The first aspect is that of seeing solidarity as the extension of the insurrectional social practice one is already carrying out within the class clash, i.e. as a direct demonstration of actions of attack against all the structures of power, large and small that are present in one's own territory. And that is because these should to all effects be considered responsible for everything that happens in social reality, including therefore the criminalization and arrest of comrades wherever they are. It would be short-sighted to reduce the question of repression against comrades to something strictly linked to the legal and police apparatus. The criminalization and arrest of comrades should be seen in the context of the social struggle as a whole, precisely because these are always the hasty material means used by the State to discourage radicalization everywhere. No matter how great or insignificant it might be, every act of repression belongs to the relations of the social struggle in course against the structures of dominion.

The second aspect is that each revolutionary comrade should be defended on principle, irrespective of the accusations made against them by the State's legal and police apparatus, in the first place because it is a question of snatching them from its clutches i.e. from the conditions of "hostage" they have been reduced to. Moreover, it is also a question of not losing the occasion to intensify the attack against the "law" intended as the regulating expression of all the relationships of power present in constituted society.

The third aspect concerns the refusal to accept the logic of defense that is inherent in constitutional law, such as for example the problem of the "innocence" or "guilt" of the comrades involved, and that is because we have many good reasons for defending them and no one can justify the political opportunism of not doing so. We cannot and must not consider ourselves lawyers, but revolutionary anarchists at war against constituted social order on all fronts. We aim at radically destroying the latter from top to bottom, we are not interested in judging it as it does us. For this reason we consider any sentence made by the State vultures against proletarians in revolt, and all the more so if they are

comrades, to be a sentence against ourselves and as such to be avenged with all the means we consider opportune, according to our disposition and personal inclinations.

The fourth and final aspect concerns our attitude towards the arrested comrades, whom we continue to behave towards in the same way as those not in prison. That means that to revolutionary solidarity we always and in any case unite a radical critique. We can and do show solidarity with imprisoned comrades without for this espousing their ideas. Those who show solidarity to imprisoned comrades are not necessarily involved in their opinions and points of view, and the same thing goes for us as far as they are concerned. We actively support all imprisoned comrades in all and for all, but only up to the point where what we do for them does not come into contrast with or contradict our revolutionary insurrectionalist way of being. Ours is exclusively a relationship between social revolutionaries in revolt, not that of bartering positions. We do not sacrifice any part of ourselves, just as we do not expect others to do the same.

We think of solidarity as a way of being accomplices, of taking reciprocal pleasure and in no way consider it a duty, a sacrifice for the “good and sacred cause”, because it is our own cause, i.e. ourselves.

Starting from these premises, of primary importance in the development of one's anarchist insurrectionalist action, revolutionary solidarity takes on meaning as such, because we would show simple material support to any friend who ends up in prison.

Revolutionary solidarity is an integral part of our very being as insurrectional anarchists. It is in this dimension that it should be demonstrated incessantly, precisely because it contributes to widening what we are already doing.



***Solidarity lies in action.** Action that sinks its roots in one's own project that is carried a coherently and proudly too, especially in times when it might be dangerous even to express one's ideas publicly. A project that expresses solidarity with joy in the game of life that above all makes us free ourselves, destroys alienation, exploitation, mental poverty, opening up infinite spaces devoted to experimentation and the continual activity of one's mind in a project aimed at realizing itself in insurrection.*

A project which is not specifically linked to the repression that has struck our comrades but which continues to evolve and make social tension grow, to the point of making it explode so strongly that the prison walls fall down by themselves.

A project which is a point of reference and stimulus for the imprisoned comrades, who in turn are point of reference for it. Revolutionary solidarity is the secret that destroys all walls, expressing love and rage at the same time as one's own insurrection in the struggle against Capital and the State.

Daniela Carmignani

Spirit of Freedom: Support the Eco-Prisoners

By Earth Liberation Prisoners Support Network
March 2010

"The whole experience has been tough, but all the kind and strengthening words and wise thoughts from strangers made it much easier!"
-Former Swedish Animal Rights Prisoner

All of the prisoners listed below welcome letters of support. So please, regardless of what languages you speak and regardless of where you live in the world, please support the eco-prisoners and no compromise in defense of Mother Earth!

ECO-DEFENCE PRISONERS

Grant Barnes #137563, San Carlos Correctional Facility, PO Box 3, Pueblo, CO 81002, USA. Serving 12 years for setting fire to a number of SUV vehicles. The letters ELF were spray painted onto all of the vehicles.

Nathan Block, #36359-086, FCI Lompoc, Federal Correctional Institution, 3600 Guard Road, Lompoc, CA 93436, USA. Serving 7 years & 8 months for an ELF arson against a Poplar Tree Farm and an ELF arson against an SUV dealership. Also admitted his role in an ELF/ALF conspiracy.

Marco Camenisch, Postfach 3143, CH-8105 Regensdorf, Switzerland. Serving 18 years. 1) Ten years for using explosives to destroy electricity pylons leading from nuclear power stations. 2) Eight years for the murder of a Swiss Border Guard whilst on the run. In '02 Marco completed a 12-year sentence in Italy for destroying electricity pylons in Italy.

Leonardo Landi, Carcere San Michele, Via Casale, 50/A, 15122 San Michele (AL), Italy. Il Silvestre activist awaiting trial accused of robbery.

Marie Jeanette Mason, #04672-061, FCI Waseca, Federal Correctional Institution, PO Box 1731, Waseca, MN 56093, USA. Serving 21 years and 10 months for her involvement in an ELF arson against a University building carrying out Genetically Modified crop tests. Marie also pleaded guilty to conspiring to carry out ELF actions and admitted involvement in 12 other ELF actions.

Abraham López Martínez (Jailed in Mexico). E-mail letters of support to cna.mex@gmail.com. On remand accused of a series of ELF style activities against various trucks and businesses.

Eric McDavid, 16209-097, FCI Victorville, Medium II, Federal Correctional Institution, PO Box 5300, Adelanto, CA 92301, USA. Serving 19 years & 7 months for planning to destroy the property of the U.S. Forestry Service, mobile phone masts and power plants. At the point of his arrest no criminal damage has actually occurred.

Daniel McGowan, 63794-053, USP Marion, US Penitentiary, PO Box 1000, Marion, IL 62959, USA. Serving 7 years for an ELF arson against a Poplar Tree Farm and an ELF arson against an old growth logging corporation. Also admitted his role in an ELF/ALF conspiracy.

Steve Murphy 0910300841, Central Detention Center, 630 East Rialto Ave, San Bernardino, CA 92408, USA. Awaiting sentencing after admitting Conspiracy to Commit Arson following an attempted arson at a town house construction site in 2006. The action was claimed under the banner of the ELF.

Justin Solondz (Address Unknown - China). American Green Scare defendant accused of direct action activity in America. Serving 3 years in China for drug related offences then due to be deported back to America. His exact prison location is currently unknown.

Jonatan Strandberg, Box 248, 59323, Västervik, Sweden. Serving 15 months imprisonment after admitting damaging a communication tower used by the Department of Defence, cutting the cables on a crane used in creating urban sprawl, and damaging a vehicle used in the logging industry.

Michael Sykes 696693, Richard A. Handlon Correctional Facility, 1728 Bluewater Highway, Ionia, MI 48846, USA. Serving four to ten years for anti-sprawl arsons, criminal damage to a utility pole, spray-painting political graffiti and burning the American flag.

Fermín Gómez Trejo (Jailed in Mexico). E-mail letters of support to cna.mex@gmail.com On remand accused of a series of ELF style activities against various trucks and businesses.

Briana Waters 36432-086, FCI Danbury, Federal Correctional Institution, Route 37, Danbury, CT 06811, USA. Serving six years for involvement in an ELF arson on a University.

Joyanna Zacher, #36360-086, FCI Dublin, 5700 8th St.- Camp Parks- Unit F, Dublin, CA 94568, USA. Serving 7 years & 8 months for an ELF arson against a Poplar Tree Farm and an ELF arson against an SUV dealership. Also admitted her role in an ELF/ALF conspiracy.

ANIMAL LIBERATION PRISONERS

Jonny Ablewhite TB4885, H.M. Prison, Hewell Lane, Redditch, Worcs B97 6QS, England. Serving 12 years for attempting to blackmail a farmer who supplied guinea pigs for vivisection.

Dan Amos VN7818, HMP Guys Marsh, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 0AH, England. Serving 4 years for conspiracy to blackmail Huntingdon Life Sciences.

Gregg Avery TA7450, HMP Coldingley, Shaftesbury Road, Bisley, Woking, Surrey GU24 9EX, England. Serving 9 years for conspiracy to blackmail Huntingdon Life Sciences.

Natasha Avery NR8987, HMP Send, Ripley Road, Woking, Surrey, GU23 7LJ, England. Serving 9 years for conspiracy to blackmail Huntingdon Life Sciences.

Mel Broughton A3892AE, HMP Frankland, Brasside, Durham, County Durham DH1 5YD, England. Serving 10 years for "conspiracy to commit arson" against Oxford University vivisection department.

Lauren Gazzola #93497-011, FCI Danbury, Federal Correctional Institution, Route #37 Danbury, CT 06811, USA. Serving 54 months imprisonment for helping organize the SHAC-USA campaign.

Alex Hall, Inmate #2009-06304, Davis County Jail, 800 West State St., Farmington, UT 84025, USA. On Remand. accused of raiding a mink farm. Also accused of breaching bail conditions whilst on bail.

Kevin Kjonaas #93502-011, FCI Sandstone, PO Box 1000, Sandstone, MN 55072 USA. Serving 72 months imprisonment for helping organise the SHAC-USA campaign.

Gavin Medd-Hall WV9475, HMP Coldingley, Shaftesbury Road, Bisley, Woking, Surrey GU24 9EX, England. Serving 8 years for conspiracy to blackmail Huntingdon Life Sciences.

Heather Nicholson A3158AJ, HMP Foston Hall, Foston, Derby, Derbyshire, DE65 5DN, England. Serving 11 years for conspiracy to blackmail Huntingdon Life Sciences.

Kevin Olliff, #1300931, TTCF 161 D-Pod, 450 Bauchet St., Los Angeles, CA 90012, USA. On remand accused of stalking as well as conspiracy and criminal threats towards UCLA vivisectionists and a company linked to vivisection.

Jonathan Paul, #07167-085, FCI Phoenix, Federal Correctional Institution, 37910 N 45th Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85086, USA. Sentenced to 51 months for an ALF arson on a horse meat plant. Also admitted his role in an ELF/ALF conspiracy.

Lewis Pogson A6454AK, HMP Lincoln, 106 Greetwell Road, Lincoln, LN2 4BD, England. Serving 3 years for rescuing 129 rabbits from Highgate Farm.

William James Viehl, Inmate #2009-05735, Davis County Jail, 800 West State St., Farmington, UT 84025, USA. Serving two years for his role in an ALF raid on a mink fur farm.

Nicole Vosper VM9385, HMP Bronzefield, Woodthorpe Road, Ashford, Middx, TW15 3JZ, England. On remand accused of blackmailing Huntingdon Life Sciences.

Dan Wadham, A5705AA, HMP Camp Hill, Newport, Isle of Wight, PO30 5PB, England. Serving 5 years for conspiracy to blackmail Huntingdon Life Sciences.

Kerry Whitburn TB4886, HMP Lowdham Grange, Lowdham, Nottingham, NG14 7DA, England. Serving 12 years for attempting to blackmail a farmer who supplied guinea pigs for vivisection.

Sarah Whitehead, VM7684, HMP Bronzefield, Woodthorpe Road, Ashford, Middx, TW15 3JZ, England. Serving two years for: 1) rescuing a puppy from horrific conditions. 2) rescuing over 100 animals from a pet breeder who was later prosecuted for animal abuse. Also awaiting trial for SHAC activity.

Carolyn Feldman, 770 Iowa St., Dubuque, IA 52001. Jailed for refusing to testify before a Federal Grand Jury investigating ALF & ELF activity.

PLOUGHSHARES PRISONERS

Helen Woodson, 03231-045, FMC Carswell - Admin. Max. Unit, POB 27137, Ft. Worth, TX 76127, USA. Serving 8 years 10 months for actions that focused on the interrelationship of war & the destruction of the natural world. The actions included pouring red paint over the security desk of a federal court and making threatening communications. Previously Helen had served 20½ years for: 1) Using a hammer to disarm a nuclear missile silo. 2) Burning \$25,000 on the floor of a bank whilst denouncing war, environmental destruction & economic injustice. 3) Mailing warning letters with bullets attached to Government & corporate officials.

OTHER ANTI-WAR PRISONERS

Elija Smith VP 7551 HMP Lewes, 1 Brighton Rd, Lewes, Sussex, BN7 1EA, England. On remand accused of disarming a weapons factory, which, amongst other things, makes Hellfire Missiles. The action was in protest at Israel military action against Gaza.

ANTIFA PRISONERS

Aleksey Bychin, FBU OIK-2 IK-7 otryad No. 7, ul. Karnallitovaya d. 98, g. Solikamsk Permskiy Kray, 618545 Russia. Serving 5 years for defending himself against neo-nazis.

Jürgen Goethals, Nieuwe Wandeling 89, 9000 Gent, Belgium. On remand accused of involvement in an outburst of rage which occurred in protest to a fascist march. Is charged with arson.

Gian-Paolo Melis, Nieuwe Wandeling 89, 9000 Gent, Belgium. On remand accused of involvement in an outburst of rage which occurred in protest to a fascist march. Is charged with arson.

Andrei Mergenov, FGU IZ 64/1 OKB 2 komn. 73, Up. Kutyakova 107, 410601 Saratov, Russia. Serving 3 years for fighting with neo-nazis.

OTHER PRISONERS

Pavel Delidon, ul. Timiryazeva-1, FGU IK-7, 309990 Valuyki Russia. Anarchist/Animal Rights activist jailed for attempting to obtain wages owed to him, but which had not been paid to him by his employer. IMPORTANT: Pavel can only receive letters written in Russian. He is punished by the prison if he receives a letter not written in Russian so please, only send letters written in Russian.

Alessandro Settepani, Carcere San Michele, Via Casale, 50/A, 15122 San Michele (AL), Italy. Co-defendant of Sergio Stefani. Arrested for stealing a car and then remanded for "Subversive Conspiracy" and remanded into a prison for political activists.

Sergio Maria Stefani, Carcere San Michele, Via Casale, 50/A, 15122 San Michele (AL), Italy. Former ALF prisoner arrested for stealing a car and then remanded for "Subversive Conspiracy" and remanded into a prison for political activists.

Fran Thompson, #1090915, CCC, 3151 Litton Drive, Chillicuthe, MO 64601, USA. Serving Life for killing, in self-defence, a stalker who had broken into her home. Before her imprisonment Fran was an eco, animal & anti-nuke campaigner.

Leonard Peltier #89637-132, USP Terre Haute, U.S. Penitentiary, 4700 Bureau Road South, Terre Haute, IN 47802, USA. American Indian Movement activist serving Life after being framed for murdering 2 FBI agents.

Richard Sills (Address Unknown, USA). Serving 15 months for bomb hoaxing a University saying they would be targeted by the ALF if they didn't stop their animal experiments.

ELP is an international eco-prisoner support network founded, in Britain, in 1993 to support jailed eco-activists. We support the prisoners by producing various regular prisoner lists.
www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk

Briana Waters

Briana Waters is a devoted and loving mother of her four-year-old daughter. She is a professional musician and violin teacher based in Oakland, California. On March 15, 2006, she was falsely accused of participating in a politically motivated arson, which took place at the University of Washington in May 2001.

Briana steadfastly maintains her innocence. She is a peaceful woman who believes in non-violence. In 2001, she directed a documentary, entitled *Watch*, which tells the moving true story of a peaceful campaign that built a coalition between environmentalists, loggers, and the

<http://www.supportbriana.org/>

residents of Randle, Washington to save the old-growth forest on Watch Mountain.

Briana's family, friends, and supporters were heartbroken and left in disbelief when a federal jury found her guilty of two counts of arson on March 6, 2008. The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals denied Briana's request for release on bail pending appeal in early July, 2008. In August of 2008, Briana was transferred from SeaTac in Washington State to the Danbury, Connecticut Federal Correctional Institution where she was designated to serve a six-year sentence.

Daniel McGowan

Daniel McGowan is an environmental and social justice activist from New York City. He was charged in federal court on counts of arson, property destruction and conspiracy, all relating to two actions in Oregon in 2001. Following his arrest, Daniel was offered two choices by the government: cooperate by informing on other people, or go to trial and potentially spend the rest of his life in prison. His only real option was to plead not guilty until he could reach a resolution of the case that permitted him to honor his principles. After many months of litigation and negotiation, Daniel was able to admit to his role in these two incidents, while not implicating or identifying any other people who might have been involved.

Daniel grew up in Rockaway Beach, Queens, New York, and is a much-loved member of the community. He has worked on projects such as the demonstrations against the Republican National Convention, counter military recruitment

<http://www.supportdaniel.org/>

efforts, organizing free markets in his neighborhood, and supporting political prisoners such as Jeff "Free" Luers. Daniel was also earning a Master's degree in acupuncture and was working at WomensLaw.org, a nonprofit that helps abused women navigate the legal system, when he was arrested by federal marshals on December 7th, 2005.

Daniel McGowan's arrest had come in the context of a well-coordinated, multi-state sweep of over 15 activists by the federal government who have charged the individuals with practically every earth and animal liberation action in the Pacific Northwest left unsolved. Many have considered this round up indicative of the government's 'Green Scare' focus, which has activists being arrested and threatened with life in prison while way more serious crimes go ignored. Many of the charges, including Daniel's, were for crimes whose statute of limitations were about to expire.

Eric McDavid

Eric McDavid is a political prisoner, currently serving a 20 year sentence in federal prison for "thought crime." He was arrested in January 2006 (as part of the government's ongoing "Green Scare" campaign against environmental and animal rights activists) after being targeted by an undercover informant who formulated a crime and

entrapped Eric in it. Eric was targeted by the state for his political beliefs, and his case is important for everyone who dares to stand up. He is currently appealing his conviction and his sentencing.

Eric was arrested (along with Zachary Jenson and Lauren Weiner) on January 13, 2006, as part of

the government's ongoing Green Scare campaign. All three were charged with "Conspiracy to damage and destroy property by fire and an explosive." His arrest was the direct result of a government informant – known only as "Anna" - who spent a year and a half drawing him in and working with the FBI to fabricate a crime and implicate Eric in it. Anna was paid over \$65,000 for her work with the FBI. Eric was imprisoned for what amounts to thought-crime – no actions were ever carried out, and Eric was charged with a single count of "conspiracy" - a powerful legal tool often used by the state to crush dissent.

Eric was denied bail twice – despite having no prior criminal record and no history of violence – and spent almost 2 years pre-trial in Sacramento County Main Jail in "Total Separation" - or solitary confinement. This meant that he had little to no contact with other prisoners or the outside world and was only allowed to leave his cell for a few hours each week. During that time he endured two separate hunger strikes to gain access to vegan food. He also endured two separate bouts of pericarditis – a heart condition which Eric had never experienced before his time at Sac County. Both of Eric's co-defendants caved under the threat of being imprisoned for 20 years and plead

<http://www.supporteric.org/>

guilty to a lesser charge. In doing so, they agreed to testify against Eric and cooperate in every way possible, including testifying in front of secret grand jury proceedings.

