

# ***Puerto Rican POWs Convicted— José Luis Rodríguez Railroaded on Conspiracy Charges!***

After more than 26 hours of deliberation during a three-day period, a federal jury found four Puerto Rican patriots guilty of seditious conspiracy on August 5, 1985.

Freedom fighters Alejandrina Torres, Alberto Rodríguez and Edwin Cortés were also convicted of other related weapons and explosives charges. The fourth defendant, José Luis Rodríguez, was convicted of one count of seditious conspiracy. José Luis was the only defendant to present a legal defense during the trial. The other three have maintained since their capture that they are Prisoners of War involved in the armed clandestine movement to win Puerto Rico's independence. POWs Torres, Rodríguez and Cortés, who represented themselves before the court, have adopted the Nationalist position of *retraiamiento* and did not dispute the government's charges. Claiming that they do not recognize US authority over their nation or themselves, the three were not present in court to hear the verdict.

The prosecution immediately filed a motion to revoke compañero José Luis' \$25,000 bond. At a hearing the following day, Prosecutor Sanders asked Juan Rodríguez (José Luis' father who testified on his behalf) to produce the false identification papers the state claims José Luis used to further the conspiracy. Mr. Rodríguez replied: *If the government who is much more powerful than I has been unable to find them, (false IDs), it is because they do not exist.*

Immediately following the guilty verdict, Edwin, Alejandrina and Alberto were placed in segregation at the Metropolitan Correctional Center where they were locked in tiny cells 23 hours a day, denied access to sunlight and fresh air, recreational activities, educational programs, limited one hour family visits, restricted phone calls and increased harassment from prison officials. Alejandrina was returned to general population several days later.

José Rodríguez stood before federal Judge George Leighton with the prospect of going to jail for twenty years and walked away with the dignity of the Puerto Rican independence movement intact and his resolve firm. It was October 4, 1985 and Judge Leighton was to sentence José Luis Rodríguez, Alberto Rodríguez, Alejandrina Torres and Edwin Cortés for a variety of charges ranging from possession of explosives to seditious conspiracy. Jail terms ranged from twenty years for José Luis to eighty-one years for Edwin Cortés.

What was at issue in this trial was a political principle—the right of Puerto Ricans to struggle by any means necessary. We know that this was the issue because this was what the government had eagerly tried to negotiate before the trial started.

Months before the trial was to start, the US attorney's office offered to drop the charges against José. The "deal" was that if Alejandrina, Alberto and Edwin agreed to plead guilty and José Rodríguez made a statement condemning the use of violence, charges would be dropped against him while Alejandrina, Alberto and Edwin would receive lighter sentences. So, on the one hand these compañeros are portrayed by the government as a vicious and dangerous threat to society and yet the same government which used the most extensive and elaborate resources to capture them is willing to make a "deal"! Obviously for the government, the statements were more important than any prison sentence. That is political!

The government's attempt to compromise the compañeros' principles was immediately rejected. Their position was that the government should drop the unfounded charges against José without any deals. They made it clear that they would not negotiate their political principles under any circumstances.

In the film *Valor y Sacrificio*, which includes film clips taken immediately after the capture of the Nationalists in Washington, one of the first questions asked by reporters to Lolita, Andrés and Rafael was, *Are you sorry for what you did?* The question was posed to each one individually, and without hesitation each responded, *I am not sorry.* Lolita Lebron added, *I am not sorry to come here and ask freedom for my country.* That very same question was posed to them time after time for the next 25 years, each time their reply was the same.

On the surface, these offers appear to be humane, but in fact are ploys to undermine the political principles on which our movement has been and continues to be built. The Puerto Rican people have refused to surrender to US imperialism. The imperialists have physically occupied our territory with their military forces, destroyed our economy and assassinated our leaders, yet we have refused to surrender. To become an apologist is to surrender our principles. In a struggle between two unequal forces, the material inequalities can only be compensated by the smaller one's will and determination to be victori-

ous over the other. It is this *will to win*, of which Comandante Juan Antonio Corretjer so militantly spoke, that the enemy wants to destroy.

To denounce the right of Puerto Ricans to struggle for independence by any means necessary, is to establish a predetermined limit to how much we are willing to pay for freedom. Such a self-imposed restraint would leave us at the mercy of our enemy, whose capacity for exploitation and destruction is limitless.

By trying to make a deal for José's release, the US Attorney was trying to use José, Alberto, Alejandrina and Edwin. He tried to make them say that Puerto Rico was not worth the sacrifice of their lives. This would have been a moral victory for the enemy. It would have reduced these patriots to the level of petty criminals begging for mercy. For the State, the trial was a means to a political end. The threat of long prison terms was being used to coerce the compa-

ñeros into betraying their political principles.

In fact, in his final statement to the court, Assistant US Attorney Reidy urged Judge Leighton to impose the maximum sentences on all the compañeros.

Face-to-face with Judge Leighton, knowing that his best chance of walking away from a twenty year sentence rested on the content of his statement, José reaffirmed the Puerto Rican people's right to struggle until victory. He defended the right of the independence movement to organize clandestinely.

When Judge Leighton finally read the sentences, it was to a packed courtroom. A courtroom filled with family, friends and supporters, who earlier had marched outside the court in a cold rainstorm to show their support for the compañeros. After a lengthy statement filled with a mixture of ignorant insults and undeniable praise, Leighton announced 35 year sentences for Alberto, Edwin and Alejandrina. José Rodríguez was given a suspended sentence and five years probation. ✪

*“...I do not consider myself heroic.  
I never did anything heroic.  
I just did my duty as I saw it.”*

*—alberto rodríguez*

My name is Alberto Rodríguez. Of all the things Mr. Ferguson (US assistant attorney) said, the only thing I agree with is that I was a teacher. That's true. I was a teacher at Northwestern Illinois University until the day I was arrested.

Some very important issues have been raised in this case. Those issues which benefitted the government were given a lot of attention. No amount of time, no amount of money was too much. Those issues and questions that were important for us were considered irrelevant, unimportant, and, a very interesting term, "prejudicial" to the government.

And yet these questions and issues go to the very heart of what this case is about. To deny that these are central issues is to deny that this trial ever took place. These questions are like democracy. The government says we're undemocratic. But if we try to explain what truly constitutes a democracy, they say that it's irrelevant; not a question in this case. If we speak about democracy, it's prejudicial to the government, which I would agree is true.

They say that we are unlawful. And then in a most cynical manner Mr. Ferguson lies when he says that this government distinguishes between

unlawful and lawful attainment of Puerto Rican independence. If you look at some of those documents that Michael Deutsch presented as exhibits, if you listen to Emilio Pantojas' testimony, the United States government has never separated what is lawful or unlawful within the independence movement.

The US government position toward Puerto Rico is best defined by former UN ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick's statement: Puerto Rico is not a domestic nor an international matter. Puerto Rico is a geo-political bastion of the United States. If you believe that the US government will jeopardize its hold over Puerto Rico just because some Puerto Ricans follow lawful means, you are dead wrong.

The prosecution has also talked about violence. They claim we are violent people. But when we attempt to explain our situation, what violence is and how it is perpetrated against us daily and that we have acted only in self-defense, the government says that it is irrelevant, not a question in this trial, and prejudicial to their case.

The US claims that colonialism is not an issue in this trial. They say let's not talk about it; we don't have enough time; it's irrelevant to this

question. But it is precisely because of US colonialism that we are here. I wondered as I sat here just why this is so. Why is it that the government wants to keep not only the jury, but the American people in this "cocoon of ignorance."

The objective of this trial — to punish us for our alleged "crimes" while denying us the opportunity to explain the colonial case of Puerto Rico — became an obsession. If something was important, but had political overtones or was political in character, the government's position was to ignore it completely and deny its relevancy. But it has not been politics in general. It has been the politics of the Puerto Rican independence movement versus the politics of the government — their politics of fear and hatred. The prosecutors can say anything and they were given all the necessary time.

Judge Leighton made a ruling, a ruling that, as Mr. Ferguson said, he will explain to you. He said that, *The lawfulness of the authority of the United States government over the islands of Puerto Rico is not an issue. Furthermore, the law does not recognize the claim that the authority of the United States over the islands of Puerto Rico is not lawful.* This is part of this

obsession with keeping politics out of it. This ruling is arbitrary, unprecedented, and cannot be found in any law.

Mr. Ferguson self-righteously says that neither we nor the Puerto Rican independence movement have the right to impose our beliefs upon you, but he has no problems with the American people imposing their will upon us. And this statement is true to that thinking.

The judge's ruling and the instruction that he will give you in fact means that even if I wanted to defend myself, I could not because there is no defense for seditious conspiracy.

Two years ago when we were first arrested in June of 1983, a famous Puerto Rican author, national poet of Puerto Rico and a life long fighter for independence, Don Juan Antonio Corretjer heard about this arrest. In fact he traveled to Chicago and was present during some of the earlier hearings in this case. And had it not been for his untimely death, he would be with us today. He wrote an article in a major Puerto Rican newspaper in which he stated: ... *Seditious conspiracy is the impossible crime. Puerto Ricans cannot be convicted of seditious conspiracy because Puerto Rico belongs to, but is not part of the United States.* He further explained that seditious conspiracy is opposition to lawful authority and since US authority in Puerto Rico is unlawful, then Puerto Ricans cannot be charged with sedition.

The government claims that Puerto Rico is not a colony. Even the ex-governor of Puerto Rico, who administers Puerto Rico at the benefit of the United States Congress, and some people claim to the benefit of the CIA, admits that Puerto Rico is a colony.