Eric's case is a clear-cut example of entrapment, and he fought the charges against him on those grounds at trial in September of 2007. After a trial riddled with errors, lies and blunders on the part of the government, a jury found Eric guilty. Many of those same jurors later made damning statements about the FBI's handling of the case, and two of them submitted declarations to the court stating that they believed Eric deserved a new trial. None of this can change the fact that Eric has been convicted of a crime that was never committed. In May of 2008 Eric was sentenced to an outrageous 19 years and 7 months in prison. At the time, it was the longest standing sentence of any environmental prisoner in the US. Unfortunately, Eric's case and sentencing seem to have set a precedent for such injustice, and others have since been sentenced to similarly outrageous time in prison. Eric is currently appealing his conviction and sentencing.

Eric is currently imprisoned in FCI Victorville, Medium II, in Adelanto, CA.

Marie Mason

Marie Mason is a 46 year old mother of two. She is an avid community gardener, a musician, a writer, an Earth First! organizer and a volunteer for a free herbal healthcare collective. She also was an extended care assistant at a small Cincinnati school when she was arrested on March 10, 2008 by federal agents. She has been charged with involvement with a December, 1999 arson at a Michigan State University genetics laboratory at Agriculture Hall and a January, 2000 arson of logging equipment in Mesick, Michigan. Both arsons were claimed by the Earth Liberation Front.

The burning of MSU's Agriculture Hall was a significant act and one that was bound to be targeted for response as part of the Greenscare repression. As former ELF press officer Craig Rosebraugh explains in his memoir, Burning

Rage of a Dying Planet, "Not only was the damage quite significant,... but this was the first time arson had been used to further the cause against genetic engineering (GE) in the US. Furthermore, it was the first time the ELF had taken credit for any GE-related action."

Predictably, the media presented the action as an assault on scientific efforts to relieve famine in the so-called developing world. But, as the ELF communiqué plainly stated, MSU's research was funded by the US government and corporations like Monsanto, which then use their considerable power to force such crops on desperate nations. These nations often resist the importation of GE crops and seeds, given their significant risks to human health, cultural identity, biological diversity and ecological integrity.

A long-time environmental, animal rights and social justice organizer, Mason had previously experienced government repression when ELF actions occurred in her community. An easy target for the federal agents in their quest to criminalize dissent, Mason was an identifiable and outspoken critic of genetic engineering and destructive forestry practices.

<http://freemarie.org/>

Jonathan Paul

Jonathan has been an animal and environmental activist since the 1980s and a vegan for 25 years. He and his wife live with 4 companion animals off the grid, powering their home with solar panels. Jonathan is currently serving a 51 – month sentence in federal prison in Phoenix, Arizona for his role in the 1997 arson of the Cavel West horse slaughterhouse in Redmond, OR.

Jonathan has dedicated his life to protecting the earth and alleviating the suffering of animals, human and non-human. From 1999 until the time he reported to prison in October of 2007, Jonathan served his community as an Emergency Medical Technician and volunteer firefighter. Jonathan has received numerous awards for his community service. He deserves our support and we need to let him know how much we appreciate his sacrifices.

Jonathan was arrested in January of 2006 in the largest roundup of animal rights and environmental activists in history. This was what the FBI dubbed “Operation Backfire”, also called by others the Green Scare. Fifteen activists were arrested in late 2005 and early 2006, then

<http://www.supportjonathan.org/>

charged with numerous property destruction crimes. Many faced multiple life sentences. Jonathan entered into a plea agreement that required him to plead guilty to arson and conspiracy in the Cavel West slaughterhouse fire.

In solidarity with three of his co-defendants, the plea agreement included a provision that none of the four of them would be required to implicate or identify any other individuals besides themselves, or to testify in court against anyone.

Out of 10 co-defendants, only four took this principled stand together: Daniel McGowan, Nathan (Exile) Block, Joyanna (Sadie) Zacher and Jonathan. A few months earlier, the other 6 co-defendants signed very different plea agreements that required them to implicate others.



An interview with Grant Barnes by eco-prisoner Jeff Luers

JL: You are currently serving a long prison sentence for arsons claimed on behalf of the Earth Liberation Front. What compelled you to take such actions?

GB: I had been aware of the ELF for some time, and as I became more aware of the severity of the most likely consequences of climate change I decided it was time for me to do my part and take responsibility. I think that property destruction is a useful component in a united front of tactics toward first, earth liberation, and ultimately towards the cultivation of a biocentric culture. It raises the economic and psychological costs of earth destruction, and when there is media coverage, as there usually is, it shows people on all sides of the struggle that the destroyers are vulnerable. I believe that property destruction is one of the things that the other species of the planet would do in their defense against extinction if they had the knowledge and ability to do so. Those who destroy the property of uncaring, irresponsible people act on behalf of these other species, which are our cousins.

JL: How did you first get into activism?

GB: I helped with an info-shop in Denver (now closed) and Food Not Bombs, and I worked for the Rape Assistance and Awareness Program.

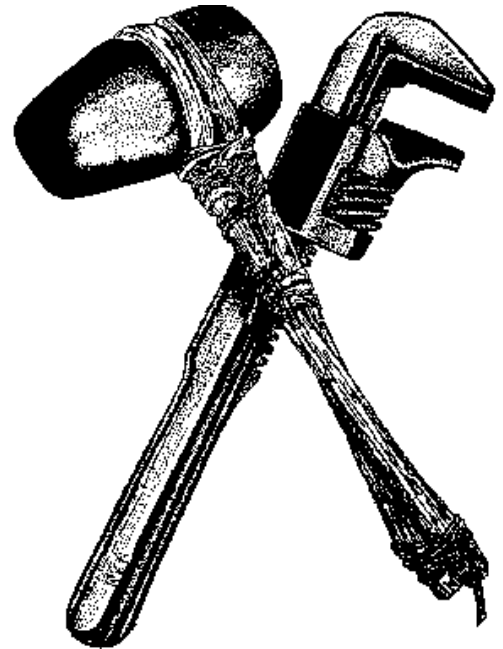
JL: You are serving your sentence in maximum security. What has that been like?

GB: One challenge has been racism. I'm white, and most of the people I talk to are not, and this has led to some confrontations with racists. My friends back me up though, so when problems arrive we respond and that keeps me safe enough. They deserve the better part of the credit for that. Otherwise, the hardest thing is the isolation; I'm a social person and community is very important to me, so everyday it takes a conscious effort to adapt to spending most of my time alone (most of the time I'm not allowed to leave the cell). However, I stay productive by studying for my degree and working out, and I've made strong progress in both areas. I occasionally have the opportunity to return correspondence and that is one of my favorite things to do.

JL: When you first decided to get involved in eco-defense did you think you would end up in prison? If so, how did you prepare yourself for that possibility?

GB: I knew I could go down and I strove not to. At various times in my life I had read prison memoirs like *Soul On Ice* by Black Panther Eldridge Cleaver and *Soledad Brother* by George Jackson, and some more recent accounts of prison life, including a web file entitled *How To Survive In Prison*. It contains some good information, for instance on the importance of respect, but I think I would have picked up on that sort of thing whether or not I had read anything on it. Probably the best way somebody could prepare would be to stay in good physical shape.

JL: How has your support been? How can people get involved?



GB: The Lucy Parsons Project sent two books last year, which are outstanding to have, as good reading material is hard to get here. Earth First! Journal kindly gave me a free prisoner subscription, and I also got an issue apiece from Green Anarchy and Bite Back, all of which I considered notable on the outside and appreciate having in here. I am especially thankful that Earth First! Journal and Green Anarchy have listed my address. I've got several letters and postcards wishing me well, and recently I've begun corresponding with several people. It would be outstanding to hear from others. The best thing people can do is send information on intentional communities, mutual aid networks, and similar formations I might contribute to when I am released. One of the most frustrating things about being inside is having few outlets to give to others, but I want to lay a solid foundation for such community that I can build on when my time here is done. Creating community takes a great deal of work, and I know it's necessary to spend time to understand, among other things, a potential member's level of commitment and the extent of the common ground shared with existing members. I want to start that dialogue, because the kind of life I want to live on the outside is one spent as much as possible in spaces of liberation from patriarchy, exploitation, anthropocentrism, racism, and all other symptoms of the present alienating civilization. To that end I am most interested in more primitive groups.

Also, I find that in general pictures are more natural expressions than words, and it means a lot to me to see photos along with peoples' writings. Regardless, it is always special to receive a letter or postcard from anyone who feels concern for the earth and joy for life.

JL: Are you working on projects while locked up?

GB: I'm finishing my degree in cultural anthropology; I was a student when I was arrested. Reading about a range of cultures has been provocative. It has shown me to some extent how much is being lost with the extinction of so many sustainable, primitive ways of life—knowledge we need now more than ever. I also keep up with reports on climate change, and I am reading some books I had not made time for on the outside, like Derrick Jensen's Endgame.

JL: And now here's your chance for a shameless wish list. Would you like people to send any specific books or books on particular subjects? Are there any canteen items, like a radio or anything else, we can help you buy to make your time easier?

GB: I don't listen to the radio or watch TV, or buy snacks, and money is qualitatively less valuable to me than heartfelt correspondence, but I would certainly appreciate funds for mailing supplies, and for beans and oats, as the vegan food here is very limited. One luxury I do love is music and receiving some of that would be a treat. One of the subjects I most want to better understand is the difference between primitive and complex cultures. I would be very grateful for any well-researched reading material at the undergrad level on this topic. Much of what is listed in Green Anarchy is of interest, for instance.

Grant Barnes is an environmentalist who was arrested in 2007 for setting fire to a number of SUV's in Denver, Colorado. He pleaded guilty to one count of using an incendiary device, and one count of second-degree arson, and was sentenced to a 12 year term in the San Carlos Correctional Facility. From his prison cell he watches the birds that have made their nest within the razor wire. A reflection of what is happening to our world." Write to: Grant Barnes, #137563, San Carlos Correctional Facility, PO Box 3, Pueblo, CO 81002.

Freedom for Marco Camenisch

Translation by ABC Bristol

Marco Camenisch was born on January 21st 1952 in Switzerland, in a small village of the Graubunden region. At the beginning of 1980 Marco was arrested for damaging electricity pylons and transformers, once against the NOK company (which ran nuclear power plants in Switzerland) and once against their distributors, the Sarelli company. The sentence was very harsh: 10 years. Marco was well aware this reflected the seriousness of what was at stake: the ecocide perpetrated by the power industry as part of the wider system of destruction, which formed the target of his own struggle.

In December 1981 Marco escaped from Regensdorf prison with other 5 inmates and went into hiding for 10 years. In November 1991 he was arrested again following a routine ID check in the town of Massa, Tuscany. There was a shooting after one carabinieri (Military Police) saw that Marco had a gun and panicked; Marco and one carabinieri were injured. This time Marco got a 12-year sentence for injuring the carabinieri and for another attack against the power lines between La Spezia and Acciaiole, which transported energy produced by French nuclear plants. He did 11 of the 12 years in Italy, waiting to be extradited to Switzerland.

In May 2002 Marco was subjected to a show-trial designed to politically damage the wider struggle against ecocide, and to punish Marco for his defiance in showing no remorse for his actions. In flagrant disregard for the state's own legal process, Marco got charged and convicted for the murder of a completely different Customs policeman in 1989 in Brusio, and sentenced for 17 years. With this sentencing the Lords of the Atom and their accomplices "settled the score" with Marco – including the previous 10 and 11-year sentences – a total of 39 years of imprisonment. Longer than a life sentence.

In May 2007 the sentence was reduced to a maximum of 8 years, with release scheduled to be in May 2018. Even when jailed, Marco has never stopped fighting and will keep struggling against the stranglehold of the corrupt system, a system that tries to break him, and smash the support for him in the wider struggle that sustains him. Over the long years of the harsh realities of imprisonment, another reality has also been created, of human relationships, solidarity, support...networks in Italy and around the world have grown and developed around Marco: comrades who have been inspired by his words and actions, or who have known him as a friend, brother or comrade. This network might now seem to be fading but it will never be broken, and it will in turn create new networks and forces.

During these years Marco has always been with us; even though physically separated, his presence is still felt in our struggles. His voice, his thoughts, his translations, his articles and hunger strikes demonstrate a solidarity free from every ideological dead-end and dogma, that has created a network of communication and solidarity with revolutionary prisoners all around the world. His prodigious output has contributed to the growth of our journey of struggles against every oppression and exploitation, in defense of the Earth and all living beings. Marco has never resigned himself or surrendered himself to his imprisonment, or accepted the dominance of the current system. He has never departed from his revolutionary journey, has continuously demonstrated a coherence and clarity of thought, spirit, and heart: rare qualities in this era of fake human relationships and political lifestylism. And this spirit is what the system tries so hard to break: his green anarchist identity, and the network of relationships that have formed around him. The harsh price that Marco is still paying is the same price that every single revolutionary prisoner around the world is paying in jail.

It is therefore urgent and necessary for us to support him once again, with the awareness that only an international mass mobilization can hope to fight against the war of annihilation perpetuated by all governments, not just the Swiss state. Marco must be released! To demand Marco's release after 30 years is to demand an end to the exploitation of all human beings, all other beings and of all Nature.

Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War

November 2009

Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War (PP/POWs) are those persons incarcerated as a result of political beliefs or actions consciously undertaken and intended to resist exploitation and oppression, and/or hasten the implementation of an egalitarian, sustainable, ethical, classless society, predicated on self determination and maximization of all people's freedom. As anarchist POW Ojore Lutalo has stated:

"Any political movement that does not support its political internees is a sham movement!"

Addresses may change without notice, and this is only a partial listing. Get in touch for additions or updates.

ABDUL AZEEZ
(Warren Ballantine)
1415430
PO Box 759
Big Stone Gap, VA 24219

BILL DUNNE
#10916-086
P.O. Box 2068
Inez, KY 41224
USP Big Sandy

DAVID GILBERT
#83-A-6158
P.O. Box 2001
Dannemora, NY 12929
Clinton Corr. Facility

ABDUL MAJID
#83-A-0483
PO Box 500
1879 Davis St.
Elmira, New York 14901-0500

BYRON SHANE
CHUBBUCK
#07909-051
P.O. Box 1000
Lewisburg, PA 17837
USP Lewisburg

DEBBIE SIMS AFRICA
#OO-6307
451 Fullerton Ave
Cambridge Springs, PA
16403-1238

ALVARO LUNA
HERNANDEZ
#255735
Hughes Unit
Rt. 2, Box 4400
Gatesville, TX 76597

CARLOS ALBERTO
TORRES
#88976-024
P.O. Box 5000
Pekin, IL 61555
FCI Pekin

DELBERT ORR AFRICA
AM4985
Follies Road, Drawer K
Dallas, PA 18612
SCI Dallas

ANTONIO GUERRERO
#58741-004
P.O. Box 898801 Oklahoma
City, OK 73189 FTC
Oklahoma City Federal
Transfer Center
AVELINO GONZALEZ
CLAUDIO
#357422
MacDougall-Walker CI
1153 East Street
South Suffield, CT 06080

CHUCK SIMS AFRICA
#AM-4975
660 State Route 11
Hunlock Creek, PA 18621
SCI Retreat
DANIEL MCGOWAN
#63794-053
P.O. Box 1000
Marion, IL 62959
USP Marion

ED POINDEXTER
#27767
P. O. Box 2500
Lincoln, NE 68542

EDWARD GOODMAN
AFRICA
#AM-4974
301 Morea Road
Frackville, PA 17932
SCI Mahoney

FRED "MUHAMMAD" BURTON AF 3896 SCI Somerset 1590 Walters Mill Rd Somerset, PA 15510	JOSEPH "JOE-JOE" BOWEN #AM-4272 1 Kelley Drive Coal Township, PA 17866-1021	MICHAEL DAVIS AFRICA #AM-4973 P.O. Box 244 Graterford, PA 19426-0244 SCI Graterford
GERARDO HERNANDEZ #58739-004 P.O. Box 5500 Adelanto, CA 92301 U.S. Penitentiary-Victorville	LEONARD PELTIER #89637-132 P.O. Box 1000 Lewisburg, PA 178371 USP Lewisburg	MONDO WE LANGA (D. RICE) #27768 P.O. Box 2500 Lincoln, NE 68542-2500
HANIF S. BEY (B. GEREAU) RR 1 Box 9955 Kingshill, St Croix, V.I 00850	LUIS MEDINA #58734-004 P.O. Box 019120 Miami, FL 33101 FDC Miami	MUMIA ABU-JAMAL #AM-8335 175 Progress Drive Waynesburg, PA 15370-8090
HERMAN BELL 79-C-0262 P.O. Box 116 Fallsburg, New York 14871 Sullivan Correctional Facility	MALIK SMITH RR 1 Box 9955 Kingshill, St Croix, V.I 00850	DR. MUTULU SHAKUR #83205-012 P.O. Box 8500 Florence, CO 81226 USP Florence ADX
JAAN K. LAAMAN 10372-016 P.O. Box 24550 Tucson, AZ 85734 USP Tucson	MALIKI LATINE #81-A-4469 P.O. Box 2000 Dannemora, New York 12929 Clinton Corr. Facility	OSCAR LOPEZ RIVERA #87651-024 P.O. Box 33 Terre Haute, IN 47808 U.S.P. Terre Haute
JAMIL ABDULLAH AL-AMIN #99974-555 USP Florence ADMAX P.O. Box 8500 Florence, CO 81226 JALIL MUNTAQIM {Anthony Bottom} 77-A-4283 P.O. Box 618 Auburn, NY 13021	MARILYN BUCK #00482-285 Unit A 5701 8th St. Camp Parks Dublin, CA 94568	RENE GONZALEZ #58738-004 P.O. Box 7007 Marianna, FL 32447-7007 FCI Marianna
JANET HOLLOWAY AFRICA #OO-6308 451 Fullerton Ave Cambridge Springs, PA 16403-1238	MARSHALL EDDIE CONWAY #116469 P.O. Box 534 Jessup, MD 20794 Jessup Correctional Institution	ROBERT SETH HAYES #74-A-2280 P.O. Box 1187 Alden, NY 14004-1187 Wende Correctional Facility
JANINE PHILLIPS AFRICA #OO-6309 451 Fullerton Ave Cambridge Springs, PA 16403-1238	MATTHEW DEPALPMA 14126-041 P.O. Box 10 Lisbon, OH 44432 FCI Elkton	ROMAINE CHIP FITZGERALD #B27527 FC-2-110 P.O. Box 921 Imperial, CA 92251

RONALD REED
#219531
5329 Osgood Avenue North
Stillwater, Minnesota 55082-
1117

RUBEN CAMPA
#58733-004
P.O. Box 33
Terre Haute, IN 47808
USP Terre Haute

RUSSELL MAROON
SHOATS
#AF-3855
175 Progress Dr.
Waynesburg, PA 15370

SEKOU KAMBUI (W. TURK)
#113058
P.O. Box 56 SCC (B1-21)
Elmore, AL 36025-0056
SEKOU ODINGA
09-A-3775
Box 700
Wallkill, New York 12589

SUNDIATA ACOLI (C.
SQUIRE)
#39794-066
P.O. Box 1000
Otisville, NY 10963
USP Otisville
THOMAS MANNING
#10373-016
P. O. Box 1000
Cumberland, MD 21501
FCI Cumberland

TSUTOMU SHIROSAKI
20924-016
FCI Terre Haute
P.O. Box 33
Terre Haute, IN 47808

VERONZA BOWERS JR.
#35316-136
P.O. Box 150160
Atlanta, GA 30315

WILLIAM PHILLIPS AFRICA
#AM-4984
Follies Road, Drawer K
Dallas, PA 18612
SCI Dallas

WILLIAM 'LEFTY' GILDAY
P.O. Box 1218
Shirley, MA 01464-1218
MCI Shirley

ZOLO AGONA AZANIA
#4969
P.O. Box 41
Michigan City, IN 46361
Indiana State Prison



Prior to being placed on this list, each Prisoner's case was reviewed to determine whether they fit into the definition of "Political Prisoners" or "Prisoner of War" set forth by the *Special International Tribunal on the Violation of Human Rights of Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War*. Prisoners who fall into this definition are then contacted to get permission to be placed on the list. The ABCF will not place a prisoner on our list without their permission even though they may be recognized by other prisoner support organizations. Not all Political Prisoners or Prisoner of War wish to be placed on prisoner support lists and the ABCF respects their decision.

If you have any further questions you'd like answered before writing, more information about any of the prisoners, or would like to meet up with one of us to go on a visit, please feel free to contact us.

The Los Angeles branch of the Anarchist Black Cross compiled this list. The ABCF is a collection of North American ABC collectives who have joined to focus our collective energies on supporting and defending PP/POWs. For more information about PP/POW's, what we do in support of them, and what you can do to help, contact us: Los Angeles ABC-BG, P.O. Box 11223, Whittier, CA 90603 or email la@abcf.net.

PARTIAL LISTING OF:

Western Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War



1. USP Atwater

BILL DUNNE #10916-086

Box 019001

Atwater, CA 95301

Anti-authoritarian sentenced to 90 years for the attempted liberation of a prisoner in 1979.

2. USP Victorville

GERARDO HERNANDEZ #58739-004

P.O. Box 5500

Adelanto, CA 92301

A member of the "Cuban 5", Cuban nationals arrested in the U.S. for monitoring right-wing anti-Castro groups in Florida who responsible for terrorist acts in Cuba.

Victorville Med II FCI

Kojo Bomani Sababu (s/n Grailing Brown)

39384-066

13777 Air Express Way Blvd.

Victorville, CA 92394

New Afrikan POW serving multiple life-sentences for actions carried out by the Black Liberation Army (SLA.) Sababu was arrested with well-known Anarchist POW, Ojore Lutalo.

3. USP Lompoc

JAMES WILLIAM KILGORE # 09879-000

3901 Klein Blvd.

Lompoc, CA 93436

James Kilgore was a '70s radical who spent decades on the run after his days with the Symbionese Liberation Army. Kilgore has been described as the "last unaccounted-for member of the revolutionary group, the SLA." Kilgore, 55, was captured in South Africa.

4. Oregon State Prison

JEFFREY "FREE" LUERS

#13797661 / OSP

2605 State St.

Salem, OR 97310

Serving a 22+ year sentence for setting fire to Sports Utility Vehicles to protest the destruction of the environment. He has been made an example of by the criminal injustice system and he urgently needs your support.

Mill Creek Correctional Facility

ROBERT THAXTON #12112716

4005 Aumsville Hwy

Salem, OR 97310

Long-time anarchist activist sentenced to over seven years in prison for throwing a rock at a cop in self-defense at a June 18, 1999 Reclaim the Streets protest in Eugene.

5. CSP - Los Angeles County

ROMAINE CHIP FITZGERALD

B27527

44750 60th St. West

Lancaster, CA 93536-7620

Former Southern California Black Panther member accused of killing a security guard in Los Angeles in 1969. Chip is one of the longest held political prisoners in the U.S.

6. Central California Women's Facility

SARA OLSON (KATHLEEN SOLIAH)

W94197 506-26-2low

CCWF

PO Box 1508

Chowchilla, CA 93610-1508

Sara Jane Olson (AKA Kathleen Soliah), is a former member of the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA), serving 20 years for her involvement in several actions carried out by the SLA. In June 1999, after twenty-four years on the run, Sara Jane Olson was arrested in St. Paul, Minnesota. Two years later, Olson pled guilty to a plot to bomb two LAPD patrol cars on August 21, 1975.

7. CSP- Solano

WILLIAM TAYLOR (BILL) HARRIS

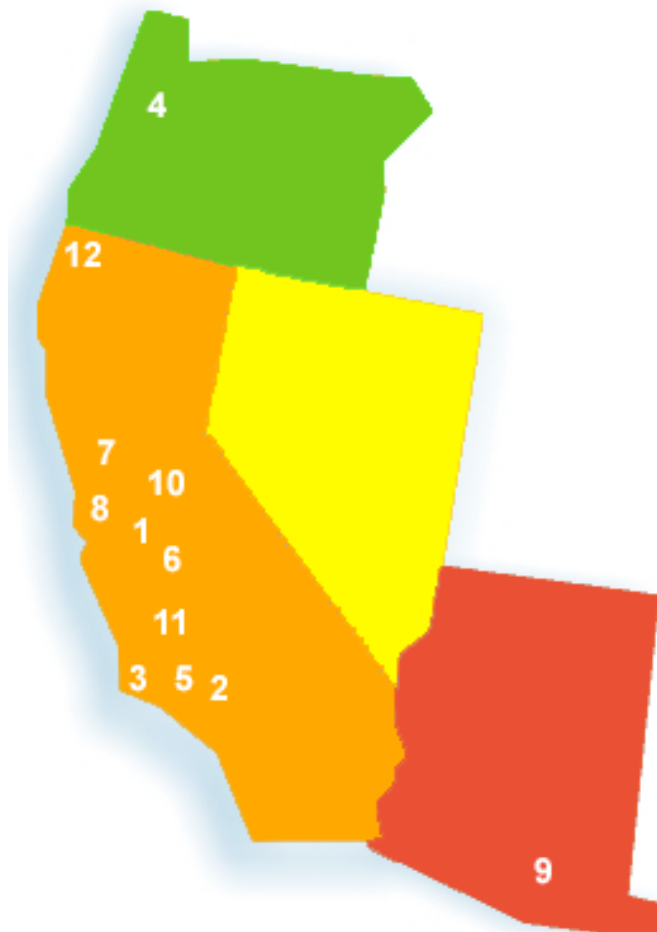
T-82151

CSP-Solano, #8-126U

P.O. Box 4000

Vacaville, CA 95696-4000

Former member of the Symbionese Liberation Army (SLA) sentenced, in 2003, to 6-8 years in prison for the 1975 bank robbery and accidental killing of a bank teller.



This map illustrates the locations of the prisons that currently hold Political Prisoners in the Western U.S.

8. FCI - Dublin
MARILYN BUCK

00482-285 / Unit B
5701 8th St. Camp Parks
Dublin, CA 94568

Anti-Imperialist political prisoner who is serving an 80 year sentence for actions carried out in support of national liberation, women's liberation, social and economic justice. Among many additional charges, Buck was charged with the liberation of PP/POW Assata Shakur.

9. FCI - Tucson
LARO NICOL

FCI Tucson
Reg. #80430-008
8901 South Wilmot Road
Tucson, Arizona 85706

Charged with possession of an explosive device (model rocket supplies) and "prohibited possession of a weapon, Laro was sentenced to two years in prison. Laro's activism in Copwatch and Food Not Bombs caused him to be the target of an ATF raid on his home.

10. Mule Creek State Prison
LUIS V. RODRIGUEZ

C33000
Mule Creek State Prison
P.O. Box 409000
Ione, CA 95640

Apache/Chicano activist being framed for the murder of two cops.

11. CSP - Corcoran
RUCHELL CINQUE MAGEE

A92051
3B-05-103
Box 3466
Corcoran, CA 93212

Sole survivor of the August 7th 1970 Marin County Courthouse shootout which killed Jonathan Jackson (brother of George Jackson) and two other Black Liberation Fighters, William Christmas and James McClain. He is also a former co-defendant of Angela Davis.

12. Pelican Bay State Prison
HUGO "DAHARIKI" PINELL

A88401
POB 7500 SHU-D-214
Crescent City CA 95531

Member of the San Quentin Six, black and latino prisoners charged with the death of three prison guards during a black prison rebellion. It was during this rebellion where George Jackson was assassinated by prison guards on August 21, 1971.



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Notice

Restrictions and criteria for visiting Federal and State prisons are different. Generally, it is easier to visit state prisoners. Visiting conditions are usually better at Federal prisons. Listed below are some of the different guidelines for visiting Federal/State prisoners, and some guidelines useful to visit any prisoner. Because prisons often have restrictions on how many visits prisoners may receive per month, avoid surprising prisoners with visits as it may conflict with visits they are already expecting. Also, if arranging visits by mail, try to be specific about the day you will visit. By being vague and saying you'll visit "some time that week", you may tie up the prisoners whole week if someone else wants to visit them the same week. If two people visit on the same day, one of you will have to be turned away at the front desk. Prisons so rarely bend any rules, especially for PP/POW's, that we might as well say they never do. Prisoners who receive very few visits may tell you to visit any time. But until they give you the freedom to do so, be principled, be considerate.



Federal Prisons: To visit Federal prisoners, you must first be approved by filling out a form that the prisoner must send you in advance. In most federal prisons only people who say they had a relationship to a federal prisoner prior to their imprisonment are likely to be approved. They will ask you to describe the relationship you had and where it began. Usually, the prison will not approve people who say they visit other prisoners. Once you complete and mail the form to the prisoners counselor (the address will be provided on the visiting form sent to you by the prisoner), the prisoner will tell you if you have been approved or denied. In any case, each prisoner can tell you specifics of the prison they are held in.

State Prisons: State prisons do not require you to be placed on an approved visitors list. You will go through a metal detector at any prison you visit. In addition to this, many state prisons require you to be pat searched. State prisons also often have much stricter dress codes.

Confirm visiting days through the mail (or by phone if they call you). Plan visits ahead of time and allow enough time to reschedule a visit if your schedules conflict. Try to propose visiting days at least two or three weeks ahead of time if you are scheduling it through the mail. Work out all the details and ask all questions with the prisoner through the mail (or by phone if they call you). Ask about visiting days and hours, dress codes, maximum number of visitors allowed per visit if you plan on bringing other supporters, about getting photos of your visit, and anything else you can think of. You will not be allowed to visit without presenting a valid photo ID like a drivers license or county ID. Bring enough small bills or change for the vending machines in the visiting room so you and the prisoner can eat.

If you have any further questions you'd like answered before writing to the prisoners, more information about any of the prisoners, or would like to meet up with one of us to go on a visit, please feel free to contact us.

Los Angeles Anarchist Black Cross Federation
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Political Prisoner and Prisoner of War Profiles

By the Anarchist Black Cross Federation

The Cuban Five

The Cuban Five are Five Cuban men who are in U.S. prison, serving four life sentences and 75 years collectively, after being wrongly convicted in U.S. federal court in Miami, on June 8, 2001.

They are Gerardo Hernández, Ramón Labañino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando González and René González.

The Five were falsely accused by the U.S. government of committing espionage conspiracy against the United States, and other related charges.

But the Five pointed out vigorously in their defense that they were involved in monitoring the actions of Miami-based terrorist groups, in order to prevent terrorist attacks on their country of Cuba.

The Five's actions were never directed at the U.S. government. They never harmed anyone nor ever possessed nor used any weapons while in the United States.

The Cuban Five's mission was to stop terrorism

For more than 40 years, anti-Cuba terrorist organizations based in Miami have engaged in countless terrorist activities against Cuba, and against anyone who advocates a normalization of relations between the U.S. and Cuba. More than 3,000 Cubans have died as a result of these terrorists' attacks.

Terrorist Miami groups like Comandos F4 and Brothers to the Rescue operate with complete impunity from within the United States to attack Cuba with the knowledge and support of the FBI and CIA.

Therefore, Cuba made the careful and necessary decision to send the Five Cubans to Miami to monitor the terrorists.

The Cuban Five infiltrated the terrorist organizations in Miami to inform Cuba of imminent attacks.

The aim of such a clandestine operation by the Cuban Five at great personal risk was to prevent criminal acts, and thus protect the lives of Cubans and other people.

But instead of arresting the terrorists, the FBI arrested the Cuban Five ANTI-terrorists on September 12, 1998. The Five were illegally held in solidarity confinement for 17 months in Miami jail.

The trial began in November 2000. With the seven-month trial based in Miami, a virtual witch-hunt atmosphere existed. Defense attorneys' motions for a change of venue were denied five times by the judge, although it was obvious that a fair trial was impossible in that city.

In a blow to justice, the Cuban Five were convicted June 8, 2001 and sentenced to four life terms and 75 years in December, 2001.

A victory in appeals, then a surprise reversal.

On August 9, 2005, after seven years of unjust imprisonment, the Cuban Five won an unprecedented victory on appeal. A three-judge panel of the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the convictions of the Cuban Five and ordered a new trial outside of Miami.

However, in an unexpected reversal on Oct. 31, the 11th Circuit Court agreed to hear the U.S. prosecutors' appeal. Therefore the opinion overturning the Cuban Five's convictions has been set aside while a new appeal is heard.

The year 2006 will be critical for the struggle to win freedom for the Cuban Five. The National Committee to Free the Cuban Five asks all people who believe in justice to join in this national campaign.

The MOVE 9

Delbert Orr Africa, William Phillips Africa, Edward Goodman Africa, Charles Sims Africa, Michael Davis Africa, Debbie Sims Africa, Jannie Phillips Africa, Janet Holloway Africa, and Merle Africa

Over many years Philadelphia's power structure earned itself a reputation for brutal treatment of radical and revolutionary Black movements. In 1966 the Philadelphia police, under their notorious chief Frank Rizzo, raided four meeting places of the civil rights organization SNCC, planting dynamite in one of the

locations to justify further repression. In 1970 Rizzo's men raided three offices of the Black Panther Party. Many people still remember with anger how Philly police beat the arrested Panthers, then forced them to strip off their clothes and line up naked in public.

In the 1970s then-Mayor Rizzo attacked a new organization, MOVE, that was emerging from Philadelphia's Black community. MOVE refused to respect present-day America and its prevailing values. Its members openly defied official power and tirelessly preached against a system that they considered utterly corrupt and destructive of life on this planet, particularly through the use of modern technology. And when threatened and confronted by the authorities, they did not back down. From its beginning, MOVE has exposed the rulers of this society for the liars, racists and murderers that they are.

1978

Confrontations escalated between MOVE and the Philadelphia power structure. MOVE members were constantly arrested and harassed. In late 1977 the police launched a siege of the MOVE house in the neighborhood called Powelton Village. After ten months of continuous conflict, 600 police attacked MOVE's house. Gunfire erupted. MOVE members were brutalized and arrested.

On August 8th, 1978 at about five o'clock in the morning, MOVE members awoke by unfamiliar sounds and voices. Several hundred police officers had surrounded their Powelton

Village home in an attempt to permanently evict the MOVE from their home. By the time MOVE members gathered children and pets into the basement, the police had already begun smashing windows and yelling over a loud speaker. Before they knew it, water was coming through the holes where the windows used to be. The police then began shooting tear gas and bullets into the MOVE home. The police (who had surrounded the house) were firing into it while telling MOVE members to come out. When MOVE members started to surrender, a Philadelphia police officer had been shot (from above and behind) and killed.

All five MOVE men were beaten badly, several times, but only Delbert's beating was caught on camera. There were 7 women and 5 men arrested only 4 MOVE women and 5 MOVE men ended convicted and sentenced to 30-100 years each. None of the MOVE 9 had weapons charges and witnesses testified that the only people having weapons, were the cops.

In 1981 the authorities attacked Mumia Abu-Jamal, a well respected radio reporter and MOVE supporter. Mumia was shot, beaten, and framed for murder by the police.

In the face of all this repression, MOVE continued to fight to free Mumia and its imprisoned family members called the MOVE 9.

After MOVE moved into a new house on Osage Avenue, police agents worked with conservative elements in the surrounding

community to create a new confrontation with MOVE.

The Bombing in West Philly

By dawn, May 13, 1985, after months of planning, hundreds of police armed with automatic weapons had surrounded the MOVE house at 6221 Osage. Police Commissioner Sambor shouted through a bullhorn: *"Attention, MOVE! This is America! You have to abide by the laws of the United States."* During the hours that followed, the police pounded the MOVE house with thousands of bullets. Then, at 5:25 in the early evening, a police helicopter dropped a *bomb* onto MOVE's roof---packed with C-4 military explosive provided by the FBI. The explosion ignited a firestorm. The MOVE house burned, and flames spread to the surrounding row houses. Firefighters were ordered to let the fire burn.

The whole surrounding block of homes--61 houses in all--were destroyed. Over 200 people were suddenly homeless. It was a hard lesson for neighborhood residents who had collaborated with the police against MOVE.

Only two MOVE family members survived: Ramona Africa, age 30, and Birdie Africa, age 13. Intense police sniper fire stopped the other MOVE members from escaping. Several were shot. Those forced back into the burning building died in the flames.

The MOVE 9 have remained in prison since 1978 and have been forced to watch their families and loved ones being attacked by the state.

On March 13, 1998, Merle Africa died in prison under questionable circumstances.

Queens Two

As a direct result of their BPP membership and progressive political views, Bashir and Abdul were hunted, captured, framed and convicted of the 1981 murder and attempted murder of two police officers in St. Albans, Queens. On the night of April 1981, two NYPD officers were fired on by two suspects during a traffic stop. Police claim that the stop in connection with several burglaries, while they also claim the van was pulled over because of its connection to the liberation of Assata Shakur from a New Jersey prison.

Regardless of the reason for the stop, the occupants exited the car and opened fire on the police, shooting both officers-killing one and injuring the other. A few days after the shooting, police began circulating a folder of "suspects" which consisted exclusively of former members of the Black Panther Party and their associates. Bashir and Abdul (James York and Anthony LaBorde) were identified in the media as chief suspects and targets of a "shoot to kill" manhunt.

Bashir was arrested in August 1981 in South Carolina. Abdul was arrested in Philadelphia in January, 1982 and was brutally beaten by police after his arrest. Over a five-year period, Bashir and Abdul were tried three times for this incident, the main witness being a man who was hypnotized by the police. The first two trials the jury was

deadlocked and the government was unable to successfully convict the two panthers. The third trial was presided over by Judge Gallagher (son and brother of a cop). Throughout the trial, cops harassed Abdul and Bashir's family members and supporters. A racially stacked jury in the third trial returned a guilty verdict and sentenced Abdul and Bashir to 33 1/3 years to life.