Seditious conspiracy, is not comprised of isolated acts. It is one thing to say people conspire to plan prison escapes, to rob the CTA, or conspire to bomb military bases. Those could be labeled criminal conspiracies. But there is something different about this case. It is the political objective, the political motive which makes our actions seditious. That is why seditious conspiracy is the impossible crime — no Puerto Rican can be seditious of a country that is not his own. The government denies this fact. Obviously the court agrees otherwise they would raise the colonial case of Puerto Rico.

There's another issue that has been raised in this trial, a point that was questioned, but later dropped because the government did not want to deal with it. This issue concerns POW William Morales, who is presently incarcerated

in Mexico. The United States has attempted everything possible to extradite William Morales to the United States, but they have failed miserably.

The government version is that they contacted the US Embassy in Mexico City and the Mexican authorities sent two police officers to a restaurant, where a shoot-out similar to those at the O.K. Corral or Dodge City took place.

But in fact William Morales was attacked by two Mexican police officers who had their guns drawn, and their plan was simple. Their plan was take William Morales, throw him in a car, drive him to the border and turn him over to US authorities. And then the United States government would tell the world that they caught William Morales sneaking across the border.

Their plan failed because a dedicated Mexican patriot sacrificed his life for William Morales. William Morales has not been extradited to the United States today because the Puerto Rican people, the Mexican people, and international community recognize his political status. This is why he's not here with us today, and why the United States has not been able to extradite him.

Mr. Ferguson says that we attempt to hide behind what he terms as heroic freedom fighters. I do not consider myself heroic. I never did anything heroic. I just did my duty as I saw it.

He said that we try to pretend that we're above the law, and that is not true. We know that there is law, and we adhere to law. But we adhere to international law because we see that Puerto Rico is a colony of the United States, that Puerto Rico was militarily intervened in 1898 and it has remained thus to the present. That is the law we adhere to. We do not pretend that we can do whatever we want and that we're not accountable to anyone. We are accountable to our people, and we recognize that.

Let me explain why we do not deny or concede to the government's evidence. We do not concede because we think they are right nor do we deny it because we are afraid. There are three main questions or principles that explain why we did not present a defense, witnesses or try to defend ourselves against the government's charges.

First is the colonial case of Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is an intervened and militarily occupied nation. And with all due respect to Judge Leighton, the authority that the United States exercises over Puerto Rico is unlawful.

Second is international law. The United States charter, which is considered the most important treaty of the world, states that people have a right to freedom and self-determination. Later that charter, through various resolutions, defined this point further. The charter states that people have a right to self-determination and independence, and that people have a right to attain that independence by any means necessary. Since the colonial powers have historically maintained their power through force, then the colonized people have a right to use force.

Later, in 1949 the Geneva Convention was established to deal with the question of prisoners of war during World War II. The Geneva Convention stated that people captured in a war, in battle, were to be given special status.

I recently read some articles that discussed a debate within military circles in this country on whether the US should agree to the Geneva Convention protocols. The government does not want to recognize these protocols because if they agree that POW status is to be applied to those who fight against colonialism, then they would have to recognize our POW status. They would have to recognize that there exists a state of war between Puerto Rico and the United States. And this is what they want to avoid.

There is also a third position in addition to the colonial case of Puerto Rico and international law and that is the Nationalist principle of *retraimiento*. *Retraimiento* is a doctrine created by the Nationalist Party, principally by Pedro Albizu Campos, as Emilio Pantojas the professor from Circle Campus, explained. Those who uphold the principles of *retraimiento* cannot recognize the US government's unlawful jurisdiction over Puerto Rico. We cannot recognize their authority or do anything that legitimizes it, be it voting or defending ourselves in trial.

*Retraimiento* is not something that you accept very easily. It has very serious consequences for a person. For one thing, you cannot defend yourself in trial if you assume this position. When you are sentenced, you cannot go before the parole board; nor can you attempt to reduce your sentence. When one becomes part of the armed clandestine movement to free Puerto Rico, he must accept the principles of *retraimiento*. He must say to himself, yes, if I am captured in the process of struggling for Puerto Rican independence, I must accept *retraimi-*

ento. I must not defend myself.

It is a very serious question and requires much thought. It's not something that one can assume in one or two weeks or three months. It requires years to reach such a serious decision. Because when you take this stand, your whole life will change, and you must be willing to sacrifice everything.

In this trial, Mr. Ferguson has stated that we attempted to elicit sympathy from you. But at the same time he cynically attempts to elicit fear from you and make you afraid of us. Because you must be afraid of us. It goes beyond just finding us guilty. It must go one step further, because what the government wants to accomplish through you and through the media is not just to find us guilty, to say that what we did was wrong. The government wants you to repudiate us, to say that we are terrorists, to make you believe that we are terrible and inhumane. And that is why they make the kind of closing statement they have made today.

In conclusion, as I sat here during the trial and looked at all the evidence that the government has acquired, all the investigation, the hundreds of agents and CIA, Secret Service, policemen, pictures, maps, experts from all over the country, your time, the Judge's time, all the security in this building, and I think about all the money and resources that this government has expended to end the FALN and to end what they call terrorism, and I say, just as Mrs. Torres and Mr. Cortes have said, there's a very simple way to end all this. A very simple way to stop Puerto Ricans who dedicate their lives to the independence of Puerto Rico, a simple way to end safehouses. It's very simple — to end all this, the US government has only to give the Puerto Rican people their independence.

Now, this is not a political belief, as Mr. Ferguson says, as though it is something that just popped into our minds or something that only a few people believe. Independence for Puerto Rico is a human right. This country has a long history of claiming to be a champion of human rights. As long as the US maintains Puerto Rico as a colony, as long as it denies this human right, then in a sense the reason we are charged with seditious conspiracy is not because we are able to physically oppose the United States government by force, but because we morally oppose them by force. The US government cannot show their faces anywhere in this world and say

that they stand for human rights and for freedom and democracy while they maintain Puerto Rico as a colony.

*“...My actions were not motivated by personal greed or because I have a malevolent nature. I am here because I am fighting for the independence of my nation.”*

*—alejandrina torres*

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury:

As I stand before you for the last time, let me once again reiterate that I am doing so as a Puerto Rican Prisoner of War, captured in the course of struggle for the liberation of my country — and also as a woman, a representative of the most victimized and oppressed sector of society. These two factors are an integral part of my reality and life experiences. The government has presented much “evidence” during this trial. Their goal is not to help you determine whether we are guilty or innocent.

The government's main goal is to provoke a psychological effect on you — the Jury — and the public at large. Their aim is to make you believe that I am a terrorist — a threat to you — and through me to label the entire Puerto Rican independence struggle terrorist and criminal. Even before this trial began the US government tried to create the illusion that we are a danger to you by ordering the extreme and unprecedented “security” measures which Judge Leighton approved for this trial. The real purpose for the security measures was not because of a threat from us, our community or North American supporters. The purpose was to intimidate supporters so they wouldn't come to the trial, and to implant in peoples' minds, well, *if Judge Leighton and the US government required so much security — then they must be dangerous.* However, we know from the large attendance at our trial that the US government has not intimidated us.

Throughout the trial, unnecessary evidence was introduced. For instance, did you really need to see the film showing the dynamite being exploded to understand what dynamite is? Did you really need to see a lightbulb flash to simulate the effects of an incendiary device? Was it really necessary for the US attorney to play the tapes over and over again and to show you the weapons and reassure you that they weren't loaded? All of this evidence was not to help you determine our guilt or innocence, which I again state you cannot do. No, it was to

keep up the flow of media sensationalism, to make you and the public think we are terrorists and a threat to you.

In Mr. Hartzler's opening statement for the government, he stated that he was going to prove that since 1974, the FALN has conspired to use force and violence to oppose the authority of the US government. There has been a conspiracy since July 25, 1898 the day the US invaded and militarily occupied my country. But that conspiracy is not to overthrow the authority of the US government — it is to win the independence of my nation. I am proud to be a part of that conspiracy — and I will continue to struggle to free my nation — whether it be in your yankee prisons or in the streets. Whose authority are we accused of attempting to overthrow? It is the authority of Britain over the 13 colonies, India and Ireland. It is the authority of Nazi Germany over France. It is the authority of Portugal over Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands. It is the authority of colonialism. We will never submit to that authority!

The evidence attempts to show you that Edwin Cortés, Alberto Rodríguez and myself attempted to plan bombings at military bases, that we attempted to free our comrade Oscar López Rivera and that we wanted to free all our comrades, Puerto Rican prisoners of war held illegally in US jails. I am proud to say that I did try to do this. But I am not a terrorist. *Terrorism* is defined in *Webster's Dictionary* as an act of violence and terror to achieve a political end. How does this government which permits the mayor of Philadelphia to bomb 62 black people's homes, randomly murder 16 black men, women and children, orders the ecological destruction of my nation to suit its industrial and military purposes — have the moral audacity to call me a terrorist? Our war of liberation is not against the American people. We could attack the populace if we so desired. But, we don't want to terrorize you. That is why actions are carried out in the dead of night as Mr. Ferguson stated

in his closing statement, to attack military bases. We don't want to hurt anyone. However, we do want the US to get out of Puerto Rico. And we know that a country which drops an atomic bomb on Hiroshima, which finances terrorism and supports the contras who are trying to overthrow the Nicaraguan government by destroying child care centers, schools and entire villages — will only leave Puerto Rico through force.