For the past fifteen years, although Abdul and Bashir have been forced to live behind bars, as political prisoners they have continued to challenge injustice. In 1996, Abdul and Bashir's lawyers went before the Court of Appeals in Albany, New York. They argued the District Attorneys, in violation of the law, systematically excluded Blacks from the jury. This assertion by the defense team was clearly borne out by District Attorney Gregory Lasak. During a 1992 evidentiary hearing, D.A. Lasak attempted to justify to the Court why Blacks had been excluded by stating that

"These cop-killing revolutionaries had gotten away in two previous trials and this was probably our last chance to get them. We couldn't take the chance of those religious people serving as jurors in this trial."

Predictably, the courts denied their appeal.

The government has been very uncooperative about turning over requested documents being sought by me under the Freedom of Information Act. During the three trials there were deliberate acts by law enforcement agencies to hide certain evidence helpful to the

defense. Attorneys are still in the process of trying to make law enforcement agencies turn over all evidence in this case. Since their imprisonment repression against the Queens Two has only increased. Abdul Majid been harassed, seriously assaulted twice, and denied proper medical treatment as a result of the assaults. He has been refused certain programs offered to general population because of his political background. Bashir, a devout Muslim has applied his religious and political principals to struggle against injustice and racism behind the walls. As a result of his activities, Bashir has gained the widespread respect of prisoners. In 1987, Bashir was transferred to Shawangunk after being targeted as an alleged organizer of a strike. He spent three years in solitary confinement, not as a result of disciplinary infraction, but solely due to his political and religious beliefs.

Bashir is constantly accused of being involved in any and every action that takes place wherever he is incarcerated. As a result, he is continuously transferred and harassed by prison guards.

New York 3

On May 21, 1971, two New York City police officers were fatally shot. This shooting occurred within the context of two major national trends: the growth of black revolutionary groups such as the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense and, later, its armed wing, the Black Liberation Army; and at the same time, the FBI operation under Director J. Edgar Hoover, with the cooperation of the Nixon

administration, to destroy the leaders and memberships of both mainstream civil rights and militant black organizations. This counterintelligence operation, called COINTELPRO, targeted black leaders by infiltrating the Black Liberation Movement, framing members of the movements for crimes, and even murdering them, in order to get them off the streets and out of contact with the community. The shooting of these two police officers also came immediately after the infamous trial of the "Panther 21," a case in New York against 21 members of the BPP charged with planning "terrorist" acts. After nearly a two-year trial all 21 defendants were acquitted.

Three months after the killings, on August 28, 1971, Jalil Abdul Muntaqim (Anthony Bottom) and Albert Nuh Washington were arrested in San Francisco during an armed confrontation with police. Their arrests came only one week after the assassination of BPP Field Marshall, George Jackson. They were later charged with the New York killings. Nearly two years later, Herman Bell was arrested in New Orleans. Also arrested and charged in the case were Gabriel and Francisco Torres although charges the two brothers were acquitted due to lack of evidence.

The first trial, then against the New York 5 (including the Torres brothers), ended in a mistrial. In that trial only one vote was cast to convict Nuh Washington. The Torres brothers were acquitted in the second trial. But at the end of a second trial, in 1975, the New York Three (Nuh, Jalil,

and Herman) were convicted of first degree murder, weapons possession, and conspiracy.

All three members of the New York Three were specifically named in COINTELPRO documents as members of the black liberation movement who had to be "neutralized." These documents, and the media smear campaign enacted by the FBI and the White House, claimed that these community and human rights activists were "terrorists". This domestic program of political repression was revealed by a 1976 congressional committee, the Church Commission, to have utilized extra-legal methods to neutralize social justice movements, including surveillance, beatings, torture, harassment, instigating violent feuds between rival individuals and organizations, coercion and intimidation of witnesses, isolating and bad jacketing influential leaders, as well as outright murder. In fact, a major reason that many BPP and BLA members were forced to go underground and arm themselves was the deadly FBI-instigated split in the party between factions led by Eldridge Cleaver and Huey P. Newton.

Despite the media perception that the BPP were "terrorists," the main activities conducted by the New York Three and other members of the BPP were running programs designed to serve the community, such as the Free Breakfast program for children; health care programs, such as sickle-cell anemia testing and lead poisoning prevention; legal and political

education; and anti-drug activities.

Clearly, the NY3 and other political prisoners are imprisoned not because of crimes they actually committed, but for their political activity and J. Edgar Hoover's racist and personal war against members of the black liberation and civil rights movement. The New York Three continue to fight for their freedom and maintain their innocence. Herman and Jalil are now two of the longest held political prisoners in the US. Each member of the NY3 has served almost 30 years. On April 28, 2000, Albert Nuh Washington passed away after a long, painful battle with liver cancer. Jalil and Herman are currently serving their sentences.

Virgin Island Five (aka Fountain Valley Five)

"Virgin Island Five" are group of activists accused of murdering eight people in the U.S. Virgin Islands. The murders took place during a turbulent period of rebellion on the Islands. During the 1970's, as with much of the world, a movement to resist colonial rule began to grow in the U.S. occupied Virgin Islands.

From 1971 to 1973, there was a small scale Mau Mau rebellion taking place on the islands. This activity was downplayed by the media, for fear it would damage the tourist industry, which the island's survival depends on.

Then on September 6th, 1972, eight American tourists were gunned down at the Rockefeller-owned golf course on the island of St.Croix. Quickly the colonial

authorities picked up over one hundred blacks for interrogations, and the U.S. colonial troops carried out a series of repressive acts of violence against the black community. The F.B.I. and the United States Army troops led a 300-man invasion force into the islands and used strong armed tactics to conduct house to house searches of the low income areas.

The island was put under virtual martial law, and eventually five men who Ismail Ali, Warren (Aziz) Ballantine, Meral (Malik) Smith, Raphael (Kwesi) Joseph, and Hanif Shabazz Bey were apprehended and then charged with the attack. All the men were known supporters of the Virgin Island independence movement. The five were charged after being subjected to vicious torture, in order to extract confessions. They were beaten, hung from their feet and necks from trees, subject to electric shocks with "cattle prods", had plastic bags tied over their heads and had water forced up their noses by the "defenders of the law." The judge (Warren Young) overlooking the case prior to being placed on the federal bench worked as Rockefeller's private attorney and and even handled legal matters for the Fountain Valley Golf Course.

Eventually, the five went to trial in what became known as the "Fountain Valley" murder trial.

This was an obvious Kangaroo Court and a mockery of any sense of a fair trial. On August 13, 1973, each of the five men convicted and sentenced to eight(8) consecutive life terms.

A look at the incredible conduct of the trial will tell anyone why:

The court refused to excuse juror member Laura Torres, former wife of detective Jorge Torres, one of the arresting officers. Nine jurors testified that during the deliberations they were threatened with F.B.I. investigations on themselves and members of their families, and also threats of prosecution.

The jury deliberated for nine days, and told the judge that they were "hopelessly deadlocked", yet he still refused to dismiss them and call a mistrial which worked to compel a guilty verdict.

Four jurors, including the jury foreman, signed statements that they had been forced into a guilty verdict by the judge, police, and FBI. One juror who's daughter was charged with bank robbery several years before, was told that those charges could be brought up again if she did not find the accused guilty.

The court refused to throw out the "fake confessions", even after it was proven that they were obtained through torture. Even the Assistant District Attorney Joel Sacks and several police officers testified and admitted that they knew the dependents had been tortured, and that the "confessions" extracted had been obtained by such methods.

Today, Warren (Aziz) Ballantine, Meral (Malik) Smith, and Hanif Shabazz Bey are all confined in federal prisons. Ismail Ali was liberated to Cuba via an airplane hijacking in 1984. Raphael (Kwesi) Joseph was granted a

pardon by the V.I. governor in 1992. Six years later Kwesi was mysteriously found dead of poison-laced drug overdose, after it was said that he was about to reveal evidence that would have exonerated at least one or more defendant.



Alvara Luna Hernandez

In the 1990s, Alvaro was recognized as the national coordinator of the Ricardo Aldape Guerra Defense Committee, which led the struggle to free Mexican national Aldape Guerra from Texas' death row after being framed by Houston police. Alvaro did local Houston and national organizing around the case, and was instrumental in winning Adalpe Guerra's freedom from prison. In March 1993, Alvaro was a non-governmental organization (NGO) delegate before the 49th session of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, Switzerland. Before the U.N. General Assembly, he exposed the U.S. government's dismal human rights record and its human rights violations of U.S. political prisoners.

Alvaro was a public speaker invited to speak at many colleges, universities and conferences in this country. His topics ranged from injustices of the criminal justice system against people of color, to self-determination, human rights and political prisoners. His eloquent, dynamic presentations would electrify audiences. In addition, Alvaro spearheaded the National Movement of La Raza, Stop the Violence Youth Committee and the Prisoners Solidarity Committee in Houston.

On July 18, 1996, Sheriff Jack McDaniel of Alpine, Texas, went to arrest Alvaro at his home on a charge of aggravated robbery (later dismissed with Alvaro as his own counsel). No warrant for the arrest was issued. When the unarmed Alvaro questioned the sheriff's action, the officer drew

his weapon. Before he could shoot, Alvaro disarmed him and fled. Alvaro was aware the police had been monitoring him since his arrival in Alpine and had often expressed fears he would be assassinated by the police. At his trial, police said they felt Alvaro was a "troublemaker" and Alvaro knew his history as a barrio organizer made him a target of law enforcement who were used to little resistance from the Chicano Mexican community. The police in west Texas have a history of abuse, frame-ups and brutality against Mexicanos. 90% of felony indictments are against Chicanos in a county whose population is 50% Mexican-American.

In fear for his life, Alvaro eluded police. Days later, Alvaro returned to his mother's house. A heavily armed law enforcement contingent converged on the home. Without identifying themselves, police began shooting indiscriminately at the house, cars parked in front and at the public streetlights. At trial, witnesses described the police shooting as a "war zone." Alvaro returned fire in self-defense but never shot nor injured anyone. Alvaro dialed 911 (emergency) and alerted other officials that police were shooting at him and would not allow him to surrender. Eventually, the situation deescalated and Alvaro was taken into custody.

Alvaro was charged with two counts of aggravated assault - one count for disarming the sheriff and one count for a wound suffered by Sgt. Curtis Hines from a ricocheting police

bullet. Alvaro's elderly mother was charged with "hindering apprehension" and jailed.

Protests demanding Alvaro's release were staged outside the courthouse in Odessa during the trial. Other protests were held in El Paso, Texas; San Diego, California; and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. On June 2-9, 1997, Alvaro was convicted of "threatening" the sheriff, but acquitted on the charge of shooting Sgt. Hines. He received a 50-year sentence. His case is currently on appeal.

Learn more at
<http://www.freealvaro.org>

Avelino Gonzalez Claudio

In August of 1985, Avelino Gonzalez Claudio was accused of participating in the planning and authorization of an operation to secure \$7,117,000 from a Wells Fargo armored truck in Hartford, Connecticut on September 12, 1983, along with other Puerto Ricans and two North Americans. The operation was carried out by a clandestine organization fighting for the independence of Puerto Rico, the PRTP-Macheteros. Avelino was not arrested at the time. However, more than 20 years later, he was arrested in Manati, Puerto Rico, on February 7, 2008.

Avelino was born in the town of Vega Baja on October 8, 1942. As a student at the University of Puerto Rico, he became a member and then vice-president of the Pro-Independence University Federation (Federación Universitaria Pro Independencia-FUPI). In the mid-1960s, he married and

moved to New York City, earning his living on Wall Street, and working with the Puerto Rican community, joining and then leading the Vito Marcantonio Mission of the Movimiento Pro-Independencia (MPI) in New York. He and his family of four children returned to Puerto Rico, where he worked in the independence movement, including administering the political journal *Pensamiento Critico* (Critical Thought).

When the arrests of 1985 took place, and Avelino was not arrested, he assumed the identity of Jose Ortega, and, while the FBI pursued him, he lived a quiet life, working as a computer teacher to support his family and contributing constructively to his nation, seeking to improve the services provided by the Department of Education.

The charges against those arrested in 1985 had various results: Carlos Ayes, Filiberto Ojeda, Juan Segarra, Norman Ramirez and Roberto Maldonado went to trial in 1989; Ivonne Melendez Carrión also went to trial; some were acquitted, others convicted and sentenced to terms ranging from one year to 55 years; while Orlando Gonzalez, Hilton Fernandez Diamante, Jorge A. Farinacci, Isaac Camacho, Elias Castro and Angel Días Ruiz negotiated a plea agreement in 1992. They were sentenced to terms of five years in prison. Two others have never been arrested: Avelino's brother Norberto and Victor Gerena, and are being sought by the FBI.

Avelino is currently being held in Somers, the state of

Connecticut's supermax prison, far from his family and his nation, where he is locked down 23 hours a day, with no access to family visits or phone calls, in conditions which are calculated not only to interfere with his ability to prepare a defense, but which are tantamount to torture. He is awaiting trial in federal court in Hartford.

Bill Dunne

"I was made a prisoner of the state on October 14, 1979 in Seattle, Washington. Late that evening, I was picked up by paramedics while under the influence of police bullets near a shot-up and wrecked car containing some weapons and a dead jail escapee.

According to the ensuing state and federal charges, I and a codefendant and unknown other associates of a San Francisco anarchist collective had conspired to effect a comrade's armed liberation from a Seattle jail and attempted to execute the plot on October 14, 1979. The charges further alleged the operation was financed by bank expropriation and materially facilitated by illegal acquisition of weapons, explosives, vehicles, ID and other equipment.

After long subjection to atrocious jail conditions and three sensationalized trials, I got a 90 year sentence in 1980. I subsequently got a consecutive 15 years as a result of an attempted self-emancipation in 1983. The aggregate 105 years is a "parole when they feel like it" sort of sentence.

I have no confidence in the American system of purported justice. It is designed to protect

and advance the interests of the ruling class and is operated by people who identify much more with that class than with mine. Rarely, however, may this complicated social system's procedures be exploited by the people they are intended to suppress. Accordingly, I have contested my imprisonment legally, and recently filed another challenge. Contrary to applicable law, my federal conspiracy prosecution constituted double jeopardy, secret government information was used in imposing the sentence, and the written sentence is 50 years longer than the controlling oral sentence. That challenge languishes in federal court in Seattle.

My political motivation is without reservation radical left up to and including the left of people's revolution by any means necessary. I know of no single ideology whose name adequately defines my politics. The names traditionally associated with left formations (anarchist, communist, socialist, etc.) have become too vague and diffuse to be sufficiently defining. They have been tied to such a wide array of failed sects and moribund social organizations that it is impossible to know if they offer the solutions requisite to real world revolution. Clarity is important in political interchange. If seeking it requires avoiding easy nomenclature that might carry unintended baggage and necessitates inconveniently long explanations, so be it.

I cannot define as an anarchist because while the ultimate end of all left struggle is the anarcho-

communism the withering of the state will leave, the many anarchisms lack the structure to get from here to there. Nevertheless, I recognize the value of anarchy's contributions in promoting local autonomy, rejecting excessive hierarchy, and incorporating a broader spectrum of human activity into political consciousness.

I cannot define as a communist because the structures that have grown out of communist thought have been too prone to authoritarian deformations and rigidity, and the many communisms lack the flexibility to resist pressure in those directions. Yet I nevertheless recognize Marx, Lenin, Che and other communists as high on the list of contributors to liberating theory and practice.

Neither do I define as a socialist because that can mean virtually anything from national socialist fascism leftward. I nevertheless recognize the present objective of revolutionary struggle as a world socialism in the most radically left sense where all people have the greatest possible freedom to develop their full human potential. The pursuit of material, political and social equality on every level is close to my core.

I am a collectivist, long having recognized that in numbers there is strength and capability and security and satisfaction. There is more humanity in cooperation than in isolation. I am a technician, knowing that we, the people, can create the revolutionary material and social technology that will free us. I am an advocate of both local

autonomy and federated centralization, a balance ensuring the equitable distribution of power. I am a supporter of all progressive struggles against imperial capital. I am a partisan of armed and other subterranean struggle as unavoidable in furtherance of class war. Revolution is not and never will be legal. I am a prisoner of war (class war.) Class is the source and sustenance of what makes revolution necessary.

I am also happily atheist, anti-sexist, anti-racist, globalist, anti-authoritarian, environmentalist, anti-imperialist, democratic (little d). However, none of those sufficiently characterizes my politics over the others that I can define myself by any of them alone. Rather than a gaggle of competitive "identities," my vision of the road to revolution encompasses all of them as necessarily synergistic strands we must weave into a new social fabric.

I see that road running not only through traditional forms of struggle, but also in new and innovative directions. Creating an alternative socio-economic base of collective living and working situations is one. That will help us drive past the apparatus of repression's increasing capacity to co-opt and suppress older forms of struggle and develop our theory and practice in the process. The diverse organs of that base will grow together into a body politic of interwoven free zones, displacing ruling class institutions with our own.

My present lack of formal identification with a particular theoretical system does not prevent me from struggle. Exclusive adherence to a hard line is not necessary to finding comrades or laying down positive practice. Revolution road is not that narrow at this juncture, nor should it be. Ultimately, we of the left have a common destination: the collective to which humanity will evolve, faster or slower according to the efficacy of our work.

Toward attaining that destination, we need to cooperate in creating a new revolutionary praxis synthesizing the lessons of the past and a clear analysis of the present. With mutual struggle, we can weld the diverse elements of our side of the barricade into a powerful weapon against the depredations of imperial capital. Our overwhelming human commonality can and must make it an all people's tool of emancipation from the class enemy that afflicts us all." *(written in January 12, 1998)*

Around 1982, Dunne was transferred by the State of Washington to the federal system. He is currently held in USP Big Sandy in Kentucky.

Byron Shane Chubbuck

Byron Shane Chubbuck is an indigenous activists serving 80 years in prison for a series of bank expropriations throughout the southwest. He is part of the wolf clan Cherokee/Choctaw, raised in New Mexico. His indigenous name is Oso Blanco.

Chubbuck was known by the FBI as 'Robin the Hood' because he informed the bank tellers he was expropriating funds to assist the poor and indigenous people fighting for independence in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas. Chubbuck began his campaign in 1998 until his capture in August of 1999.

In August 13, 1999, two FBI agents investigating the series of bank expropriations came to Chubbuck's apartment. The agents were interviewing Chubbuck's wife when he entered. A shootout between the agents and Chubbuck erupted and he was able to flee. During the shootout no one was injured.

Chubbuck was found a little while later in an adjacent apartment with family members. The FBI surrounded the apartment and within a half hour, Chubbuck allowed the the family members to leave unharmed. Chubbuck, however, bashed through the walls in the building to slip into adjacent apartments in an effort to escape. He went through two or three apartments before emerging more than two hours later. Chubbuck tried to run but captured after being shot with several bean bags and attacked by a police dog.

He was charged with the robbery of 13 banks and the attempted robbery of a fourteenth. In addition to the robberies, he was also charged with two counts of assaulting a peace officer, two counts of possessing and discharging a firearm, and one count of being a felon in possession of a firearm, all in connection the standoff.

On December 21, 2000, Byron Chubbuck, was being transported by the US Marshall's service from Albuquerque Federal Court to Santa Fe County Jail, when, after unlocking his handcuffs, kicked out the back window of the prison transport van. According to statement made by Chubbuck on a radio interview, the key to the handcuffs was purchased from a prison guard.

During his escape, Chubbuck continued to expropriate funds to send to Chiapas, Mexico. Authorities believe he expropriated funds from about eight banks after his self-liberation. He was place in the "15 most wanted" fugitive list by the Marshals Service.

On February 2001, Chubbuck was recaptured after sustaining a gunshot wound to his chest, shot by Albuquerque police.

In the end, Chubbuck was accused of expropriating funds from about 20-22 banks. He was convicted on 14 of those charges. It is estimated that he expropriated at least \$165,000.

Carlos Alberto Torres

Carlos was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico in 1952. His family soon emigrated to New York and then to Chicago.

In his junior year in high school he was able to participate in his first Puerto Rican history class, offered by Aspira. He studied sociology at Southern Illinois University and later at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

At the U. of I. he became involved in the struggles against

the racist teachings of Shockley, Crittenden and other sociologists, as well as for Latino recruitment to the university.

Carlos was involved in issues in the community related to police brutality, slum landlords, corrupt politicians and the colonial case of Puerto Rico.

In 1980 he was arrested and charged with seditious conspiracy and related charges, and sentenced to 78 years in prison. The parole commission recently told him he must serve another 15 years in prison before they will consider his case. His release date is 2024.

After his arrest, his daughter Clarissa, then age 3, was whisked out of the country, for fear the government would make good on its threats to harm her. Clarissa, a recent high school graduate, is reunited with her family and working in San Francisco to save money for college.

Daniel McGowan

Daniel McGowan is an American environmental activist who was arrested and charged in federal court on multiple counts of arson and conspiracy, relating to the arson of Superior Lumber company in Glendale, Oregon on January 2, 2001 and Jefferson Poplar Farms in Clatskanie, Oregon on May 21, 2001 claimed by the Earth Liberation Front. McGowan was facing a minimum of life in prison if convicted when he accepted a non-cooperation plea agreement on November 9, 2006. His arrest is part of what the US government has dubbed Operation Backfire.

Biography

New York native McGowan has worked on many activist issues including military counter-recruitment, demonstrations against the Republican National Convention, the Really Really Free market, and the support of prisoners such as Jeff Luers and others. McGowan was a graduate student earning a Master's degree in acupuncture and was an employee of WomensLaw.org, a nonprofit group that helps women in domestic abuse situations navigate the legal system.

Arrest and Operation Backfire

On December 7, 2005, one of the largest arrests of environmental activists in American history began. Using the code name Operation Backfire, the FBI arrested six people. Chelsea Gerlach, William Rodgers, Kendall Tankersley, Kevin Tubbs, Daniel McGowan and Stanislas Meyerhoff were arrested for allegedly taking part in a wide variety of violent crimes, including arson and domestic terrorism.

Stanislas Meyerhoff agreed to be a federal cooperating witness almost immediately upon arrest and interrogation. On December 22, William "Avalon" Rodgers was found dead in his cell in Flagstaff, Arizona, from an apparent suicide.

At first, those arrested were indicted separately with certain individuals facing numerous trials for each separate alleged incident. On January 20, federal prosecutors, the head of the FBI, and US Attorney General

Alberto Gonzales held a press conference announcing a sweeping 65-count indictment, including two conspiracy charges, against 11 individuals relating to 17 different incidents in Oregon, Washington and California. In addition to the six people arrested on December 7, the Oregon indictment also named Jonathan Paul, Suzanne Savoie, Joseph Dibee, Rebecca Rubin and Josephine Overaker.

The Oregon indictment charged certain defendants with arson, attempted arson, and using and carrying a destructive device. The destructive device charge, 18 USC 924(c), carries a 30-year mandatory sentence and a life sentence for a second conviction of the charge.

On June 28, the government arraigned Nathan Block, Joyanna Zacher, Daniel and Jonathan Paul on a new 65-count superseding indictment. All four pled not guilty.

Criticism of prosecution

McGowan had originally been indicted separately, but his arrest comes in the context of a well-coordinated, multi-state sweep of numerous activists by the federal government, who have charged the individuals with practically every earth and animal liberation case left unsolved in the Northwest. Many of the charges, including McGowan's, are for cases whose statute of limitations were about to expire.

McGowan's case has been considered to be part of the US government's 'Green Scare': a term alluding to the Red Scare of the 1940s-50s, and an expression used by

environmental activists to refer to action taken by the U.S. government against the radical environmentalist movement. The name the federal government has given to this case is Operation Backfire and to date, over 15 activists have been arrested and indicted.

The Christian Science Monitor reports that the "Operation Backfire" indictments have elicited concern, from activists, that authorities have "cracked the super-secrecy of ALF and ELF". Alternative media organizations have condemned the arrests, some calling them a "witch hunt", "aimed at disrupting and discrediting political movements". Activists, maintaining the Red Scare allusion, claim the operations are "fishing expedition[s]" carried out "in the midst of 9/11 McCarthyism. The FBI disputes these claims, Director Robert Mueller claiming the agency takes action "only when volatile talk crosses the line into violence and criminal activity".

Plea agreement

On November 9, 2006, McGowan and co-defendants Jonathan Paul, Joyanna Zacher and Nathan Block pled guilty and signed a non-cooperation plea agreement with the government. This agreement does not require cooperation (informing on others) on the part of the defendants.

Zacher and Block each pled to one count of conspiracy, attempted arson, and two separate incidents of arson. McGowan pled to conspiracy and to two separate incidents of arson. The government is

recommending they be sentenced to 96 months in federal prison. Paul pled to one count of arson and one count of conspiracy. The government is recommending Paul be sentenced to 60 months in prison. All four defendants are free to argue for a lesser sentence.

Federal prosecutors have asked the court to apply a "terrorism enhancement" at sentencing. The defendants could face up to 20 years in prison in addition to the terms of the plea agreement. The government is seeking the "terrorism enhancement" despite the fact that the crimes to which they have admitted responsibility only involve the destruction of private property; no government property was damaged in any of the incidents.

Sentencing

On June 4, 2007, Daniel McGowan was sentenced to 7 years in federal prison at a location to be determined. U.S. District Court Judge Ann Aiken presided over the sentencing, which took place at Oregon Federal Court in Eugene, Oregon. Judge Aiken applied a "terrorism enhancement" to the sentence, and McGowan was also ordered to pay \$1.9 million in restitution.

David Gilbert

American radical organizer, author and prisoner David Gilbert (b. 1944) was a founding member of Columbia University Students for a Democratic Society and member of The Weather Underground Organization. Following eleven years underground he was arrested with members of the

Black Liberation Army and other radicals following a botched armored car robbery in 1981. He is now a well-known prisoner serving time in upstate New York.

David Gilbert grew up in a Jewish family in Brookline, Massachusetts, a suburb of Boston. Inspired in his teens by the Greensboro sit-ins and other events of the American Civil Rights Movement, he joined the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) at age seventeen. He entered Columbia University in 1962. In his junior year he helped to found the Independent Committee Against the War in Vietnam [ICV] and later the school's chapter of Students for a Democratic Society. He travelled regularly to Harlem while working as a tutor, and saw Malcolm X speak at Barnard College in February 1965, experiences he describes as formative. Known by the late '60s primarily as a young theorist, publishing articles in New Left Notes and other movement publications, he went on to play an organizing role in the April-May 1968 Columbia student strike.

As Columbia SDS grew during the Spring 1967 term, Gilbert tended to return to the Columbia campus only to offer a "radical education" counter-course for Columbia SDS freshmen and sophomores in a lounge in Ferris Booth Hall. Most of his activism was centered downtown at the New School for Social Research or at the New York SDS Regional Office.

Gilbert's father was a liberal Democrat who worked as a

manager in a toy company and Gilbert was still just a left-liberal Democrat, politically, when he entered Columbia College in the fall of 1962. But by the fall of 1965, Gilbert was speaking on the sundial against the war in Viet Nam at ICV rallies, was a revolutionary communist and New Left radical on a political level, somewhat bohemian culturally and very intellectual, morally passionate and earnest. He always seemed to be in a pleasant and enthusiastic mood. He also seemed to be one of the New Left activists around campus who knew the most about any politically relevant subject. As an orator and agitator, Gilbert was also quite good. And as a day-to-day organizer, Gilbert was very hardworking.

After graduating from Columbia College in June 1966, Gilbert spent most of his days and evenings during the fall of 1967 downtown attending grad school at the New School, building an SDS chapter there or attending meetings at the New York SDS Regional Office. He and other New York Regional SDS activists were both working to build SDS and attempting to build an "adult," non-student Movement for a Democratic Society [MDS] of ex-student radical professionals who had left the campus scene, for meaningless off-campus 9-to-5 jobs. In addition, Gilbert spent his spare-time studying Marx's Das Kapital book and writing New Left theoretical papers on imperialism and U.S. domestic consumption, consumerism and "the new working-class." In October 1967, Gilbert looked somewhat like Marx, himself, having grown a long beard.

In 1969 SDS split into different ideological factions and Weatherman emerged, its purpose being to build up armed struggle amidst young white Americans in support of the Black Panthers and other militant groups and also oppose the war in Vietnam via actions that "Bring the War Home". Gilbert joined this group in 1969 with his friend Ted Gold, who in early 1970 would die in the infamous New York City townhouse explosion that killed three Weather members. The group's participants went into hiding at this point, and the organization was renamed the Weather Underground.

Exactly what Gilbert did in the Weather Underground between 1970 and the group's demise around 1975 is not known. Not on the group's coordinating committee (the Weather Bureau) he did act as a regional leader, spending at least some of these years in Colorado. The Weather Underground committed several bombings and actions in this period against government and business targets. As support for the group began to wane on the left the pace of actions lessened and some members of the Weather Underground reemerged. Most were not prosecuted or did not serve time in prison despite having been sought by the police for years; police misconduct was the cause of many charges eventually being thrown out of court (see: COINTELPRO). Gilbert did not emerge, however; he and his partner Kathy Boudin remained active even following the birth of their son Chesa Boudin in August 1980.

In the late 1970s or early 1980s Gilbert and other white activists took the name RATF (Revolutionary Armed Task Force), declaring their solidarity with the Black Liberation Army (BLA). In 1981, this group participated along with several members of the BLA in an attempt to rob a Brinks armored car at the Nanuet Mall, near Nyack, New York. While Gilbert and Boudin waited in a U-Haul truck in a nearby parking lot, armed BLA members took another vehicle to the mall, where a Brinks truck was making a delivery. They confronted the guards and immediately began firing, almost severing the arm of guard Joe Trombino and killing his co-worker, Peter Paige. The four then took \$1.6 million in cash and sped off to transfer into the waiting U-Haul. The truck was soon stopped by police, who were looking for black, not white, perpetrators, and therefore did not suspect Gilbert and Boudin. Officers questioning the couple were then attacked by BLA members who emerged from the back of the vehicle. Two police officers, Waverly L. Brown and Edward J. O'Grady, died in the shootout. Gilbert fled the scene with other RATF and BLA members but was later caught by police, tried, and sentenced in 1983 to 75 years for three counts of felony manslaughter. His extremely long sentence for participating in this action (especially when compared to Kathy Boudin's 20-years-to-life, from which she has been paroled) may be due to his decision not to participate in his trial, not recognizing the authority of the state to try him.

Gilbert co-founded an inmate peer education program on HIV and AIDS in the Auburn Correctional Facility in 1987, and a similar more successful project in Great Meadows Prison in Comstock following his transfer there. He has published book reviews and essays in a number of small/independent newspapers and journals which were collected into the anthology *No Surrender: Writings from an Anti-Imperialist Political Prisoner* (Abraham Guillen Press) in 2004. He has also published longer single pieces on the topic of misleading AIDS conspiracy theories and white working class political consciousness. The 2003 documentary *The Weather Underground* featured interview segments with Gilbert, raising his profile beyond those in the small political prisoner support network who have been following his progress since his incarceration. The DVD release of *The Weather Underground* features a longer interview with Gilbert as an extra.

He has served time in numerous upstate New York prisons, and is currently at the Clinton Correctional Institution in Dannemora NY.

Ed Poindexter

Ed Poindexter and Mondo we Langa (formerly David Rice), have been incarcerated on life sentences for the 1971 bombing death of an Omaha policeman. Both have insisted they never manufactured a bomb, and never instructed a 16-year-old to make a 911 call to lure police to a trap which would kill one policeman and badly injure another. So much evidence has

come to light since their convictions corroborate their story that Amnesty International and the Lincoln NAACP have called for their release, or for a new trial.

Ed Poindexter is a former member of the Black Panther Party. David Rice was a known member of the NCCF. (National Committee to Combat Fascism) This group consisted of Black Panther members that were working to protect the black community from police brutality. David Rice was Minister of Information in the NCCF. Rice's political actions were a large part of why he was convicted. We have documents to show that the FBI helped to suppress evidence in this case that would have completely discredited the key witness against the convicted men. At the time of the bombing, the FBI was actively spying on U.S. citizens and working to subvert groups that were working to advance the rights of African Americans and American Indians.

Jaan Karl Laaman

Jaan Karl Laaman is an Anti-Imperialist political prisoner, imprisoned for actions carried out by United Freedom Front (UFF) a left-wing guerrilla group active in the US in the early '80s. He is currently serving a 98 years sentence for charges ranging from Seditious Conspiracy, firefights with government forces and weapon possession.

In the 1960's, Jaan was involved in various grassroots movements, ranging from the peace movement, anti-racist struggles to the labor organizing.

During this time, he joined the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), where he worked side by side with Black Panther Party and Young Lords organizing the youth. Due to a combination of government repression and slow progress of the movements of change, Jaan joined up with the underground revolutionary movement.

On January 16, 1972, a group calling itself the People's Liberation Army in New Hampshire planted four bombs in various locations in Manchester, New Hampshire. Three of the bombs exploded shattering the windows of police and fire headquarters. The fourth device was found unexploded in the police chief's office.

Jaan Laaman and another person, Anne Holt, were arrested and charged with the attacks. The Justice Department stated they found a letter on one of the arrested claiming responsibility for the action. Jaan was subsequently sentenced to 20 years in prison. After winning an appeal and getting some of his sentence reduced, he was released in 1978.

Jaan quickly stepped back into the political life and in 1979 he and his comrade Kazi Toure helped to organize the Amandla Festival of Unity. This concert, which featured Bob Marley, helped to fight racism in Boston, where it was held, and raised money to send to freedom fighters in South Africa. This activity along with the anti-racist and community security work he was doing led to increased police and Klan harassment, so

Jaan, once again, went underground and joined the armed clandestine movement.

Jaan joined up with a group known as the United Freedom Front, which consisted of former members of the Sam Melville-Jonathan Jackson and other revolutionaries. The group targeted government institutions and major corporations that had ties to the South African Apartheid system or right-wing paramilitaries in Central America. This included taking actions directly against the South African and United States governments, attacking various government buildings.

The UFF continued their activities for several years, funding their actions through bank expropriations. The on February 7, 1982, Jaan Laaman and another UFF member, Kazi Toure, were involved in a shoot out with police. While Jaan managed to escape, Kazi was arrested. Despite the arrest, the group continued their operations but on November 4, 1984, five members of the group, including Jaan Laaman were arrested. Nearly six months later, the last two remaining members were arrested.

Members of the group were charged with various crimes from murder, firefights with government forces, seditious conspiracy to weapons charges. Jaan Laaman was sentenced to 98 years in prison. Recently, Jaan completed his federal sentence and was transferred to the state of Massachusetts, where he serving time for his state charges.

Imam Jamil

Imam Jamil was born in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. In the late 1960s he was known as H. Rap Brown. After Islam he adopted the name Jamil Al-Amin.

In 1960, he enrolled at Southern University in Georgia and majored in sociology. "I lived near Louisiana State University, and I could see this big fine school with modern buildings and it was for whites. Then there was Southern University, which was about to fall in and that was for the niggers." Although a good student, he left school in 1964 before finishing his undergraduate degree.

Influenced by many writers committed to the struggle of African-Americans for freedom, 19-year-old H. Rap Brown found the environment around Howard University in Washington, D.C. inspiring and motivating when he visited his brother who was studying there. He moved to Washington, D.C. and became got involved in activism for social justice.

In 1966, Brown became a field organizer for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in Greene County, Alabama. This was one of the first examples of his involvement in the civil rights movement, which characterized American politics in the 1960s.

By 1967, at the age of 23, Brown was elected the chairman of the SNCC after Stokely Carmichael, one of its founding members, was ousted. During Carmichael's chairmanship, the SNCC moved from a philosophy of nonviolence to that of "Black

Power," by encouraging African-Americans to move to other forms of political and cultural empowerment. Newsweek magazine described the new chairman as:

... a disenchanted ex-poverty worker who affects sunglasses indoors and out, a droopy mustache, a bushy "natural" coif and a curdled view of the white world...He preaches armed eye-for-an-eye self-defense for Negroes and packs a 12-gauge "cracker gun" in his own dusty Plymouth.

A national figure, H. Rap Brown was in great demand as speaker. In July 1967, he addressed a civil rights rally in Cambridge, Maryland. Brown urged about 400 people to fight fire with fire. "Black folks built America, and if America don't come around, we're going to burn America down," he is quoted as saying. As he was escorting a lady to her home, some persons fired at him from the bushes. He was injured by a shotgun pellet to his forehead. Subsequently, rioting broke out. Brown was accused of inciting the riot, and with the charge pending, he was arrested. A federal judge gave him the maximum sentence of five years in 1968.

At a rally in Oakland on Feb. 17, 1968, he and Stokely Carmichael were made honorary officers of the Black Panther Party in a merger of the two groups. Brown was named minister of justice for the Black Panther Party. The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense was founded in October, 1966, in Oakland, California by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale.

The name was shortened to the Black Panther Party (BPP).

It grew to at least 5,000 members nationwide, with chapters in over half of the United States, as well as an international branch in Algeria. Its programs included free health clinics and free breakfast programs for children. But this posed a threat to the predominantly white power structure of the time and the vast majority of the white public. For them, the Black Panther party meant anti-government militancy.

A police raid on the Panthers' quarters in Chicago resulted in the deaths of two of the party's leaders. Police riddled the apartment with bullets in a controversial show of force. Earlier the same year, Seale and other Panthers had been charged with killing a suspected informer. An undeclared war was being waged against the Panthers.

While the sentence for a 1968 arms conviction was on appeal, and as the state of Maryland was preparing to try him for the Cambridge riot, Brown went into hiding in 1970. The FBI added him to its "Most Wanted" list. Brown eluded the FBI for a year and a half, reappearing after 17 months on October 16, 1971. With three supporters who had joined him, he led an attack on a New York City bar, targeted for its exploitation of the community. A shootout with police ensued and Brown was wounded and captured.

While Brown was in jail, waiting for his trial, he converted to Islam. A fellow prisoner

suggested he name himself "the trustworthy" or "Al-Amin" in Arabic. He adopts the name Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin. He was sentenced to five-to-fifteen years in Attica State Prison. After three years in various state prisons, Imam Jamil won parole in 1976. His total jail and prison time was five years, including two years in jail prior to sentencing.