Judge Leighton has repeatedly stated that this is not a political trial. Nothing could be further from the truth. My actions were not motivated by personal greed or because I have a malevolent nature. I am here because I am fighting for the independence of my nation. As you sit there, you know that this is true, as does the US attorney and Judge Leighton. Recently, an article appeared in the *Chicago Sun Times* entitled "Terrorism is in the Eyes of the Beholder". And that's true. The US government labels me a terrorist because I'm willing to engage in armed struggle to free my nation. Yet, if I were a mercenary who fought with the Contras in Nicaragua President Reagan would call me a freedom fighter. Clearly, the issue is not how I am fighting — but what I am fighting for and who I'm fighting against. Although the evidence clearly shows that Edwin Cortés, Alberto Rodríguez and myself are fighting for the independence of Puerto Rico, you have not been permitted to learn why I would fight for the independence of my nation. Judge Leighton ruled that US authority over Puerto Rico is lawful. It doesn't matter how many atrocities have been committed against my people under that lawful authority. And yet it is "lawful". That is why this trial is a farce.

We have known the outcome of this trial since June 29, 1983. At the hands of our jailers we have already experienced the burden of the sentence that is going to be imposed on us. In 1803, Robert Emmet, an Irish patriot who was hanged because he led an insurrection to free Ireland from English rule stated at his sentencing, and I quote: *Sentence was imposed on me before this trial ever began.* For us, this conviction was just as certain.

In answer to our opening statements, Mr. Hartzler stated we are unlike George Washington because Washington wanted democracy. You get an idea of what the US government means by democracy when you know that George Washington, the supposed democratic hero kept black people as slaves, and women were at best second

class citizens. That is not my idea of democracy. So, if he tells you there is a democracy in Puerto Rico, you know something is wrong. But, Mr. Hartzler missed the point. Edwin Cortés was explaining that George Washington was a hero because he won. If you had lost your anti-colonial struggle, Britain could very well have tried Washington for sedition. Right now we are being tried for sedition. When we win independence, our people will state that this trial was just one more in a history of outrages carried out by your government against the Puerto Rican people.

You heard the testimony of the traitor Alfredo Mendez. He tried to tell you he was sick of his life — so he decided to cooperate with the US government. What he was sick of was the thought of spending 75 years in jail. He is the government's boy — he no longer is a Puerto Rican. You saw how he remembered what he was supposed to say — and how he said just what the government wanted him to say when they questioned him. But not when he was cross-examined. He couldn't remember, he mumbled. Why? He was so worried he might forget his lines and make his keepers — the US government mad at him. Every struggle has their Benedict Arnold. Alfredo Mendez will be remembered as a pathetic worm who sold himself and his people. He is truly a man without a country, a man without principles and dignity. On the other hand, you have heard testimony about our unindicted co-conspirator, Guillermo Morales. He also left prison, but by a very different means and for different reasons. This is a man who escaped

attempts to label as terrorism is really resistance. Our prisoners are subjected to psychological and physical torture. If they didn't resist, they would die. If we don't resist US military and corporate plans for our nation, we will die. Resistance is our means of survival. If it were not for that, I can assure you I wouldn't be standing before you today. Let me assure you that as a Puerto Rican Prisoner of War and as a woman, I will continue to struggle until the day I die against any country that dares to wage terrorism against a people under the guise of "democracy." What is most important in my life is that Puerto Rico will be free. The rest is inconsequential. Puerto Rico will be free and socialist if we, the Puerto Rican people so desire. This is the way I, as a Puerto Rican, and not some "foreigner" — want it to be.

Thank you. ☆

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*"...As a Puerto Rican Prisoner of War  
and as a woman, I will continue  
to struggle until the day I die...."*

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from a New York prison — using the bandages wrapped around his finger stubs to escape. He rejoined our independence struggle in spite of the great personal risks. A movement that can produce women and men of the caliber of Guillermo Morales can never be defeated by worms like Alfredo Mendez — nor can the US government defeat us even with all its cameras, FBI agents and technology.

Finally, what your government at-

**“... What would you do if your nation was going to be destroyed? What would you call the people who resisted such plans, patriots or terrorists?”**

**—edwin cortés**

Good afternoon, members of the jury. You have heard the evidence as presented by the US Attorneys, FBI and Chicago police on behalf of the United States government. You have seen in this courtroom the meeting of two forces diametrically opposed to each other, one which is rich and powerful and technologically advanced. You've seen hidden microphones, telephone wiretaps and videos. This is George Orwell's Big Brother, 1984. The other force is poor and indigent, but very creative and with a will to win.

As to be expected, we did not hear anything from the United States government as to why Puerto Ricans, wherever they find themselves, be it in Chicago, New York, Boston or Connecticut, have a burning desire to obtain liberty and independence for their homeland. If you lived in the conditions in which we live in the United States, you would understand why for us, as for black people, life here is not an American dream, but a nightmare.

The US government has stated in its documents that one of the central goals of the FALN is to obtain the political independence of Puerto Rico by force, violence and armed revolution. We do not deny this fact because if we did, we would be negating the very essence of our existence and that is to be proud Puerto Ricans, and to have contributed to a liberating process.

It is the natural and human right of any colonized people to fight with arms against tyranny. And, of course, no court of the occupying power will recognize that right.

In communiqués introduced into evidence, you heard about the effects of colonialism in my country. I would encourage you to carefully analyze these documents. They are intended to educate our people as well as the American public concerning our plight because we are not fighting against you. We want you to understand why we would give up our lives to free our nation. If you

believe in the contents of these documents, you will appreciate why we are waging a war of independence against the colonial empire.

I could continue to give you facts and figures and documented evidence which will prove the nature of colonialism. But you will be told that it is not relevant to the criminal charges that you are supposed to consider in this case. So you see we have been prevented from explaining the essence of the colonial case of Puerto Rico to you. But despite the US attorneys' attempts, all the facts could not be hidden.

You heard in the tapes and read in the transcripts that Puerto Rico is a Latin American country in the Caribbean with a distinct national identity and national character. You heard that *Aguilla Blanca*, (White Eagle), and the *Macheteros*, (Machete Wielders), were the first two armed guerrilla organizations who fought against the United States military forces in 1898.

You heard Agent Hahn testify that the FBI does not operate outside the United States. But you then heard agent Maldonado testify that the FBI does operate in Puerto Rico. We now know that the FBI came to Puerto Rico in the early 1930s solely to disrupt and destroy the Puerto Rican independence movement regardless of its methods. We know that the FBI are experts in repressive techniques and that they have been used not only against the Puerto Rican independence movement, but the black liberation movement and especially, Martin Luther King.

We heard Agent Hayes testify about the 2020 Plan, named for the year of its completion. He testified that the Plan had something to do with the economy of Puerto Rico, and he was right. Plan 2020 is the continuation of US economic plans begun in 1898 to create dependency, insecurity and the development of a colonized mind.

Imagine your nation being converted into 11 military/industrial parks and the large scale strip mining of valuable

natural resources to profit another nation. Plan 2020 is a threat to our existence as a people and as a nation.

What would you do if your nation was going to be destroyed? What would you call the people who resisted such plans, patriots or terrorists?

The United States government thinks they can do what they wish with Puerto Rico, but they are mistaken. Puerto Rican men and women like ourselves will defend our nation.

We are told by the US Attorneys that having 21 pounds of dynamite in an apartment is wrong, against the law, and kept in a hazardous manner. But the US government wants us to believe that storing nuclear weapons in Puerto Rico, which creates millions of times more danger to life and property, is right. How can this be reconciled? How can the US government justify dropping bombs on the island of Vieques day and night?

Let's not look at planting explosives at various military facilities as isolated acts. Let's look at the roots of violence. Prior to 1898, Puerto Ricans had committed no acts of violence against the United States. Why would Puerto Ricans risk their families and lives on US soil if it weren't because the United States occupied our country? Since the American invasion of Puerto Rico, a struggle against this intervention has occurred from the secret societies of 1898 to the Nationalist Party of the 1930s and '50s led by Pedro Albizu Campos.

During the 1930s and through the 1950s this struggle was led by the Nationalist Party and a Harvard-educated lawyer, Pedro Albizu Campos, who was incarcerated for ten years in 1937 for this very charge of seditious conspiracy. He was incarcerated because he enjoyed the mass support of the Puerto Rican people.

There was an important lesson for us to learn during this period because the Nationalists did not hide behind walls. They openly confronted the US occupier. And this led to the establishment of the Third Republic of Puerto Rico in Jayuya.

Today you have the development of political/military clandestine organizations such as the FALN. You have the Popular Puerto Rican Army, *Macheteros*, the Armed Forces of Popular Resistance, FARP, the Organization of Volunteers for the Puerto Rican Revolution, OVRP, and the Revolutionary Commandos of the People, CRP.

History has shown us that only by waging an armed struggle can you shake

the colonial yoke. The basis of our struggle will not be removed because it has been branded as criminal. On the contrary, it will continue to multiply and flourish.

If the United States government is really interested in stopping prison breakouts, CTA robberies and bombings at military bases, all it has to do is get out of Puerto Rico and grant us our independence. We can assure you if this happens, the FALN will cease to exist.

Albizu Campos defined our nation as a "militarily intervened nation," that US military intervention and the illegal cessation of Puerto Rico to the United States by Spain meant a state of war still existed between Puerto Rico and the United States. This is the basis of our position as prisoners of war. Not "so-called" prisoners of war, as Mr. Ferguson would have you believe, but prisoners of war.