In August of 1995, Imam Jamil was arrested in connection with a shooting the previous month of a young man in the neighborhood. He was charged with aggravated assault after the man claimed Imam Jamil shot him. Later, however, this man withdrew this statement, saying he was pressured by authorities to identify Imam Jamil as the assailant.

On March 16th, 2000, Fulton County Deputy Sheriff Ricky Kinchen is shot and later dies. Another deputy Aldranon English is wounded after being shot by a man outside Imam Jamil's store. They were trying to deliver an arrest warrant to Imam Jamil. The warrant was for failure to appear in court in January 2000 on charges of theft by receiving stolen property and impersonating an officer. Those charges date back to incident in May 1999. English identified the shooter in the March 16 incident as Imam Jamil.

Imam Jamil is arrested in Lowndes County, Alabama, following a four-day U.S.-wide manhunt. A grand jury in Atlanta indicts Imam Jamil for murder in connection with the shooting death of deputy Kinchen the previous month. He is indicted

on one count of murder, four counts of felony murder, two counts of aggravated assault and six other lesser charges.

The State of Georgia announced that it planned to pursue a death penalty conviction of Imam Jamil Abdullah Al-Amin. From 1992 to 1997, the FBI and Atlanta police investigated the former black militant once known as H. Rap Brown in connection with everything from domestic terrorism to gunrunning to 14 homicides in Atlanta's West End, according to police investigators' reports, FBI documents and interviews. The FBI investigation ended in February 1996. The Atlanta police investigation ended in August 1997 without any charging him of any crime. In his only public comment on his arrest, Al-Amin called it a "government conspiracy." Atlanta Journal-Constitution (April 1/00)

On June 2000, Otis Jackson, 26, confessed to killing the police officer, but later recants. Imam Jamil's defense team is not informed about it. Despite this fact, Al-Amin was found guilty and sentenced to life in prison.

Joe Joe Bowen

Joseph "Joe-Joe" Bowen is one of the many all-but-forgotten frontline soldiers in the liberation struggle. A native of Philadelphia, Joe-Joe was a young member of the "30th and Norris Street" gang, before his incarceration politicized him. Released in 1971, his outside activism was cut short a week following his release when Joe-Joe was confronted by an officer of the notoriously brutal Philadelphia police department.

The police officer was killed in the confrontation, and Bowen fled.

After his capture and incarceration, Bowen became a Black Liberation Army combatant, defiant to authorities at every turn. In 1973, Bowen and Philadelphia Five prisoner Fred "Muhammad Kafi" Burton assassinated Holmesburg prison's warden and deputy warden as well as wounded the guard commander in retaliation for intense repression against Muslim prisoners in the facility. In 1981, Bowen led a six-day standoff with authorities when he and six other captives took 39 hostages at Graterford Prison as a freedom attempt and protest of the prison conditions at Graterford.

Much of his time in prison has been spent in and out of control units, solitary confinement and other means of isolating Joe-Joe from the general prison population. These include three trips to Marion penitentiary, where he met Sundiata Acoli, and other units. However, he legendary to many prisoners as a revolutionary. "I used to teach the brothers how to turn their rage into energy and understand their situations," Bowen told the Philadelphia Inquirer in 1981. "I don't threaten anybody. I don't talk to the pigs. I don't drink anything I can't see through and I don't eat anything that comes off a tray. When the time comes, I'll be ready."

Joe-Joe is currently held in Pennsylvania.

Leonard Peltier

Leonard Peltier is a Native American PP imprisoned for the

1975 shoot-out between the FBI and the American Indian Movement (AIM) in which two federal agents and a Native American man were killed. Four years after his incarceration, a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) suit released documents which prove Leonard Peltier's innocence and FBI's targeting of the activist. Leonard was a close associate of Dennis Banks (one of the founders of AIM).

Maliki Shakur Latine

Maliki Shakur Latine was born in the Bronx on August 23, 1949. In his early years, Latine became involved with the Nation of Islam. It was during this time that he began on the path of confronting society's oppressive forces.

In 1969, Maliki and his brother, Shaqwan, joined up with the Black Panther Party for Self-defense (BPP). Maliki described this period as a very trying time, but also a rewarding one. The discipline was not as rigid as in the Nation of Islam, but it contained the basic elements of discipline essential to any effective organization. With this experience came additional requirements in organizational discipline.

Maliki began taking political education classes offered by the Black Panther Party. He studied Chairman Mao, Franz Fanon, Lenin, Fidel Castro, Che, and many others. He was also involved in transforming the theoretical ideals of the BPP into daily practice.

Due to the Panthers' public outreach which included the Free Breakfast and Lunch

programs, free clothing drives and free day care programs - the U.S. government took notice of the Black Panther Party. That such actions were anchored by a revolutionary message caused the US government to view the black radicals as a serious threat.

In a previous bio, Latine stated, "It was during this period that the U.S. government's covert hostilities towards the BPP became very overt and direct. Hence, the U.S. government unleashed its strategy of repression in the form of its infamous "Cointelpro" (E.G. Counter Intelligence Program) in its effort to thwart the party's community-based programs and organizational effectiveness, while at the same time targeting the party's leadership by way of manufacturing false and fabricated charges in an attempt to criminalize the party's membership and the BPP itself."

Like many of the Panthers targeted by the US government, Maliki found himself behind prison bars, specifically in Riker's Island. There he met one of the Panther leaders, Lumumba Shakur. Lumumba and 20 other Panthers (known as the Panther 21) were facing trumped up charges, which included a plot to blow up various locations in New York City. All of the Panther 21 would eventually be freed from the charges.

Maliki Latine was soon released from Rikers and returned to the Panthers, only to find that the government's tactics against the organization forced many of them to go underground.

Following their lead, Maliki and his brother decided to follow suit. Maliki then spent two years training and studying and engaging in various actions.

Two years after going underground, Maliki and his brother attended the funeral of Zayd Malik Shakur, who was killed during an altercation with police on the New Jersey turnpike. Maliki continued to participate in the liberation movement for six years before being arrested.

July 3rd Altercation

At 4:45 on July 3rd, 1979 NYPD officers pulled over a Chevrolet Malibu on 148th Street, near 7th, in Harlem. With guns drawn, the two officers approached the car. A gun battle broke out, leaving one of the officers and one of the occupants of the car injured.

The four occupants escaped, but in the car the police found two spent shotgun shells, additional ammunition, a .45 caliber revolver, and a .357 caliber revolver. Down the street they came upon a recently fired twenty-gauge shotgun. The police also claim they found the prints of Jose Saldana and Maliki Latine.

Several hours after the shooting, after the police followed a trail of blood, Arkill Shakur was captured outside a building at 285 West 150th Street, with leg and ankle injuries he incurred in the gunfight. He was taken to the hospital and was later charged for his involvement in the altercation.

Just over 2-weeks after the shooting, on July 18, police and

FBI raided the apartment of Dwight (Jamal) Thomas in Astoria, Queens. They arrested him and charged him with the shooting.

A month later, on August 7, 1979, Maliki Latine was arrested in St. Albans, Queens, by a joint force investigating a series of bank expropriations. They charged him with the July 3rd incident. It wouldn't be until six months later before the police would arrest their final suspect, Jose Saldana.

Sixteen days after the capture of Saldana, Latine and three other prisoners, who were also accused of killing cops, attempted to escape from the special security area of Rikers Island. The men managed to get outside of the prison walls, but three of them, including Latine, were immediately captured. The fourth escapee's body was discovered days later, dead because of apparent drowning.

Maliki Latine and Jose (Hamza) Saldana were indicted on charges of attempted first-degree murder, four counts of criminal possession of a weapon, and criminal possession of stolen property. On October 1, 1981, the two were sentenced to 25 to life. Jamal Thomas was initially charged as a co-defendant in the case but chose to have his case severed. He was later sentenced to life in prison for another altercation while in prison and additional 15-year sentence for a prison standoff.

In August 1993, the district court overturned Latine's conviction and ordered a new trial within

120 days or his release. The state appealed, and the second circuit reversed the district court's decision to overturn the conviction. Finally, the U.S. Supreme court refused to hear any further appeal and denied him a writ of certiorari, even through his appeal is founded upon the mandate of the U.S. Supreme Court's own rulings.

Maliki Latine is currently being held in Great Meadow Correctional Facility in Comstock, New York.

Marilyn Buck

Marilyn is an Anti-Imperialist PP. She is imprisoned for her anti-imperialist actions carried out in support of national liberation, women's liberation, social and economic justice. In the 60's Marilyn participated in protests against racism and the Vietnam war. In 1967 she became part of Students for a Democratic Society. Marilyn became part of a radical filmmaking and propaganda collective, showing the films as an organizing aid at community meetings, high school groups, workers' committees and in the streets. She also participated in international solidarity groups supporting the Vietnamese, Palestinians, and the Iranian struggle against the Shah. She worked in solidarity with Native Americans, Mexicano and Black liberation struggles. As a direct result of all of this activity, she became a target of COINTELPRO. In 1973, she was arrested and convicted of buying two boxes of bullets. Accused of being a member of

the BLA, she sentenced to 10 years, the longest sentence ever given for such an offense at the

time. In 1977 she was granted a furlough and never returned, joining the revolutionary clandestine movement. In 1985 she was captured and and faced 4 separate court trials. She was charged with conspiracy to support and free PP/POW's and to support the New Afrikan Independence struggle through expropriations. In 1988 she was indicted for conspiracy to protest and alter government policies through use of violence against government and military buildings and received an additional 10 years for conspiracy to bomb the Capitol. She is serving a total of 80 years.

Eddie Conway

Veteran Black Panther Party leader Marshall Edward ("Eddie") Conway continues to maintain his innocence of a police murder in 1970, which he claims not to have committed. Currently incarcerated in Maryland House of Corrections in Jessup, Maryland, Eddie states that he was falsely implicated in the murder of one Baltimore City police officer and the assault and attempted murder of two other officers. Eddie states, "At no time in my life have I killed or attempted to kill anyone. I have no involvement with that incident. I'm innocent." Eddie claims to be the target of the local police and the F.B.I.'s Counterintelligence Program (COINTELPRO), which was designed to destroy individuals and organizations that were considered to be politically objectionable. Eddie asserts that he is one of many political prisoners in the United

States as a result of F.B.I. director J. Edgar Hoover's and Assistant Director William Sullivan's war against the Black Panther Party.

According to police accounts, shortly after 9:00 p.m. on the night of April 24, 1970, Officer Donald Sager and Officer Stanley Sierakowski responded to a domestic complaint. When they arrived at 1201 Myrtle Avenue they talked to a woman who said she was afraid of her abusive husband. After the investigation, the officers returned to their car to make out their report. While writing their report, three men walked past the patrol car. The woman who made the complaint signaled from her door for the officers to return to her home. Officer Sierakowski opened the door to get out, and a hail of gunfire hit their car from behind. Officer Sierakowski was shot four times in the stomach and in both hands. Officer Sager was shot in the head while still seated in the car. He was later pronounced dead at the hospital. Officer Sierakowski managed to reach the car radio and called for help.

Not far from the crime scene, Officer Roger Nolan and Officer James Welsh received a dispatch call and responded. Based on the information received about the direction in which the assailants fled, the officers went in pursuit of the suspects. According to their report, they apprehended two suspects on a lot across from Myrtle Avenue approximately four blocks from the crime scene. The officers handcuffed them and placed them in the back seat of their patrol car. The

men were later released. Approximately three blocks away, near Freemont and Mosher Avenue, they noticed a man running into an alley. Officer Nolan left the patrol car on foot and pursued the man. Officer Nolan claims that as he turned the corner of the alley, the man shot at him and they exchanged fire. The man got away. A ballistics expert testified that eight of the bullets removed from Officers Sager and Sierakowski or found near the scene came from the same .45 pistol used to fire at officer Nolan.

At the same time, police apprehended two suspects approximately two blocks from where the officers were shot. Jack Johnson, Jr., and James Powell (both later identified as members of the Black Panther Party), were apprehended under the back porch of a house. Several rounds of ammunition and a .38 caliber handgun were found lying on the ground between the two suspects. The next morning, another gun, a .32 caliber pistol, was allegedly found at the arrest site concealed underneath a sandbox. A ballistics expert testified that a .38 caliber bullet was removed from the skull of Officer Sager. Powell was charged with murder in the first degree, and Johnson was charged with murder in the first degree, plus assault with the intent to murder.

Although there was no direct physical evidence to link Eddie with the events surrounding this case, a warrant was issued. On April 25, 1970, Eddie was arrested shortly after he reported

to work at Baltimore's Main Post Office. According to the testimony of the arresting officer, the warrant was obtained based on information provided by an informer.

One attempt by the prosecution to make its case was to try to use one of the other defendants against Eddie. Jack Johnson, who was closely tied to the shootings by evidence, was alleged to have cut a deal with the state implicating Eddie in the crime. In return for his testimony, Jack was to receive complete immunity from prosecution. When Jack took the stand, he pleaded the Fifth Amendment.

In addressing this issue, court appointed public defender Attorney McAllister stated in his closing remarks, "You don't let a murderer go unless you're trying to get someone else". This attorney had been fired by Eddie, but Judge Harris demanded he remain as the defense attorney.

Another attempt at case building by the prosecution was based on the "stacked deck" identification made by Officer Nolan. Four days after the shootings, Officer Nolan was shown two groups of six to eight photographs. The first set contained a picture of Eddie that was taken six years earlier. The second set contained a picture taken of Eddie at the time of his arrest. Eddie's picture was the only picture that appeared in both sets.

To put the same person's picture in two small sets of shots could possibly influence and prejudice a person's decision. A line up is

a probably a better means of identification. Because of the influence possible by the people showing the photos, photos should only be used if there's nothing else available. Eddie also says, "By the time you got the second photo of the same person, wouldn't you make the assumption that this is the photo you're supposed to identify?"

The most disputed piece of circumstantial evidence introduced by the prosecution was the testimony of a known jailhouse informer named Charles Reynolds. This informer was placed in Eddie's cell for four days. Reynolds was being transferred from Maryland House of Corrections in Jessup to the state of Michigan. There he would stand trial on previous forgery charges. For some reason, instead of a direct transfer to Michigan, Reynolds was placed in Eddie's cell at Baltimore City Jail some thirty miles away from Jessup.

Reynolds claims Eddie confessed to having taken part in the shootings and filled him in on the details. After Reynolds' transfer was completed, he sent a letter to the Baltimore City Police Department stating he had witnessed Eddie's confession. Reynolds asked for a favorable recommendation to the Michigan parole board in exchange for his testimony. Prosecuting attorney Ward and the chief investigator flew to Michigan to take Reynolds' statement. Reynolds told them that Eddie told him that the shooting of the police officers was an "initiation mission" ordered by the regional director of the Black Panther Party, Paul

Coates. Reynolds went on telling details that could have been found in any Baltimore newspaper twice a day at that time. Reynolds claims Eddie said he disposed of the .45 caliber pistol in the harbor, returned home, and "put up watch" (this last statement was not explained). Prosecuting attorney Ward stated that he was convinced that Reynolds was a reliable source because the watch was never mentioned in the newspapers.

Eddie and many other people believe that Reynolds was deliberately placed in his cell. Eddie claims he knew he was an informer because the word had come to him through the prison grapevine. Eddie says, "I would not have given Reynolds the time of day and surely no conversation about my pending case. One thing all Panthers studied was the law, entrapment and underhanded police tactics." Eddie states, "Since they planted him in my cell to make a case against me, it would stand to reason that they fed him the information they wanted him to know, like a "smoking watch." Eddie also said, "When they first came up with the indictment, the watch thing was never mentioned."

Unlike the prosecution, Eddie was never able to present his case. At the beginning of the trial, Eddie fired his first lawyer, Nelson Kandel. Eddie says, "Mr. Kandel wanted to handle my trial as a criminal trial, and I wanted it to be handled just as it truly was, a political railroad." Judge Harris appointed public defender McAllister to handle Eddie's case. Eddie fired him and

requested the court to allow Attorney Arthur Turco, who was at the time of the request Eddie's cell mate, to represent him. Arthur Turco was awaiting a decision on his own case and asked that bail be set for his pretrial release. Judge Harris denied Eddie's request and McAllister stayed on as his assigned lawyer. Eddie then filed a petition in court asking that his trial be halted on grounds that Judge Harris failed to allow him the Attorney of his choice.

In light of the judge's decision, Eddie requested to represent himself. Judge Harris granted him his request but insisted that Mr. McAllister remain at the defense table to assist Eddie if he needed advice. As a result, Eddie felt he was not being given the right to a fair trial and refused to take part in the trial because he says he was being railroaded. Eddie only returned to the courtroom to protest and demand a new trial and then ask to be returned to his cell. Eddie did not participate in his defense and was denied a request to make his own closing arguments.

"I thought that any defense I put forth would be fruitless because it was clear to me - in the frame of mind I was in - that America and Maryland did not wish to really have a fair trial. I was under the impression now that the attorney general of the United States, who was John Mitchell at the time, had decided that this chapter [of the Black Panthers] was to be eradicated, and that we were the victims of that program... I know I sort of blew my opportunity to have a

trial, but my position was that I never had an opportunity to have a fair trial in the first place."

Eddie says he has an alibi and can account for his whereabouts at the time the crimes were committed. He declines to make a public statement because he feels that the place for that discussion is in front of a jury when he gets a new trial.

Matthew DePalma

DePalma is an anarchist convicted of illegally possessing Molotov cocktails allegedly intended to be used at the Republican National Convention and against the police outside the convention.

The government indictment stated that between August 22, 1008 and August 29, 2008, DePalma began to build roughly about five Molotov cocktails. Police started watching him during a CrimeThinc Convergence near Waldo, Wis. It was here where they claim he devised his plan to use explosives to disrupt the RNC at the Xcel Center.

He was arrested on August 30, 2008 by agent of the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force at a residence in Minneapolis. The plan involved tunnels near the center and using explosives to destroy cables and cause a power outage.

As with the more recent arrests, a great deal of evidence against DePalma has come from the assistance of a paid informant. DePalma pleaded guilty on October 21, 2008. He pleaded guilty to 1 count of possession of destruction device.

Oscar Lopez Rivera

Oscar was born in San Sebastián, Puerto Rico in 1943. His family moved to the US when he was 9 years old. He was drafted into the army and served in Viet Nam, awarded the Bronze Star. When he returned from the war in 1967, he found that drugs, unemployment, housing, health care and education in the Puerto Rican community had reached dire levels and immediately set to work organizing to improve the quality of life for his people.

Oscar worked in the creation of both the Puerto Rican High School and the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, and participated in the development of the Committee to Free the Five. He was involved in the struggle for bilingual education in public schools and to force universities to actively recruit Latino students, staff and faculty. He helped to found educational programs at the maximum security prison for men at Stateville, IL. He worked in the community against drugs and police brutality. He also worked on ending discrimination in public utilities like Illinois Bell, People's Gas and Commonwealth Edison.

He was arrested in 1981 and sentenced to 55 years for seditious conspiracy. In 1988 he was given an additional 15 years for conspiracy to escape. His release date is 2021.

Oscar's daughter, Clarissa, lives in Puerto Rico with her daughter Karina. Since 1986, Oscar has been in the most maximum security prisons in the federal prison system, in the Administrative Maximum Unit at

Florence, CO, with restricted non-contact visits. Thus, Karina has never known her grandfather's touch.