You will remember that US Attorney Hartzler addressed you after my opening statement. He stated that the difference between George Washington and us was that George Washington was fighting for democracy, and we're fighting against democracy. Mr. Hartzler committed a historical error that deserves clarification.

First of all, the American colonists were fighting for liberty and independence and against British colonialism. Democracy as a political system was developed after the revolution through a process of many years. The first elections were held 13 years after the American revolution. The Democratic principles that evolved were universal ideas to be applied to all nations and people, not jealously guarded by America. The right of a people to nationhood was inherently understood. And I'll quote one paragraph in the Declaration of Independence: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights, and among these rights are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

We are fighting for our liberty and independence. And the political system we choose will come afterwards. We feel that the true people's democracy, when allowed to develop, is socialism.

There is another difference between us and George Washington, Mr. Hartzler. And that, besides nationality and country, is that we never desire nor will be slave holders.

Members of the jury, these ideas are not based on mere whims, but flow from our colonial reality. if you study our history, we are sure you will reach

***"It is the natural and human right of any colonized people to fight with arms against tyranny."***

the same conclusion, unless ofcourse, you are the type of person who places profits before the human needs of people.

People came to this trial because they believe ours is a just and noble cause. We are freedom fighters, not terrorists. For those who struggle, victory will be their just compensation. Thank you. ☆

# LIBERTAD

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*The true measure of effectiveness and success (of the political-legal strategy) is the fact that the... people's spirit of resistance continued. —edwin cortés, alejandrina torres and alberto rodríguez*

*With the conviction of the four Puerto Rican patriots captured in Chicago in June of 1983 and accused of "seditious conspiracy" the US government has once again implemented their tactic of pre-emptive strikes and the elaboration of a "denial system". Using these tactics within a strategy of counter-insurgency, imperialism proposes to defeat national liberation struggles. An important feature of this strategy is the continual use of legal institutions while severely weakening their inherent democratic content and protections. Under the camouflage of nominally democratic-legal institutions, the government is implementing an authoritarian, neo-fascist conception of repression. This article will look at the material base for this strategy of repression, how it is being implemented and how it manifested itself in the trial of the four.*

US imperialism is experiencing an economic crisis caused by over-accumulation and over-production and reduced rates of profit. This crisis has resulted in a myriad of conditions — inflation, drop-in profit and precedent setting unemployment — which US capitalism has never experienced at such critical levels all at once. This has been aggravated by the fluctuating cost of energy. This economic crisis can be measured by the fact that this year, the US will have a trade deficit of about \$150 billion, economic growth has stagnated at a pitiful 3 percent and an increased consumer debt of 23.6 percent of personal income (the highest since WW II). All this is aggravated by the severe debt problem of Latin America which owes the US a shocking \$360 billion.

The US' traditional response to economic crisis — expanding their share of the world's market and control of raw materials, bolstered by military power — is no longer viable in today's world. Presently, US capitalism is following a monetarist, supply-side economic model. The main feature of this economic model is increased capital by: lowering real wages, slashing social expenses (health, education & welfare), relocating industry from high-wage to low-wage areas both within the US and abroad, introducing technology which cuts labor costs, removing costly regulations on business (environment, workers and consumer protection — limiting prosecution of business fraud and corruption cases), reindustrializing through military and military related projects and strict control of money supply and interest rates. This economic program

only benefits those capitalists able to reduce costs of production and remain competitive.

This approach to economic recovery for capitalism (inappropriately labeled "Reaganomics"), is presently creating severe unemployment, increased austerity and the lowering of the standard of living. While this is affecting all working people, obviously those affected the most are those already at the bottom of the economic ladder. Recently disclosed US Census figures state that 35 percent of all blacks and 28 percent of all Latinos live below the poverty level. In addition, 51 percent of all Black children and 39 percent of all latino children under the age of 18 live in destitute conditions.

Puerto Rico, being a colony of the US, has been hit even harder by the economic crisis. The official unemployment rate of 23.3 percent, continual decrease in an already low average income of \$3,820, 49 percent of the population dependent on the government through welfare disbursement, another 40 percent partially subsidized and an external debt of \$32 million are indicative of this crisis. The US plans to deal with this economic crisis by expanding the military-industrial complex on the island. The militarization of the economy is growing rapidly with the emergence of a wide-range of military related industries. In conjunction with this, the US proposes Plan 2020 which will convert Puerto Rico into an immense mining-petrochemical refinery center.

The US realizes that its economic policies are going to severely affect third world people within its borders and in

Puerto Rico and will be seriously challenged. The US is responding to this inevitable threat by launching an ideological-political offensive. This offensive consists of a developing repressive interventionist state (interventionist in that the state will move away from the economic sphere and become more involved in social questions) which will be popularly supported by a "conservative consensus". This consensus will be forged primarily through a right-wing social agenda.

The development of a "conservative consensus" is being formed by a growing right-wing political movement. This movement is growing rapidly, primarily by organizing around social issues such as busing, abortion, school prayer, gun control, crime, death penalty, sexuality, family, school discipline and content and "terrorism". This movement has successfully manipulated white social fears, prejudices, populist attitudes towards government, law and order, christianity and patriotism. While right-wing politics, particularly Christian Fundamentalism, have made inroads in Black, Puerto Rican and Mexican communities, these will not be fully integrated into the "conservative consensus" because American right-wing politics have always had as their core white supremacy and xenophobia making it more probable that third world conservatives will not develop a mass base.

The increased influence of this right-wing movement, labeled by some as the "New Right", can be seen in support for the reduction of social services while increasing the militarist-



repressive arm of the government. Military budgets are sky high and the FBI and CIA have had their internal political police powers legalized and expanded. Creation of such bodies as the Senate Subcommittee on Security and Terrorism and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (responsible for population control in the case of a critical political crisis), new federal laws placing severe restrictions on political work and lifting of restrictions on use of evidence in trials also point to the influence of this movement. Along with the increase in political repression, capital punishment is accelerating, prison regimentation tightens and the length of prison sentences increases. These events have taken place in an atmosphere of social service cutbacks, a shift of health, education and personal security along with the general distribution of wealth from the poor to the rich.

Another example of the rise of the right-wing in the US is the existence of fascist underground organizations. Organizations such as the Silent Brotherhood, the Order and the White American Bastion are growing in force. In conjunction with this underground, there exist organizations like the Aryan Nations, Civilian Military Assistance and the Ku Klux Klan which provide ideological, financial, logistical and moral support. These organizations have at times conflicted with the state — because of their zealotry and impatience — not because the US wishes to destroy them.

The growth of this "conservative consensus" as a force for the support of fascism in America can be linked to the ideological-political use of code words like *law and order*, *patriotism* and *terrorism*. By creating simple notions of these terms, public analysis of issues are avoided and political leaders are not required to develop thoughtful answers to problems people face. Popular frustrations to problems are directed against "welfare cheats", "terrorists" and "illegal aliens", instead of at the true source of the problem — capitalism. By targeting vulnerable communities as responsible for the problems, scapegoat politics disguise class contradictions.

Third World communities — the most severely affected by the economic crisis — are exhorted to greater sacrifice, discipline and austerity. The "conservative consensus" sees protest and resistance by these communities as disruptive and views conflicts simply as problems of law and order. Through this

method white north americans feel increasingly threatened and support grows for a populist, fascist state.

The emerging fascist state when confronted by resistance, particularly the struggle for Puerto Rico's independence, being waged in the US and Puerto Rico is moving away from the more traditional democratic forms of social control. The state is gradually subverting nominally legal-democratic institutions to a "counter-insurgent" model. There, the theory of counter-insurgency prevails through military-police power

Richard Hahn coordinated the prosecution of the four. Efforts to remove Agent Hahn and another FBI agent (a Black FBI agent brought into the case in a classic "Spook Who Sat By The Door" manner) were dismissed by the trial judge, George N. Leighton.

Former US Attorney Dan Webb stated after the conviction of the four that this case was a "premiere" of things to come. From the outset the government stated that the case was not political but against "terrorism". With the use of this code word, right-wing hysteria

### *As it curtails political liberties at home, imperialism is engaging in overt and covert acts of aggression against governments and liberation movements abroad.*

without mass support in the communities affected. What is left are legal institutions in form, but not in content.

From the outset of the trial of the four Puerto Ricans — Alejandrina Torres, Edwin Cortes, Alberto Rodríguez and José Luis Rodríguez, (accused of being members of the FALN), this strategy of counter-insurgency was evident.

The US government proposed the implementation of a legal-political repressive strategy known as the "Denial System". This system was first elaborated in a secret counter-insurgency conference held in Puerto Rico in 1978. Its main feature is the coordination of the police, courts and the mass media into an effective counter-insurgent instrument. Its reasoning is that since revolutionary organizations are presently in an incipient stage, now is the time to strike and drive a "wedge" between the forces for national liberation and the people.

In the case of the four, a concerted effort of over 100 agents from various federal and local agencies were actively involved in an investigation which spanned a two-year period. New and sophisticated electronic surveillance was used. Particularly striking was the unprecedented use of video cameras in private homes. After thousands of hours of surveillance and intelligence gathering, the state made a pre-emptive strike and arrested the four in various locations throughout Chicago. An example of the active participation of repressive agencies in prosecuting "terrorist" cases could be seen during the trial where FBI Chief Case Agent

and emotions were heightened. Through this the government successfully proposed special rules and procedures. Among the new standards were the unprecedented level of security in and around the courtroom, and the acceptance of illegally obtained evidence (illegal according to US law). By using the code words of "terrorism" and "violence" the government was able to develop new rules of evidence, courtroom procedure and conspiracy laws for "FALN Defendants". Throughout the trial the government constantly resorted to hysteria, inflammatory statements and a tedious presentation of evidence, most of it hearsay and circumstantial. The all-purpose snitch Alfredo Mendez was once again paraded in front of the jury with the same story heard at the trial of compañero Oscar Lopez-Rivera.