Oscar's mother Mita, passed away last year. Officials refused to allow him to travel to the funeral. He grieved alone, from the cement walls of his cell. This year Oscar will complete 13 years of solitary confinement, having been kept in a cell the size of the average bathroom for 22 and a half hours of every day.

Robert Seth Hayes

"My name is Robert Seth' Hayes. I was captured and convicted in New York City in 1973 under a host of charges, attributed to my membership in the Black Liberation Army (BLA). Through my conviction, I received a sentence of 25 years to life. In 1994-95 I began my 22nd-23rd year in confinement. And it's the confinement, the nature thereof; I'd like to talk to you about here. Been in mind, that prior to my and others like myself, arrival into the prison system, the conditions were at their normal "oppressive" high. But upon contact with combatants of the community, greater emphasis was then placed on how to deter emerging minds (those already confined, and those entering it), from gaining insight or developments of consciousness, from captured Freedom Fighters. Executive Teams (i.e. Department of Corrections top advisors) from across state (prison) lines began to assess/share ideas, and information, on how to psychologically depress, isolate, oppress and hopefully render impotent, revolutionary combatants. It was agreed by

them (the D.O.C.) that the standard practice of physical force was to be continually emphasized and heightened by a secondary level of mental terror. The objective was to convince outsiders to steer clear of captured comrades or suffer similar circumstances. And if by chance, combatants themselves became "worn out" to the point that they themselves abstained from revolutionary practices (i.e. became unstable, reactionary in practice, or incapable of organizing others, or themselves), so be it!

With the introduction of Revolutionaries into mainstream prison life, the system (with its multifaceted tentacles) found itself confronted with its greatest challenge. Simply put, the lines were drawn, the enemy identified, and the battle became engaged.

For me, the first distracting incident occurred during my 5th year of incarceration. One evening, at approximately 10 pm, an officer passing by the cage holding me hesitated in front of it. When I looked up to determine what he desired, the fool snapped a picture of me nearly blinding me with the flash, then quickly raced down the gallery. After settling down, I began pondering the reasons for his actions. Was this a means of identifying me for a hit man or squad? A souvenir? I/we never clearly determined exactly why the act was committed, but it did have its affects. I began to move more slowly and resist certain conversations while being too busy watching my surroundings. Regrettably several days passed before I concluded that what I

encountered was the opening salvo of "unexplained" acts specifically designed to undermine the recipient and make him second guess day to day activities. The results being, others (the enemy) could close in closer as the Rade was now moving slower, more cautious, more accessible to observation. Closer scrutiny to determine if the Revolutionary was resorting to indecision, using greater caution, and whether or not he/she appeared to be moving in confidence? Though I took the necessary legal steps in the matter! I/we never forgot the lesson we received. The battle on the Psychological plane had begun. Hence from that day forward, my watch word was, "plan for the expected and be prepared for the unexpected." Move responsibly, and as always, seek counseling from one's peers!

Over the years, Comrades, statewide, have discovered the systematic moving of Rades to isolated areas as a further means of discouraging Revolutionary work. While in Green Haven C.F., while engaged in solidarity activities, I was snatched up and moved to Southport C.F. Once there and contacting folks in the street, everyone had the same question. What and where is Southport? Heretofore, it was an unknown entity. A High-Tech prison recently opened, that none of us had ever heard of. No doubt I would have spent many a year there had it not become necessary (according to the D.O.C.) to create a Marion (23 hr. a day lockdown) type state facility. Without having SHU status, I could not

legitimately be held there. I was transferred to another isolated outpost called Wemda C.F. where I reside to this day. With the new emerging pragmatic conservative team in place statewide, the emphasis now has shifted back to the 70's standards of placing organizers in one holding place, as opposed to one man to a cell, as widely spaced as possible.

These types of dehumanizing practices along with a host of other demeaning acts, have been the specialty of corrections for many many years. They are designed not only to derail conscious activities, but simultaneously act as a deterrent to others seeking to make the crossover. Needless to say, none of it works against a determined and conscious member of Domesticated Warfare here in Amerikka. With the support networks such as the Campaign to Free Afrikan Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War in Amerikka, headed by Dhoruba Bin Wahad and Tanaquil Jones, and others too numerous to name it has been relatively easy to maintain a sense of Firmness and Alertness and Strength, while still confined. As it stands, I am scheduled for the parole board in 1998. At that time I will have completed 25 years in captivity. I have no optimism that I will be released, but I will nevertheless struggle to become released.

If in the event I am not released, I will maintain a Revolutionary Commitment to Struggle til Liberation comes or life ends. So I say to you, one and all, the Struggle is arduous, therefore, so must your commitment to

changing society, humanity, be arduous. HARAMBEE (Let's Pull Together). A Luta Continua'. We Resist!"

Romaine Fitzgerald

Romaine "Chip" Fitzgerald was born and raised in Compton, California. Upon his release from the Youth Authority in early 1969, he joined the Southern California Chapter of the Black Panther Party.

Bruce Richard, a former member of the Party's Southern California Chapter with Chip, now a union executive, recalls:

"Upon our release [from Youth Authority], we wasted no time joining the Black Panther Party. Chip worked tirelessly in various capacities in the Westside office of the Chapter. To be a Panther was a 24/7 commitment, and every single day seemed like weeks due to the volume of activities during that explosive period. We were totally consumed in the Party's Free Breakfast Program, the tutorial program, selling Panther papers, political education classes and other projects. Chip was a favorite of many in the communities we served, and the children, especially, loved him, reflected in their smiling little faces when he appeared."

In September 1969, Chip was wounded and arrested in connection with a police shoot-out. He was tried for assault on police and other, related charges, including the murder of a security guard. He was convicted and sentenced to death. He was 19 years old.

"The Greatest Threat"

This was immediately following the early 1969 announcement by infamous FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover that "The Black Panther Party, without question, represents the greatest threat to the internal security of the country." As documented by Huey P. Newton in his widely-acclaimed Ph.D. dissertation *War Against the Panthers, A Study of Repression in America*, Hoover then pledged to use a special counterintelligence program, COINTELPRO, to "expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of Black nationalists," and, specifically targeted the Black Panther Party. Newton and other scholars document that, of the actions employed by the COINTELPRO program to carry out its agenda, 79% were specifically directed toward destruction of the Party."

In 1972, the California Supreme Court, in *California v. Anderson*, declared the death penalty unconstitutional, as a violation of the Eighth Amendment protection against "cruel or unusual punishments" and of the State's constitutional ban against both. Along with nearly 100 other men on death row at the time, Chip found his death sentence commuted to life, with the possibility of parole. Today, however, unlike 98% of those on death row in 1972, who have been released, Chip languishes in prison still, incarcerated for nearly 40 years now. In spite of his long and brutal incarceration, Chip's dedication to the cause of the liberation of black and all oppressed people has not wavered.

The FBI's War Against the Panthers

Although Hoover identified the Party as a "threat to the internal security of the country," he boldly stated that it was the Party's Free Breakfast for Children program, not its weapons of self-defense, that made the Party so "dangerous." Begun in the Party's base in Oakland, California, the Free Breakfast Program grew across the nation with the rise of Party chapters during 1969, in over 40 states. Hoover charged that the Program was spreading revolutionary propaganda to all the hundreds of thousands of black families whose children participated in it, a dangerous development. Newton stated: "Since its inception, the Party [was] subject to a variety of actions by agencies and officers of the federal government intended to destroy it precisely because of the Party's political ideology and potential for organizing a sizable group of the country's population that has been historically denied equal opportunity in employment, education, housing, and other recognized basic needs."

It is well-documented that, at the end of 1969, under the direction of the FBI, Chicago police assassinated the Party's Illinois chapter chairman Fred Hampton and leading member Mark Clark and Los Angeles police created its SWAT Team and raided the offices of the Party there, at one-location in a five-hour gun battle. This was the Party Chapter to which Chip belonged. He is a casualty of this war.

The War Continues

Chip's incarceration cannot be viewed apart from this history of the FBI's war against the Panthers. Chip is the definition of a political prisoner, and is the longest-held Black Panther Party political prisoner. Indeed, at his last parole hearing, in July 2008, he was vigorously challenged by a Board member about his political views, past and present, and summarily denied.

The Struggle Must Continue

This contradiction must be overcome, so that Chip can be set free. As Chip's long incarceration is rooted in the political agenda of the State, his freedom is dependent upon political action. At the same time, the Committee to Free Chip Fitzgerald has employed a new and savvy attorney, Keith Wattley of Oakland, California, who will be appropriately filing a habeas corpus application in the California courts to legally challenge the Board's wrongful denial. The Committee is mounting a vigorous campaign to obtain support letters to the Board from elected officials and other notables, whose power can and will be politically persuasive. It is our intent to convince the Board, as well as the Governor, who has the ultimate power to release Chip, that another unjust decision will be met with political consequences.

Ronald Reed

Ronald Reed, a former member of the Black United Front, was convicted of the 1970 shooting of a St. Paul police officer. Twenty-five years after the killing, Reed was arrested and convicted of first-degree murder and conspiracy to commit first

degree-murder. He is serving Life in prison.

Reed is a former 60s civil rights activist. In 1969, Reed was also among the students at St. Paul Central High School who demanded black history courses and organized actions against racist teachers. He was also instrumental in helping to integrate college campuses in Minnesota. During this period, Reed began to look toward revolutionary theory and began to engage in political street theater with other young black revolutionaries in the city of St. Paul.

Shooting on Hague Avenue

On May 22, 1970, St. Paul officer James Sackett was responding to a bogus emergency call at a home in the 800 block of Hague Avenue. While responding to the call, Sackett was ambushed by a sniper and killed. Police immediately looked at Black radicals as those responsible for the incident, arresting several men they claimed were members of the Black Panther Party. The men were released for lack of evidence.

A young woman by the name of Connie Trimble was also arrested and charged with making the call that led to the ambush of the cop. Though it came out in the trial that she connected to the incident, Trimble refused to reveal the names of the others involved. She was acquitted of the charges against her but served time in jail for contempt of court.

During the trial of Trimble, confidential "informants" accused Trimble of being a Black Panther, alleging that she and other Black Panther commandos were acting under the orders of Panther leader Ronald Reed.

The Robbery

At 8 pm, on October 20, 1970, three armed men entered the Ames Plaza Bank with the intent of expropriating funds. A shootout took place between a security guard and the men involved in the bank expropriation. The guard, who was also an off duty cop, was shot in the chest. Reed was arrested in St. Paul 10 days after the Omaha incident and Reed was arrested on November 13th in southeast Minneapolis.

Police claimed to have found in Reed possession detailed notes laying out a plot to kidnap Minnesota's governor, Harold LeVander and St. Paul City Council Member Rosalie Butler. They also claimed they discovered a statement indicating plans to hijack a United Airlines jet out of Minneapolis. The plot was designed to win the release of Connie Trimble and Larry Clark. According to newspapers, Reed also intended to demand to release of Angela Davis and a young activist named Gary Hogan. Despite police claims, the charges of conspiring to commit air piracy were dismissed because there was no evidence of the conspiracy other than the notes. In recent articles, Reed's brother has stated these charges were fabricated against his brother. Reed and Clark were still charged with the

robbery and were extradited to Nebraska. They were each sentenced to 10 to 25 years in prison.

On October 26, 1976, Reed escaped, but was arrested in Los Angeles on February 3, 1977. Reed served 13 years and Larry served less than 8 years.

The Arrests

The case regarding the death of the officer Sackett remained cold for nearly twenty-five years. But in 1994, during an interview with 5 Eyewitness News, Connie Trimble claimed that Ronald Reed was with her when she made the call. This statement reopened the investigation.

In January 2005, during a grand jury hearing over the killing of Officer Sackett, Connie Trimble-Smith, repeated her claims that Reed was the one that encouraged her to make the call. The grand jury indicted Ronald Reed and Larry Clark and the two were arrested. Reed was living in Chicago, working as a pipe fitter. Clark was homeless living in Minneapolis.

Police stated the two men had been the prime suspects since the killing. Originally, they claimed Reed and Clark were Black Panthers bent on killing cops. According to the media and prosecutors, the Twin Cities Black Panthers were involved in drug dealing, bomb making and other acts of "terror" that led to the killing of Officer Sackett. The catch to this issue was that there was no Black Panther Party in the Twin Cities. No raids or arrests targeting Panthers as seen in many different cities in

the country at the time ever took place in the Twin Cities.

Prosecutors later altered their position claiming that Reed and his co-defendant were "Black Militants" not "Black Panthers" - a term so broad it could have one time included Jesse Jackson. Reed and others, they claim, engaged in the ambush in hopes of impressing the Black Panther leadership and starting a chapter in St. Paul.

The Testimonies

The case rested on the testimony of several prosecution witnesses. Connie Trimble who earlier testified that Reed persuaded her to make the call that lured the cop into the ambush recanted some her earlier remarks. She claimed that Reed did not murder Sackett and, in fact, had been duped like her. She stated after the two made the call to the police, they went to Larry Clark's home and stayed together the rest of the night.

Trimble also testified that she made the call but that they were calling the cops on a neighbor who had been having a party. Neither She nor Reed were aware of any plot to kill the officer.

Another witness, Joseph Garret who claimed to be a Panther with Reed, stated that Reed had asked him if he was interested in helping him "bring down the first pig." Garrett claimed he that he declined. Several days before the shooting, Garret was stopped by a traffic cop and was found in possession of a gun. After a discussion, Garrett told the officer to "watch the

rooftops." He was arrested shortly after the shooting of Sackett, but was released.

John Griffin, presently serving a 30-year drug sentence, testified that Reed informed him what it was like to kill a cop and also order a bombing campaign that Griffin backed out of. The problem with this testimony is that Reed was in prison serving the 13 years in Nebraska during the time Griffin claimed these things took place.

The fact remains the police were not able to produce the murder weapon, an eyewitness to the shooting, or any physical evidence tying Reed to the killing. Despite this, Reed and Clark were both found guilty and sentence to Life in prison.

In April 2006, Larry Clark began his trial. Clark was tried separately from Reed, but was still found guilty one month later. The ABCF has been contacted by Larry Clark's attorney demanding that he not be placed on any lists.

Russel Maroon Shoatz

Russel Maroon Shoatz is a Black (New Afrikan) POW. Maroon is imprisoned for his activities on behalf of Black Liberation.

In 1967, Maroon was a founding member of Philadelphia's Black Unity Council (BUC). The BUC eventually merged with the Black Panther Party.

In 1970, Maroon and five other comrades were accused of attacking a Philadelphia Police station, resulting in the death and wounding of several police

officers. This attack was carried out in response to the unjustified deaths in the Black community committed by these officers.

After being accused of this attack he joined the BLA and participated in the revolutionary underground movement. He was eventually arrested in January 1972. Maroon is serving multiple life sentences. Most of his time in prison has been spent in control units in which he is locked in his cell for 22-24 hours a day.

Sekou Kambui

Sekou Cinque T.M. Kambui (s/n William J. Turk) is a New Afrikan political prisoner currently serving two consecutive life sentences for crimes he did not commit. Sekou has already spent twenty years of his life behind bars on trumped up charges of murdering two white men in Alabama in 1975.

Sekou is of Afrikan / Cherokee heritage, born on September 6, 1948 in Gadsden, AL. He was raised by his mother, grandparents and aunt in Detroit, Harlem, New York, and Birmingham, AL, respectively. Throughout the 1960's, Sekou participated in the Civil Rights movement, organizing youth for participating in demonstrations and marches across Alabama and providing security for meetings of the Southern Christian Leadership Council (SCLC), Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC). Sekou is a paralegal professional and has been an active jailhouse lawyer and

prisoner's rights activist for more than 20 years.

Sekou became affiliated with the Black Panther Party in 1967 in Chicago and New York. While in Detroit, he became a member of the Republic of New Afrika, before returning to Birmingham. Back in Alabama, Sekou coordinated community organization activity with the Alabama Black Liberation Front, the Inmates for Action (IFA) Defense Committee and the Afro-American People's Party in the mid 1970's. Sekou was also a soldier in the Black Liberation Army (BLA) during these years before his capture.

On January 2, 1975, Sekou was captured in north Birmingham for allegedly running a yield sign and / or speeding. During this stop, a 9mm pistol was found in the car lying between the front seats. Subsequent investigation by police on the scene discovered that the pistol was listed as stolen during a Tuscaloosa, AL murder. A wide-ranging investigation followed, which included inquiries into his personal relationship with a white woman. At one point during the investigation, while being transported, Sekou was told by one of the investigators, "...we don't really give a damn whether you committed these crimes or not, but you should have because we're gonna hang your ass with them anyway..." Sekou was falsely arrested and charged with the murder of two white men: a KKK official from Tuscaloosa and a multi-millionaire oil man from Birmingham.

It's not surprising that Sekou

was found guilty of both murders in separate trials. Did Sekou have a chance of being found innocent? If one considers the nature of the case in that there was a Black man standing accused of killing two White men in Alabama in 1975, then the initial conclusion must be "no." But when that Black man in considered an "Uppity Nigger" by the White power structure, coupled with the subsequent (and what can be assumed, continual) involvement of the FBI, our initial conclusion becomes a proven fact. On this basis alone, Sekou was presumed guilty.

Despite immense pre-trial publicity, the court denied a motion for a change of venue. An appeals court later affirmed this decision, citing examples of ineffectiveness of the counselor. In fact, the nature of this case was so intense that during a 1985 investigation of the crime, persons in Tuscaloosa vividly recalled details of the murder, the accused (Sekou) and the entire issue of the killing. Major witnesses in both cases admitted during this same investigation that they had been forced to testify against Sekou and had been repeatedly visited by certain members of the Birmingham Police Department, as well as the Jefferson County Sheriffs Department. Defense witnesses in the first trial were so terrified after continuous threats and racial intimidation by the Birmingham Police for providing alibi testimony that they fled Alabama, leaving Sekou without a defense for his second trial. To this day Sekou has never been placed at or near either murder scene, no

murder weapon was found, nor any direct evidence offered to connect Sekou to the murders. The pistol which he was captured with has never been conclusively linked to the crimes.

Sekou's legal challenges to both convictions have been continuously threatened by the Alabama Department of Corrections (ADOC) through the seizure of legal material and mail, repeated retaliatory transfers and threats to interfere with pending parole dates.

For twenty years now, Sekou has been held captive in Alabama. He is well known to nearly every Warden, Regional Coordinator and higher-level officials in the ADOC. As a jailhouse lawyer, his legal reputation precedes him at every institution. In fact, many prisoners owe their freedom to Sekou's legal efforts on their behalf. He has won numerous other civil actions regarding medical malpractice, abusive treatment, abusive segregation, abusive prison conditions; all of which have earned him nothing but retaliatory transfers and continuing unabated enmity by officials of the ADOC. It is absolutely impossible to relate the depth of hostility encountered by Sekou personally, and by his family from not only the ADOC but also from the Alabama Board of Pardons and Paroles. Every attempt made to appeal his original conviction has been stymied by missing trial transcripts, illegal confiscation of law books and legal research/trial preparation material, etc.

In the last ten years, Sekou has been up for parole five times, and has been denied each time and set off. Prior to every parole consideration there has been a punitive transfer and an escalation of harassment due to a legal action taken by Sekou on behalf of other prisoners.

Sekou Odinga

Sekou served as a PC member from May 1995 to May 1996, also imprisoned for actions carried out in the fight for Black Liberation. He is also a New Afrikan POW. In 1965 Sekou joined the Organization for Afro American Unity (OAAU), founded by Malcolm X. After Malcolm's death the OAAU was not going in the direction he wanted and in 1967 he was looking at the BPP. In early 1968 he helped build the Bronx BPP. On January 17, 1969 two Panthers had been killed by police and a fellow NY Panther who was in police custody was brutally beaten. Sekou was informed police were searching for him in connection with a police shooting. Rather than face possible death as many of his comrades had in custody, Sekou joined the Black underground with the BLA. He remained underground partaking in revolutionary clandestine activity for 12 years until his capture. Upon being captured he was charged with 6 counts of attempted murder of police, 9 predicate acts of Racketeering Influenced Corrupt Organization (RICO) including the liberation of Assata Shakur from prison and expropriation of an armored truck. He is serving consecutive 25-life state time and a 40 year federal sentences.

Currently in Lompoc, CA, Sekou is continually harassed by prison administration with mail and visiting regulations.

Sundiata Acoli

Sundiata served as a PC member from May 1995 to May 1996. Sundiata is a New Afrikan POW. He is imprisoned for actions carried out in the fight for Black Liberation.

In 1968 Sundiata joined the Harlem branch of the Black Panther Party (BPP) and did work around the issues of education, housing, employment, child care, drugs and police brutality in the oppressed community.

In 1969 he was imprisoned with 13 others in what was known as the Panther 21 case for charges motivated by community work. Held for 2 years without bail, the Panther 21 were acquitted and Sundiata was released in 1971.

Upon being released, Sundiata was harassed, provoked and followed by the FBI until it was impossible to do effective community work. He then joined the Black underground with the Black Liberation Army (BLA).

In May 1973 Sundiata, with Zayd Malik Shakur and Assata Shakur were ambushed on the NJ Turnpike by state troopers. Zayd was murdered by the police, Assata critically wounded. In the shootout a trooper was killed. Sundiata escaped this incident but was captured shortly after and is now serving a life plus 30 year sentence for the killing of the state trooper.

Tom Manning

Tom Manning is an anti-imperialist PP. After returning to the U.S. a veteran from the war in Vietnam, he found himself in prison serving a 5 year sentence for apolitical activity.

However while in prison, Tom became somewhat politicized, taking part in food and work strikes, reading Che and uniting with other prisoners from other cultures.

Completing his sentence in 1971, Tom began a family and became active in political organizing, particularly with a Portland, Maine group known as SCAR. Much of this work centered around working with prisoners, ex-prisoners and their loved ones. This work rapidly expanded to many areas of social concern including employment and housing for people coming out of prison, housing, welfare, advocacy, transportation for visits of prisoners family, childcare, a bail fund and a bookstore.

Through this work and the study required to do it effectively, class contradictions became very clear to Tom. Eventually these realities lead to become active in the armed clandestine movement.

First in the 70s with the Sam Melville/Jonathan Jackson Unit, and later in the 80s in the United Freedom Front. The armed anti-imperialist and anti racist activities of these organizations lead to a massive seven year hunt by all federal state and local authorities in the north eastern US. This hunt ended in his capture and Tom is now

serving a double life, plus multiple sentences.

Tsutomu Shirosaki

Tsutomu Shirosaki is a Japanese national imprisoned as a political prisoner in the United States. He has been accused of being a member of Japanese Red Army and participating in several attacks, including a mortar attack against a U.S. embassy. He is currently serving 30-years in a U.S Federal prison.

Tsutomu Shirosaki was born in 1947 in central Japan. In the 1960s, he went to Tokyo University, where he received a degree in engineering. It was during his college years, where Tsutomu began participating in the student movement, embracing a more left-wing philosophy. By the 1970s, Shirosaki participated in various underground activities, including a string of bank and post office robberies. These actions were fund-raising activities for Japanese radical groups. But in 1971, Shirosaki was arrested in Tokyo and sentenced to ten years in prison for an attack on a Bank of Yokohama branch office.

Flight 472 Hijack

On September 28, 1977, five members of the Japanese Red Army hijacked Japan Airlines Flight 472 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. They demanded \$6 million from the Japanese government and the release of nine prisoners held in Japan. The prisoners listed included radical activist and members of the Japanese Red Army.

On October 2, six of the nine prisoners were released and taken to Dhaka. One of those prisoners released was Tsutomu Shirosaki. The released prisoners, the JRA hijackers and the remaining hostages then flew to Algeria, where the hostages were released. According to Shirosaki, the released prisoners and JRA members eventually ended up in Lebanon. After the drama of the hijacked settled, the Japanese authorities announced that the released prisoners should turn themselves in to the nearest Japanese embassy. With no response from the prisoners, the Japanese government placed the freed prisoners on the Interpol wanted list.

Tsutomu Shirosaki, while choosing freedom, had no idea where to go. He had never traveled outside of Japan and spoke no other language than his own. The other freed prisoners found themselves in a similar situation. According to Shirosaki, the Japanese Red Army assisted the freed prisoners in adjusting to the new region. Despite the generosity of the JRA, Shirosaki has stated that he never joined the organization. Instead, he became a volunteer fighter in the Palestinian revolution with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP.) With the Palestinian movement being so strong in Lebanon, Shirosaki did not need a passport to stay in the country.

1986 Bombing in Jakarta

On May 14, 1986, two mortar-styled rockets were fired into the U.S. Embassy compound in Jakarta, Indonesia. Then, two rockets were fired from a hotel

room toward the Japanese Embassy. Also that morning, a car bomb exploded in the Canadian Embassy parking lot causing injuries to three people. A group calling itself the Anti-Imperialist International Brigade (AIIB) claimed responsibility for the action. The attacks were in response to the G7 summit in Tokyo.

Seven weeks after the incident, the Japanese government announced that they had found a fingerprint of Tsutomu Shirosaki in the hotel room where the rockets were launched at the Japanese embassy. They also claimed the Anti-Imperialist International Brigade was another named for the Japanese Red Army.

During the time of the attack, Tsutomu Shirosaki was still in Lebanon. He was not in Jakarta and was not a member of either the JRA or the AIIB. Shirosaki did not respond to the claims of his involvement because he felt they were so ridiculous. He was in Lebanon and thought that he was in a safe haven.

After the Oslo Accords, it became difficult for the Palestinian armed resistance to exist in Lebanon, so Shirosaki decided to leave. Using a false ID, he traveled to South Asia.

In December of 1987, Italian authorities announced an international warrants for Tsutomu Shirosaki and another suspected Japanese Red Army member, Junzo Okudaira, for an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Rome six months earlier.

The Arrest

On September 21, 1996, local police in Kathmandu, Nepal arrested Tsutomu Shirosaki after he tried to contact some friends, whose phone was tapped by the US¹ National Security Agency. He was handed over to the FBI and extradited to the United States to stand trial.

After arriving in the United States, Shirosaki stood before a 15-day trial and was sentenced to two concurrent 20-year terms and also given 10-year terms on other chargers. The 20-year terms were ordered to run consecutively to the 10-year terms for a total prison time of 30 years.

Tsutomu Shirosaki never took the stand at his own trial. He has stated he had no part in the attacks in Jakarta or membership with the Japanese Red Army or the Anti-Imperialist International Brigade. He has argued that his fingerprint had been placed at the scene. In his own words, "I did not know that planting a copied finger print from a file is easy work, even in the early '70s a corrupted policeman did, but a few years later it became clear. But I didn't know such information, as mentioned, I was in Japan's jail, then in Lebanon, then in South Asia, so no news about such activities."

Veronza Bowers

Veronza was convicted in the murder of a U.S. Park Ranger on the word of two government informers, both of whom received reduced sentences for other crimes by the Federal prosecutor's office. There were no eyewitnesses and no

evidence independent of these informants to link him to the crime. At his trial, Veronza offered alibi testimony, which was not credited by the jury. Nor was testimony of two relatives of the informants who insisted that they were lying. The informants had all charges against them in this case dropped and one was given \$10,000 by the government according to the prosecutor's post-sentencing report. Veronza has consistently proclaimed his innocence of the crime he never committed, even at the expense of having his appeals for parole denied, for which an admission of guilt and contrition is virtually required. He insists on maintaining his innocence.

The Black Panther Party was targeted by J. Edgar Hoover and the FBI in its infamous Cointelpro Operation which, during its years of operation from 1956 to 1971, surveilled, infiltrated, manipulated and tried to provoke criminal activities by entirely lawful civil rights and peace demonstrators exercising their First Amendment rights to oppose government policies. Hoover referred to the BPP as "the greatest threat to the internal security of this country" and authorized surveillance of many black and antiwar leaders including Martin Luther King.

Despite letters of support from prominent attorneys, former high-ranking representatives of regional commissions, prison officials and a member of the U.S. Congress, Veronza has continually been denied release due to intervention by the U.S. Parole Commission. A recent decision by the regional federal

parole commission to grant his release was overturned by the National Commission. With the truth coming out daily about the high incidence of inmates who have been falsely convicted and imprisoned, exonerations of Death Row prisoners (156 to date), police and prosecutorial malfeasance and other failures of the criminal justice system, Veronza's case deserves careful review.

William Gilday

William "Lefty" Gilday is a 60's radical sentenced to death for his involvement in bank expropriation while attempting to finance the anti-war movement during the Vietnam war. Gilday is a former minor league baseball player from Amesbury, Massachusetts, who, while in his early to mid-thirties, was arrested and imprisoned on robbery charges. While imprisoned he met up with Stanley Bond, a Vietnam helicopter pilot also imprisoned on robbery charges. The two became friends and after their release, both entered into the Student Tutor Education Program(STEP), a program designed to help former inmates enter into university level education. Gilday enrolled into Boston's Northeastern University with another fellow inmate, Robert Valeri. Bond entered into Brandeis University.

It did not take long before the three former inmates got involved in the Student movements of the 1960's. William Gilday and friends became involved in Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and later moved into a militant offshoot of SDS, known as the

Weather Underground. Gilday began to organize around students rights and the anti-war movement. During this period, the three met up with Susan Saxe and Katherine Powers, two college students from Brandeis University.

On September 23, 1970, Gilday along with four other comrades entered the State Street Bank and Trust Company in Boston with the intent to expropriate funds to help finance the movement against the Vietnam War. The group retrieved \$26,585 from the bank.

According to the FBI, Gilday and friends were a "radical, revolutionary group dedicated to attacking the United States military system and undermining police powers." The FBI claimed it also had reason to believe the same group was responsible for an assault on the National Guard Armory at Newburyport, Massachusetts, on September 20, 1970, which left the armory heavily damaged by fire and explosions. Ammunition and a truck were seized during this action but were later recovered. It is also believed the group took part in the robbery of a saving and loan in Philadelphia earlier that year.

As Gilday and company left the bank, a Boston police officer, who had been alerted by a silent alarm, was shot and killed. Shortly after the incident Boston police obtain warrants for two college students, Susan Saxe and Katherine Powers, and former convicts Stanley Bond and William Gilday. The four were charged with murdering the policeman during bank robbery.

Bond and a fifth member of the group, Robert Valeri, were quickly apprehended. Days after the robbery, William Gilday was captured after pursuit by police cruisers and helicopter.

Gilday was tried and found guilty for the killing of the Boston police officer. He was sentenced to death but his sentence was later reduced to life imprisonment.

In 1972, Gilday's codefendant, Stanley Bond, was killed in an explosion in Walpole State Prison. According to the authorities, Bond was making a bomb, which was to be used during an attempted escape. Robert Valeri became a witness for the state against his accomplices, served time in prison for manslaughter and armed robbery, and was released.

The FBI claimed Saxe and Powers were able to elude authorities because of close relationships they developed within the women's movement. FBI agents flooded the women's communities of Boston, Philadelphia, Lexington (Kentucky), Hartford and New Haven. Their conspicuous interrogation of hundreds of politically active women, followed by highly publicized grand jury subpoenas and jailings, wreaked havoc in health collectives and other vital projects. Activists and potential supporters were scared off, and fear spread across the country, hampering women's and lesbian organizing nationally.

In March of 1975, Susan Saxe was arrested in Philadelphia and served seven years in prison

before finally being released. After twenty-three years on the run and five years on the 'Most Wanted' list, Katherine Powers was arrested in 1993 after turning herself in to police. She was sentenced to eight to twelve years in prison and was released in October of 1999.

Gilday is the only one still held captive. He is presently incarcerated in MCI Shirley in Shirley, Massachusetts.

Zolo Azania

Zolo Azania is a former Black Panther convicted of a 1981 bank robbery that left a Gary, Indiana cop dead. He was arrested miles away from the incident as he was walking, unarmed, down the street.

The prosecution intimidated witnesses, suppressed favorable evidence, presented false eyewitness and expert testimony, and denied him the right to speak or present motions in his own behalf.

The two other men charged and convicted with Zolo received sentences of 60 years. But Zolo's political history and beliefs were used to paint an unfair and inaccurate picture of him and he received the death penalty for a crime he was not involved in.

Since the trial the battle to save Zolo's life has successfully resisted several attempts to follow through with the death

penalty conviction. On July 25, 2005, Special Judge Steven David issued a final order barring the state of Indiana from pursuing the death penalty in Zolo's case. This precedent-setting ruling is a tremendous victory for Zolo!

The Lake County Prosecutor's office has appealed Judge David's ruling and the oral arguments in front of the Indiana Supreme Court will take place on June 9, 2006. The court will decide whether to uphold or overturn Judge David's decision that prohibits the state of Indiana from pursuing the death penalty in Zolo's case.

Prisoner Support Resources:

Anarchist Black Cross Network
www.anarchistblackcross.org

Break The Chains
PO Box 12122, Eugene OR 97440
breakthechains.net
breakthechains02@yahoo.com

California Anarchist Prisoner Solidarity
PO Box 22449, Oakland CA 94609
caps@riseup.net / caps.anarhija.org

Prison Activist Resource Center
PO Box 339, Berkeley CA 94701
www.prisonactivist.org

Earth Liberation Prisoners Support Network
BM Box 2407, London, WC1N 3XX. England.
elp4321@hotmail.com
www.spiritoffreedom.org.uk

North American ELPSN
naelpsn@mutualaid.org

Specific Prisoner Support Groups

Alex and BJ www.supportbjandalex.com
Tre Arrow www.trearrow.org
Dylan Barr www.supportdylan.org
Mel Broughton www.myspace.com/supportmel
Jake Conroy www.supportjake.org
Josh Harper www.joshharper.org
Lauren Gazzola www.supportlauren.com
Sean Kirtly [supportsean.wordpress](http://supportsean.wordpress.com)
Jeff 'Free' Luers www.freefreenow.org
Jonotan freejonatan@yahoo.se
Marie Mason www.freemarie.org
Eric McDavid www.supporteric.org

Daniel McGowan www.supportdaniel.org
Kevin Oliff www.supportkevin.org
Jonathan Paul www.supportjonathan.org
Leonard Peltier www.leonardpeltier.net
Nathan Pope supportnathan@gmail.com
Jonathan Roberts supportjonathan@mutualaid.org
Sadie & Exile (Nathan Black & Joyanna Zacher)
solidaritywithsadieandexile@gmail.com
SHAC 7 www.shac7.com
Tarnac 9 <http://tarnac9.wordpress.com>
Briana Waters www.supportbriana.org

Other Prisoner Support Groups

Anarchist Black Cross Network (ABCN)
www.abcf.net
Bristol ABC www.geocities.com/bristol_abc
Brighton ABC www.brightonabc.org.uk
Prison Activist Resource Center list of PPs/POWs
www.prisonactivist.org/pps+pows/pplistalpa.html
Locked Out: A nationwide working group for activists supporting queer, trans, and intersex prisoners:
<http://lists.riseup.net/www/info/lockedout>
The British Vegan Prisoners Support Group
www.vpsg.org

Earth Liberation Prisoners Poland
ELP4321@hotmail.com
For all the latest eco-prisoner news, as ELP receives it, subscribe to UrgentELP:
urgentelp@lists.riseup.net
For news about prisoners who are not normally supported by ELP subscribe to ELP-Extra: elp-extra@lists.riseup.net
To receive ELP's bimonthly newsletter, Spirit of Freedom, e-mail
ELP4321@hotmail.com
North American Earth Liberation Prisoners Support Network naelpsn@mutualaid.org & www.ecoprisoners.org

Books to Prisoners Programs

Here are some reliable books to prisoner programs we are aware of. All of them receive massive amounts of requests.

Books to Prisoners

c/o Left Bank Books
92 Pike Street
Seattle, WA 98101

Books Through Bars

4722 Baltimore Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19143

Prisoner lit project

c/o Bound Together Books
1369 Haight Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

Women's Prisoner Book Project

c/o Arise Bookstore
2441 Lyndale Avenue S.
Minneapolis, MN 55405

Prison Book Program

c/o Lucy Parsons Bookstore
1306 Hancock Street, Suite 100
Quincy, MA 02169

Books through Bars

c/o Bluestockings Books
172 Allen Street
NY, NY 10002

Friends and Allies

Bite Back

www.directaction.info

Voice of the Voiceless, Peter Young's blog

www.voiceofthevoiceless.org

Do or Die: Voices of Ecological Resistance

www.eco-action.org/dod/index.html

Earth First! Journal www.earthfirstjournal.org

Killing King Abacus & Willful Disobedience

'zines www.geocities.com/kk_abacus

Insurgent Desire-Green Anarchist Archive

www.insurgentdesire.org.uk

The Mid-Atlantic Infoshop www.infoshop.org

Activist Network (UK):

www.activistnetwork.org.uk

CrimethINC Ex-Worker's Collective

www.crimethinc.com

Recommended Further Reading

Attacking Prisons at the Point of Production

compiled by Green Anarchy - available from the GA distro.

The Marini Trial - Italian State Repression of Anarchist Revolt and Anarchist Responses

Venomous Butterfly Publications pamphlet, 2003.

The Prison Within the Prison - Resistance to the F.I.E.S . Isolation Units In Spain

compiled by Brighton ABC,

Towards An Alliance of Flame In Each Indignant Heart

by the Claustrophobia Collective. Included with the ABC Info & Resources pamphlet and also published by Venomous Butterfly.

The Defiant: Prisoners in the Global Resistance

Inspiring prisoners' writings put together by the now defunct Anarchist Prisoners Legal Aid Network (APLAN).

"Any political movement or peoples struggle, which fails to provide support to fallen comrades, is doomed to failure as certain as day follows night."
-Harold H. Thompson

"Any political movement that does not support its political internees is a sham movement!"
-Ojore Lutalo

"A movement that is not capable of looking after its comrades in prison is destined to die, and that at a high price under atrocious torture."
- Daniela Carmignani

"The point is simple: no serious political struggle which has any chance of attaining revolutionary potential can afford to ignore its prisoners."
-North American Earth Liberation Prisoners Support Network

compiled march 2010 in arcata, ca