Throughout the trial the government tried in vain to entice the 3 POWs to participate in the trial (a violation of the POW position) and to force José Rodríguez' defense to abandon the political prisoner position and become strictly legal. By using the traditional method of reward and punishment, the government hoped it could tempt the four into becoming part of the legal process thereby winning an important political and moral victory. Their tactic of acknowledging the complacency and chastising resistance failed miserably. To combat the tendency towards cooption by the legal system, hundreds of meetings were held between the four and the defense attorneys. Through a process of collective struggle and decision-making,

a viable courtroom strategy evolved which struck a balance between political principle and legal considerations. Through the POW's opening and closing statements, selective questioning of FBI agents, the constant reaffirmation that these proceedings were illegal and that Puerto Ricans have an inalienable right to struggle with arms, the political character of the trial was set. Neither the government nor the judge was able to effectively deny this fact. The judge, realizing the political nature of the issues presented, made a dictatorial, authoritarian and unprecedented ruling, stating that the authority of the US over Puerto Rico is legal. This lame colonial act by the judge backfired, by creating the same furor and indignation it was trying to quell. The government, realizing the effective presentation of political positions, attempted in its arguments to appeal to the jury (and indirectly to the North American public's) emotions, fears and patriotism.

Complementing the vertical position of the defendants, the community actively assisted in defining the trial as political. On the very first day of trial 5 members of the community condemned Alfredo Mendez as a CHOTA (snitch) in a creative act of silent protest. The government attempted to retaliate by singling out certain members of the community for selective harassment. This tactic failed because the community continued to show its support.

The third party in this nefarious trial was the mass media. Fulfilling its role within the "Denial System" the media distorted and obscured reality. Under such sensational headlines as "Justice As Gang Target" and "Prosecutors Blast FALN Violence" the mass media attempted to rob the four of any political legitimacy. The electronic media bombarded the people with hazy video images which purported to show all kinds of violent activity. By depicting the defendants as "bomb-throwing maniacs" with one newspaper going so far as to label the Puerto Rican independence movement as being "depraved and immoral", the state advanced their strategy of dehumanizing revolutionaries and confusing revolutionary activity with senseless violence.

While fair and objective reporting from the American Media, the founders of "yellow journalism" cannot be expected, one should neither ignore nor avoid them. By establishing a media coordinator who regularly passed out press releases and confronted and

challenged the media, some favorable media was generated. This shattered the government's hopes for a totally negative media campaign. Their preoccupation with the media became clear when they attempted to get the trial judge to pass a gag order against defense attorneys. One very good aspect of the work done with the media was the favorable and extensive coverage by the Spanish language electronic media.

The combination of POW intransigence, Political Prisoner José Luis Rodríguez' commitment to revolutionary principles, defense lawyers commitment to collectivity and the primacy of political principles over legal expediency, along with the combative spirit of the community dealt the government a political and moral defeat. The fact that all defendants were found guilty is not the proper measurement of the effectiveness and correctness of the political-legal strategy. The true measure of effectiveness and success is the fact that the Puerto Rican independence

movement was advanced, new relations were developed both within the independence movement and internationally, church support was strong and finally the people's spirit of resistance continued. During the trial, the proceedings were turned around from a trial against the independence movement into a trial against US imperialism.

With the US still holding a pre-eminent position in the imperialist camp we can expect them to be most aggressive in their threat and use of force. In order to maintain its hegemony, the US must become an example for fascist politics to continue its hegemony. As it curtails political liberties at home, imperialism is engaging in overt and covert acts of aggression against governments and liberation movements abroad. This new fascism is creating tremendous contradictions. Our role as revolutionaries is to be prepared politically, ideologically and organizationally to seize the times. ☆

## Compromise or Resistance

The government's proposal for a negotiated plea is an example of the US government's attempts to entice prisoners of war and political prisoners into relinquishing general principles of resistance for narrow considerations. Two months before the commencement of the trial, prosecutors approached defense attorneys Michael Deutsch and David Thomas with the offer of a plea bargain. They proposed that the three POWs declare themselves guilty and that José Rodríguez sign a statement. In return, the government would drop all charges against José and recommend reduced prison sentences for the three POWs.

Looking at strictly legal considerations and in the interest of leniency for individual prisoners, this plea bargain was the best possible offer. But the price for this offer was the conditional surrender of the POW's revolutionary principle of *retramiento* and of José Rodríguez's commitment to principles of resistance and non-collaboration. It was with this in mind that the prisoners were compelled to reject any plea bargain or negotiation.

While recognizing that at certain historical moments negotiations between revolutionary forces and the regime are both necessary and correct, this was not the case in this situation. The prisoners had nothing to negotiate with except their principles and commitment to resistance. To negotiate these principles away would amount to nothing more than wholesale capitulation. On the other hand, the government understood clearly the importance of weakening these principles for they present the colonial regime with a clear political-moral challenge. ☆

# FIGHT REPRESSION SUPPORT POLITICAL PRISONERS

There are a number of major political trials happening now or coming up in the next few months. The men and women on trial are facing indictments with laundry lists of conspiracy charges. Conviction could mean essentially life sentences.

Their only 'crimes' are their commitment to a world free of colonialism and neocolonialism, their belief in a society free of racism, sexism, and exploitation, and their principled and persistent efforts to build a powerful progressive movement that can bring about those fundamental changes.

The following section details these trials. An overview gives some sense of how the criminal justice system is being used as a major tool of counterinsurgency. One mechanism is to systematically subvert the historically most democratic aspects of the legal system. What better way to perpetrate the myth of U.S. democracy than by turning political repression into law and order? For example:

- the right to bail and the presumption of innocence are abrogated by the 1984 preventive detention act...
- juries are often sequestered or anonymous. This serves to intimidate jurors because the defendant is portrayed as dangerous...
- grand juries are an investigative tool of the F.B.I....
- judges are giving maximum sentences, often using the defendant's political clarity and pride in their acts of resistance as an excuse...

The government is trying to prevent defendants from putting political/legal defenses before their juries. But those on trial are determined to uphold their principles, expose government repression and fight the attempt to criminalize, isolate and silence resistance.

We urge people to come to court. Our presence can dispel the atmosphere of danger and criminality the government tries to create. Our presence makes a statement that we will not be intimidated by repression or allow the government to determine the legitimacy of any part of the progressive movement. We'll all be stronger for it!

## "WE ARE GUILTY OF NO CRIMES" Ohio 7 Trial in Brooklyn

Seven Northamerican anti-imperialists began a major political trial in Brooklyn, New York this fall, the Ohio 7. The 7 (Ray Levasseur, Patricia Gros, Tommy Manning, Carol Manning, Jaan Laaman, Barbara Curzi-Laaman, and Richard Williams) are charged with carrying out 10 bombings against corporate and military targets that were claimed from 1982-1984 by the United Freedom Front. (Due to a death in the family of Pat Gros' attorney, Pat's case has been severed from that of her comrades).

In 1981-82, the FBI carried out Operation BOSLUC/Western Sweep,

one of the most intensive investigations in u.s. history. It targeted the 7, as well as other Northamerican revolutionaries (Alan Berkman and Marilyn Buck) and New Afrikan Freedom Fighters Assata Shakur, Mutulu Shakur and Nehanda Abiodun. The search, focussed in the Northeast, focussed largely on the children of the 7, distributing their pictures and medical records to pediatricians, schools and day care centers. In parts of New England, FBI agents and state police went door-to-door with pictures of the 7.

In November, 1984, five of the 7

## GUERRILLA USA

were captured in Cleveland, Ohio; six months later, Thomas and Carol Manning and their three children were captured in Norfolk, Virginia. (See The Insurgent, Vol. 1, No. 1 for information about the FBI kidnap of the Manning children.)

The 7 view the repressive atmosphere of their trial and the trial itself as a continuation of the counterinsurgency campaign begun with BOSLUC. In his opening statement, Ray Levasseur, who is representing himself, said: "In a criminal case, it is often said that for someone to represent himself or herself is not a very wise move. . . . But this is not a criminal case. It is an attempt by the government to criminalize revolutionaries and those who resist the government's policies. It is an attempt to criminalize the movement of which I am a part: the clandestine movement. It is an attempt to criminalize the fight against U.S. imperialism. . . . That is what makes this a political trial. None of us at the defense table are criminals. We are the sons and daughters of mill workers and laborers and laborers and homemakers and we are very proud of that. We are revolutionaries, and reject every attempt by the government to criminalize us -- because we are guilty of no crimes."

During their trial, the 7 have used every opportunity to uncover the real criminals and their crimes: U.S. support for the racist South African regime, U.S. aggression against the people of Central America, the nature of the FBI. They have made their own long histories of resistance clear -- much to the dismay of the judge, the prosecutors and the two FBI agents who sit at the prosecution table. Throughout Ray's opening, he was interrupted by the judge and prosecutor Charles Rose (who also prosecuted all those tried for criminal contempt of the grand juries investigating the Puerto Rican independence movement; and who debriefed Puerto Rican traitor Alfredo Mendez). In his opening, Ray described being framed for the sale of a small amount of marijuana: "My experience in prison was a shocking one, and only deepened my commitment to social change. I did all of my time in maximum security, and in segregation units, because I had been identified as a political prisoner. I went to the penitentiary from the county jail before I should have because the

prosecutor had me moved during a hunger strike in which Black and white inmates had banded together in a situation where many of us were sick from intestinal sicknesses and very inadequate food; when we got food that was spoiled and you could not eat, then we went on strike and formed a committee, and I was asked to speak for them. And the next day, I was in segregation in a state prison, and I had never seen the inside of a state prison prior to that.

Because I had been identified as a political prisoner, although I was only doing five years I ended up on death row because the segregation unit was part of death row. We shared part of the tier with death row. The percentage of Black prisoners in this prison in Tennessee (Brushy Mountain State Prison - Ed.) far exceeded the percentage in the state's population. With a couple of exceptions, all of the prisoners on death row were Black. All were from poor and working class backgrounds. I never met one that wasn't. They were primarily there for economic crimes. Taking because you haven't got a job, taking because you can't provide -- you don't have enough to provide for your family, taking because you are sick of a racist system that gives you no opportunity."

The government is worried about how well the Ohio 7 are projecting their political beliefs to the jury, the press and the public. On November 27, while in a locked courtroom empty of spectators or the jury, while viewing evidence, the Ohio 7 were harassed by the federal marshals, who were trying to provoke a violent confrontation. As Ray said in open court a few days later: "You (addressing Judge Glasser - Ed.) . . . made clear that the marshals are solely responsible for handling us. The point was not lost on them and within a matter of hours we were roughly strip searched by up to 15 extremely hostile marshals who threatened and tried to terrorize us. A few of the most sadistic marshals who led the attack on us in March, but who we haven't seen since, were called back in and tried to provoke a violent incident. The marshals' frenzied attitude and belligerence carried over to MCC, where the garage guard picked up their lead and abusively searched the men again, and then tried to search the women in the same manner. Barbara Curzi and Carol Manning refused to submit to a phys-

ical search by a male guard. They requested a female guard to search them, which finally did happen, but they were still given a disciplinary report and put in segregation because they refused to be assaulted by a male guard."

The government's case is expected to last through mid-January. In the defense case, the Ohio 7 hope to put on witnesses to testify about the nature of U.S. imperialism; and about the nature of building a clandestine resistance movement. Public support for the 7 is crucial in fighting their case, and in protesting the unceasing physical attacks and threats. We urge our readers who can to come to court to support these revolutionaries.

## DR. ALAN BERKMAN— Fights Conspiracy Charges

Dr. Alan Berkman was arrested with Betty Ann Duke on May 23, 1985 in Philadelphia by the FBI. They were charged with conspiracy to possess weapons, explosives and false identification, charges which carry up to 71 years in prison. Betty Ann, who had successfully fought preventive detention and was out on bail since August, defied the government's attempts to try and jail revolutionaries by jumping bail in early October. Their arrest was the result of a massive FBI hunt for revolutionaries involved in building clandestine anti-imperialist resistance. The arrest was accompanied by an FBI-orchestrated media campaign to brand them as "terrorists" and dangers to the community. Alan has been active in anti-imperialist politics and struggle for over 20 years, and in community medicine as a physician for more than 15 years. He has been a particular target of the FBI both because of his role as an activist and organizer, and also because he has medically treated people in struggle, Prisoners of War and political prisoners. As he said at his arraignment on July 1, 1985, "I am a revolutionary, an anti-imperialist, a supporter of human rights for all oppressed peoples. I'm not guilty of any crimes -- just of trying to stop them."

Since his arrest, Alan has been kept under "special security" in preventive detention, in 4 different prisons. He has constantly been in segregation

and subject to extraordinary restrictions. He has been subpoenaed to a grand jury investigating the revolutionary underground and is refusing to collaborate.

Alan is an internationalist who has supported national liberation movements around the world since the early 1960's. His medical skills were devoted to serving the oppressed and not to accumulating wealth. He treated survivors of the 1971 Attica Rebellion. He infiltrated across government lines to bring medical care to the Native Americans at the takeover of Wounded Knee in 1973. He went into prisons on innumerable occasions to treat political prisoners and Prisoners of War, including New Afrikan POW Sekou Odinga and Puerto Rican POW William Morales. He worked in a clinic of the Black community in Lowndes County, Alabama, and in the Puerto Rican community of the Lower East Side in New York. Alan went to prison for 8 months in 1982 for contempt of a grand jury rather than collaborate with an FBI investigation into the Black Liberation movement and the Black Liberation Army.

2½ years ago, Alan went underground rather than allow the U.S. government to rob the revolutionary movement of a committed doctor and activist. At the time of his arrest in May, Alan was wanted by the FBI and faced 12½ years in prison because a paid government informant accused him of treating a wounded revolutionary, Marilyn Buck, and not turning her in to the FBI. Instead of merely charging him with not reporting a gunshot wound-- a minor charge with a maximum sentence of 1 year--he was charged with being accessory to an armed robbery for the 1981 attempted Brink's expropriation. FBI wanted posters listed him as "armed and dangerous" because of his political activities.

## LINDA EVANS— Political Defense Wins a Victory— Miles of Trials Ahead

In September, Linda Evans put a monkey wrench in the government's "anti-terrorist" machinery by scoring a political victory in her New York City federal trial for weapons possession and harboring a fugitive. Linda was captured along with a revolutionary comrade, Marilyn Buck, in Dobbs Ferry, New York on May 11, 1985. Marilyn, for years a committed fighter in solidarity with the New African Independence Movement, had been a fugitive since 1977 when she failed to return from a prison furlough.

Linda was charged with having a gun when she was arrested, and having tried to hide the fact that Marilyn was a fugitive as they traveled together. In her defense, she turned the government's accusations around: certainly she had acted in a clandestine fashion -- using false names and driving in such a way as to lose any one following her -- but she had done so for political reasons, to build a secure movement away from the eyes and ears of the state, and not criminal ones. She should be found not guilty, Linda argued, because her intentions were revolutionary and not the criminal intent the law prohibits.

Linda was represented by Ashanti Chimurenga, a Black woman attorney who is coordinator of the New African Legal Network. Ms. Chimurenga had to fight federal Judge Matthew Broderick (former NYC police commissioner) and U.S. Attorney Patricia Williams constantly to be allowed to present Linda's defense. Linda's defense witnesses included Susan Putter, who had worked with Linda in the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee in Austin, Texas; Doris Turner, a leader of the Black Citizen's Task Force in Austin which had led the Black community in fighting police violence in Austin; and David Gilbert, anti-imperialist freedom fighter serving a life sentence for his participation in the October 20, 1981 Brink's expropriation under the leadership of the BLA, and an old friend of Linda's from SDS in the 60's. All testified that through years of surveillance, intimidation and phone taps by the FBI, Linda and other anti-imperialists had learned that in order to be truly effective

and to protect their work from government counterinsurgency, they had to build a clandestine movement -- one that the state's agents couldn't see and couldn't find. David Gilbert in particular testified that without a clandestine core to the movement, those who did public political work were completely vulnerable to the state's attacks.

After over three days of deliberation, the jury of four Black people and eight white people found Linda not guilty of the most serious charge of weapons possession, carrying a sentence of ten years; couldn't reach a verdict on harboring a fugitive, and found her guilty only of a minor weapons charge carrying a maximum sentence of two years. Conversations with the jurors after the trial made it clear that, although they did not support Linda's revolutionary politics, they did believe that she was a revolutionary and not a criminal. Several jurors recalled the COINTELPRO attacks of the 60's and 70's on the Black Liberation movement in particular, and understood why people would have learned to build a revolutionary movement underground.

Throughout the trial, Ms. Chimurenga was insulted by the racist judge, who threatened several times to hold her in contempt for defending her client so militantly. Linda's victory with the jury seemed to have stopped him from going as far as taking legal action, though he made his disrespect clear at every point. He gave Linda the maximum sentence of two years, and is retrying her on the harboring charge.

Linda faces two more trials: one in Connecticut, due to begin in January 1986, for possession of false identification and harboring Marilyn Buck in 1983; and one in Louisiana for buying weapons using a false name. When Linda was arraigned in New Orleans following her New York trial, she was held in preventive detention by the Louisiana magistrate, who clearly did not care that no fewer than three federal judges had already released her on bail, after finding that she was neither a "danger to the community"

nor a "risk of flight", as stated in the legal language.

## LAURA WHITEHORN— Support Grows in Baltimore

On May 11, 1985, the FBI busted into an apartment in Baltimore without a search warrant, allegedly looking for fugitives involved in building the armed clandestine struggle. There they found Laura Whitehorn and arrested her. She has been charged with possession of false identification and weapons, and assaulting a federal officer. She has been held under the No-Bail law in preventive detention at the Baltimore City Jail since her arrest.

Laura has been an anti-imperialist organizer and activist for over 20 years. In the 60's she worked in the Civil Rights movement. She was a member of SDS and fought to support the Vietnamese people in their war for liberation. She organized support for the Black Panther Party. In the early 70's, Laura helped to found the Boston Women's School. She worked in People Against Racism in Boston to fight the racist attacks against Black people during the years of the "anti-busing" movement in the mid-70's. In 1975, immediately following the victory of the Vietnamese people, Laura visited Vietnam as one of four members of a delegation of anti-imperialist women from this country. She worked to raise political and material aid for ZANU during the struggle for a free Zimbabwe. Laura worked to expose the FBI's counter-intelligence program (COINTELPRO), and to support political prisoners and Prisoners of War.

What the U.S. government is now charging as crimes against Laura are not "crimes", but the activities of a woman revolutionary who for several years now has been part of building the clandestine aspect of a revolutionary resistance movement. Laura's treatment since her arrest -- by the FBI, the U.S. Marshals, the judge and the jail authorities -- has been aimed at criminalizing and isolating her from the Baltimore community and the movement. Although they had found no fugitives in the apartment, FBI agents arrested Laura and began a campaign to brand her a "terrorist". A week after her arrest, the Assistant U.S. Attorney, who has since been removed from the case, "leaked" to the national press inflammatory stories about the Baltimore apartment.

Laura has been held in "special security" conditions at the Baltimore City Jail. Despite numerous bail hearings and an appeal of the No-Bail judgment, all her efforts have been rejected. Yet, despite her detention, she has been able to generate support for her case and for other political prisoners, within the Baltimore progressive, anti-war, and women's communities. Awareness is growing about the importance of fighting political repression and supporting political prisoners. A process of dialogue and struggle about Laura's case, as well as about building a multi-leveled resistance movement is emerging. In early December, there was a forum in Baltimore to engage these issues, build awareness of her situation, and support for all political prisoners.

The trial is scheduled to start in Baltimore Federal Court on January 21, 1986.

# THE INSURGENT

Newsletter of the Committee to Fight Repression Vol. 1 No. 2 Fall 1985

**BUILD A  
REVOLUTIONARY  
RESISTANCE  
MOVEMENT!**

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Cathedral Station  
New York, NY 10025**

**IN THIS ISSUE: FBI INVADES PUERTO RICO  
MAXI-MAXI PRISONS  
PLOWSHARES INTERVIEW  
POLITICAL TRIALS  
EL SALVADOR'S POLITICAL PRISON  
and more...**

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# FIGHT POLITICAL REPRESSION! SUPPORT LAURA WHITEHORN

The following is a statement from Laura delivered by taped message to a December 8th event in Baltimore. The well-attended activity was called to build support for Laura, all political prisoners and POW's, and campaigns to actively fight political repression and build revolutionary resistance.

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"I send greetings of solidarity to this gathering. It goes without saying that I would much prefer to be there than to be sending this message.

I want to take this chance to thank all the people here who have supported me in various ways - from coming to court, to visiting and writing to me, to helping to organize this program. I also want people to know that I have received consistent and important support since the day of my arrest from a number of Black prisoners in the Maryland system. I am learning that there are quite a number of Black people in prison in this state as a result of racist and political frame-ups. I hope that you will support these comrades in their legal and political struggles.

When the Committee to Fight Repression discussed with me their plans for this program, I was of two minds about what film should be shown. I've never seen The White Rose, but I understand that it raises some of the reasons why political opponents of oppressive governments need to build and work in clandestinity. That is an important issue in my case and the cases of my comrades in New York and Philadelphia, because what the government calls "criminal" is really political opposition, carried out by people who have come to recognize the U.S. government as an imperialist one, a criminal one, and one that needs to be resisted and fought on many levels. I don't believe we can reason with or reform a system that looks upon the contras as "freedom fighters", calls righteous struggles of the oppressed "terrorist", and tries to disenfranchise and oppress Black people more, not less than before. I think we need to recognize that the FBI is a political police agency, not a keeper of "law and order". I hope that is discussed here tonight, because the commitment some of us have made to building in clandestinity is largely based on our view of the U.S. government and its police agencies as highly political and completely dedicated to crushing national liberation struggles and revolutionary resistance that supports those struggles and attacks the same enemy.

The other film I would have liked to show is The Murder of Fred Hampton. Fred Hampton, along with Mark Clark, was assassinated in his bed in Chicago on December 4, 1969, by the Chicago police and the FBI. He was the chairman of the Chicago chapter of the Black Panther Party. He was 20 years old. He was a powerful leader. Anyone who heard Fred Hampton speak to the huge crowds that attended Panther rallies in Chicago in 1968 and 1969, as I had the opportunity to do, experienced the potential he had for effective revolutionary leadership of the Black Liberation struggle. The FBI saw this, too, which is why they killed him. Their operating slogan came from J. Edgar Hoover, and was implemented through COINTELPRO or the counter-intelligence program: "prevent the rise of a Black 'messiah'" - a leader capable of helping to translate the anger and the human rights struggles of Black people in the U.S. into a sustained national liberation struggle that will succeed in winning land, political power and freedom. Through COINTELPRO and other programs the U.S. govern-



## GUERRILLA USA

ment has assassinated Black leaders like Fred Hampton, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King, and George Jackson, and imprisoned many more.

The main reason I thought about showing that film - in addition to commemorating Fred Hampton and Mark Clark - was that I thought it might help set the context for another discussion I hope takes place tonight: about revolutionary resistance and why some of us believe it is necessary, support it when it occurs in the national liberation struggles, and believe it's correct for Northamerican anti-imperialists to engage in it as well. I understand that some debate on this issue has been generated by my case, since the government accuses me and my comrades - in the newspapers, not in our indictments - of being involved in armed attacks against military and political institutions of the U.S. government, South Africa, Israel, and the New York Police department. The issues have also come up over some of the charges I face for possession of guns. I'd like to try to speak briefly on some of these issues.

First, I just want to say something I've discussed with people here who have visited me: that I understand that people have supported me because of our unity - we are part of the same movement, we are united on the need to fight repression, we support one another because we are united in the struggle against imperialism. Our unity is greater than whatever differences we may have, and I think we can build more unity by talking and struggling together.

In the most general sense, I support and believe in the necessity of revolutionary resistance because I am a revolutionary. I think the world will be a much safer, more humane and creative place when the system of imperialism has been defeated. Until it is, I think we will only continue to see war, starvation, poverty, crime, brutality, and the constant threat of nuclear disaster. In the 60's, I became a revolutionary anti-imperialist because I began to understand that fundamental change would not be able to happen peacefully. The struggle of the Vietnamese people and the Black liberation struggle in this country convinced me that wars of national liberation were the most effective strategy to change all the things I hated and thought were wrong about the world and the U.S. - racism, exploitation, male supremacy and the oppression of women, imperialist war. This has been borne out over and over since then - including in Azania/South Africa, El Salvador, and the Philippines right now. I'd grown up hating the way I was disrespected as a woman, hating the racism I saw, the conditions under which Black people were forced to live, and the fact that Black people had to fight and die for the most basic human rights. In the 60's, I experienced the world events and the revolutionary anti-imperialist strategy that Che Guevara summed up as "create 2, 3. many Vietnams". Since the U.S. is itself an empire, and directly imprisons oppressed nations of Native Americans, New Afrikan or Afro-American people, Mexicano/Chicano people, and colonizes Puerto Rico, some of these "many Vietnams" will take place right here. Their enemy is my enemy, and I think over time we need to be able to attack that enemy, too.

Some people have raised to me that revolutionary resistance gives the government an excuse for discrediting and cracking down on progressive movements. I don't really agree. Political repression is the way the system protects and maintains itself. The only way to avoid repression is to be ineffectual. The government started going after the anti-imperialist movement when we first overstepped the government-defined bounds of acceptable protest in the 60's. For example, when we started to run in the streets and carry NLF (National Liberation Front of the Vietnamese people) flags, instead of just petitioning and marching on the sidewalks, this overstepped their bounds. It was a time also when the movement engaged in many levels of activity to stop the war, from bombings and underground activities, to all kinds of demonstrations and creative direct actions. It was very important that we did overstep these bounds. If we hadn't, we would have been much less powerful, much less a part of real solidarity with the Vietnamese. This wasn't just a matter of what tactics we chose. We were saying to the U.S. government, "we don't believe you anymore, we don't accept your terms, your promises, your definitions." When we overstepped the bounds of

## GUERRILLA USA

acceptable dissent, we stepped out of the U.S. government camp and over to the side of the Vietnamese and other Third World people in struggle for their lives, their right to self-determination, their human rights, their land and sovereignty. Because we went beyond protest to resistance, because we began to fight in solidarity with the Vietnamese, we were able to build an effective anti-war movement in the late 60's and early 70's. We fought on a number of levels and in a wide variety of ways, all of which enriched and empowered one another.

I've continued to try to fight imperialism since that time, because I want to be part of a powerful and effective movement. I've never been able to understand why we, who live in the heart of the imperialist system, should fight it any less than freedom-loving people anywhere else in the world do. To me, that would just be accepting the government's definitions. For example, in this country, a lot of people accept the government's definition of the FALN - the Fuerzas Armadas de Liberacion Nacional - as a "terrorist" organization. But, to draw an analogy between Puerto Rico and El Salvador, the FALN and the armed clandestine organizations that exist in Puerto Rico itself, are like the organizations that make up the FMLN in El Salvador - legitimate and leading expressions of the will of the Puerto Rican people to fight for their independence. The same is true of the Black Liberation Army. The BLA has been an expression of the national aspirations of Black people for land and independence. It gets called "terrorist" by the very government that has deprived Black people of their human rights and right to self-determination for 400 years - through real violence, terror and inhumanity.

Knowing what I know about the nature of this society and this government, I will never allow the government to define violence or to tell me that those who fight with all their lives for freedom are terrorists or criminals. Or to tell me that some ways of protesting are legitimate and others are not. Or to convince me that the comfortable and peaceful conditions that surround most white people's lives in the U.S. today define this system, more than the violence and genocide that surround Third World people's lives.

As I said earlier, the government has continually accused me and my comrades of being involved in armed anti-imperialist attacks carried out by the Armed Resistance Unit and the Red Guerrilla Resistance. I have to admit I consider it an honor to be accused of such things, because I have great respect for those groups, as I do for the United Freedom Front. The actions of these organizations over the past few years have added strength and power to the Northamerican anti-imperialist movement. I hope that people will read the pamphlet, "Build a Revolutionary Resistance Movement", which is collected communiques from these organizations. I think the communiques provide a good picture of how all the actions of these revolutionary organizations have been geared toward increasing and sustaining militant resistance to imperialism and solidarity with national liberation struggles. They have acted in concert with anti-imperialist struggles in the Third World, and together with direct actions and mass protest in this country against the U.S. war machine.

I think many of us here are united by the commitment to make sure the U.S. government can't keep escalating its acts of war against nations all around the world and at the same time remain comfortable and cozy here at home. But our movements are not successful at doing that at the present time. I hope we can build our unity so that we will present the most powerful opposition we can to U.S. imperialism.

I know the Committee to Fight Repression will talk tonite about the campaign to demand health care for Dr. Alan Berkman, a revolutionary anti-imperialist political prisoner in Philadelphia, and a very dear comrade of mine. I just want to use this opportunity to put my 2¢ in, too. I urge everyone here tonight to join in the campaign. Doing so is an act of fighting for our movement. It's an act of fighting political repression, fighting the FBI's attempt to literally destroy a fine revolutionary comrade. A victory in this campaign will be a victory for all prisoners in U.S. jails, where human rights are systematically abused.

One important achievement of the Northamerican anti-imperialist movement over the past decades has been that we have produced a movement and individuals who are finer human beings than this society meant us to be. Instead of racism, national chauvinism, greed, sexism and individualist competition, we've produced people who are committed to principle--who put their individual lives, safety and careers secondary, and the struggle primary--who respect other human beings instead of objectifying, despising and oppressing them. Alan is one of these people - a revolutionary of the highest character, strength and dignity, a comrade who contributes to our movement in many ways. The campaign for his cancer to be treated correctly, is, I think, going to have to be a fierce and sustained struggle. We're fighting for the state to give Alan medical care, and also to stop using FBI propaganda about "terrorism" to deny him the most basic decent conditions. The FBI, U.S. Marshals, Bureau of Prisons, U.S. Attorney, and the judge have shown over and over their desire to make Alan suffer as much as possible, and ultimately to kill him by denial of correct medical care. So, this campaign is already something of a pitched battle. In this, as in all matters, we are determined to win!"

FREE ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS AND PRISONERS-OF-WAR!  
VICTORY TO NATIONAL LIBERATION WORLDWIDE!  
BUILD A REVOLUTIONARY RESISTANCE MOVEMENT!

----- Laura Whitehorn  
Political Prisoner,  
Baltimore City Jail  
December 8, 1985

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## **JUDY CLARK SENTENCED TO 2 YEARS IN SEGREGATION**

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**RETURN JUDY TO GENERAL POPULATION !**  
.....

**STOP ISOLATION OF  
POLITICAL PRISONERS!**  
.....

**FIGHT POLITICAL REPRESSION!**  
.....

Judy Clark is a political prisoner, serving a life sentence for having participated in the October 20, 1981 Brink's expropriation in Nyack, N.Y., under the leadership of the Black Liberation Army. Judy first became politically active in the civil rights movement of the early 60s. She later joined SDS and organized against the war in Vietnam and in support of the Black Liberation Struggle. Judy was part of the Weather Underground Organization, and served six months in jail after she was captured in 1970. She was active for years in the anti-imperialist women's movement, and in work in support of the struggle of prisoners for human rights. Judy also worked to expose the government's COINTELPRO (counterintelligence) program, which targeted the Black Liberation Movement, other national liberation movements, and the anti-imperialist movement with false arrests, surveillance, disruption and even assassination, as in the case of Black Panther Party leader Fred Hampton, killed in a joint FBI/Chicago police raid on December 4, 1969

Judy is now serving two years in segregation at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in upstate New York. Her situation is not unique -- the government is moving more and more to hold political prisoners in segregation; or in specially designed "maxi-maxi" units or prisons. These conditions are designed to isolate them from their communities and supporters; and to

## GUERRILLA USA

break their will to resist.

Write to Judy Clark, 83-G-313, Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, 247 Harris Road, Bedford Hills, N.Y. 10507, to show your support.

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On September 4, 1985, as I was leaving a visit, I was confronted by several guards who handcuffed me and took me immediately to the Special Housing Unit - segregation - here at Bedford Hills Prison. Once there, I was given written notice that I was being charged with conspiring to escape. I was also told that all my property had been confiscated and was being held for further investigation. Since it is common knowledge inside that a prisoner walks in to a disciplinary hearing guilty until proven innocent, and being aware of how conspiracy charges are used against political activists, I knew immediately that I was in for a long hard fight.

In a hearing held in the following days, I was informed that the FBI terrorist task force had given "documents" to the internal investigative department of the New York prison system, which they claimed were written by me, in which "security procedures at the facility and apparent lapses therefore" were discussed. These papers, said to be found in another city last May, were handed over to the prison authorities in June. By their own admission, the subsequent investigation of me revealed no illegal or suspicious activity on my part. When I pressed this question the Deputy of Security produced three items from my property he claimed were suspicious: a leotard I wore for a dance class, a bracelet I wore every day, and a facial cleansing masque/lotion! These items were so absurd that they ended up being discounted. None-the-less, I was found guilty by the Lieutenant holding my hearing, and I was sentenced to two years in isolation in SHU - the box. This means being locked in a cell 23 hours a day, with no access to facilities, education or work programs.

The length of my sentence is unprecedented here at Bedford. In the past, women who have actually escaped and who then have later been found, or who have been detected while attempting to escape, have received from 6 months to a year segregation time. The only reason I got two years in the box is because I am a revolutionary political prisoner who the state wants to isolate from other prisoners and the struggle outside. In fact, for the two years before our trial, I and my comrades were kept in isolation. And, when I was brought here to Bedford 2 years ago, I was illegally kept isolated here in SHU until I successfully fought to be released into population. After I was put into segregation this time, people in the media were told that I no longer had access to interviews because I was in SHU. When I am in the visiting room, a special guard is assigned to me whose sole job is to stop any sister prisoners from talking to me.

While this attack is unprecedented at Bedford, it is not surprising, nor different from the treatment of many political prisoners and Prisoners of War. It comes in the wake of numerous arrests and indictments against revolutionaries from the North American anti-imperialist movement and the New Afrikan/Black and Puerto Rican liberation struggles. Many of the New Afrikan/Black political prisoners and Prisoners of War being held in New York State prisons, such as Herman Bell and Nuh Washington, are being kept in isolation for extended periods of time. When the state hasn't succeeded in locking them for disciplinary charges, they have resorted to the use of involuntary protective custody - where they don't need a charge to keep people locked. In the Federal prison system, the situation is even worse. At Marion Federal prison, New Afrikan POW's Sundiata Acoli and Sekou Odinga and, until recently, Native American POW Leonard Pellitier, along with dozens of other prisoners, are in a permanent state of lock, in strip cells, for two to 5 years. Puerto Rican POW's Haydee Torres and Lucy Rodriguez were held in a special isolation unit at Alderson Federal Women's Penitentiary until a political mobilization of protest forced the prison system to transfer them. Now a new unit

## GUERRILLA USA

is planned to keep women political prisoners and POW's in isolation, in Lexington, Kentucky. Meanwhile, the federal system is responding to the challenge posed by the growing number of revolutionary women inside by assigning them to do their time in short term detention centers which lack adequate work, educational, physical and medical facilities for long-termers. Political prisoners from several liberation movements and the anti-imperialist movement being kept at MCC (Metropolitan Correctional Center) in New York City are filing a suit challenging the harassment, isolation and physical assaults they are subjected to.

The government wages these attacks because it understands that though it may imprison us, it cannot destroy our continued political activity and will to resist. For years, Third World revolutionaries in prison have organized and struggled to be a militant presence in their movements, inspiring others to greater struggle. Native American, Puerto Rican and New Afrikan/Black freedom fighters have fought for recognition of their status as prisoners-of-war as a way to advance the national consciousness and capacity of their people to struggle for human rights and self-determination, and to expose U.S. colonial domination over their people. A growing number of captive Northamerican revolutionary combatants and activists from the anti-imperialist, Sanctuary and anti-war movements are beginning to struggle for our rights and responsibilities as political prisoners. As in the past, the prisons are an active arena of struggle.

Recognizing this gives me the incentive and clarity to continue to struggle, no matter what my conditions are. For the past four years I've been inside and in the two years I've been at Bedford, I've fought in many ways -- defying the criminal courts and FBI investigations, supporting the right of the New Afrikan comrades to status as POWs, struggling to be an active part of our movement, struggling in the best interests of my sister prisoners.

Here in segregation, the oppression and repression is intensified. Every day, we have to battle just to get the basic necessities we should have a right to. Our food is cold and inedible, we are denied showers, our visits are delayed. We have no access to radio or TV; only two phone calls a month, and a limit of five books in our cell. We are even robbed of peace and quiet because women must continually yell and argue to get the guards to address their needs. But none of this can break my spirit and determination.

We have begun a campaign to demand that I be released back into population. The prison attempted to alienate other prisoners from me through intimidation and sensationalism. But women have responded with open expressions of support and concern, and letters protesting my two year segregation time. This support is important. But to be most effective, it must be joined by a mobilization of support and protest on the outside. The fight to get me out of the box, like all struggles to improve the conditions of political prisoners and POWs, is important not only to defend our lives and safety, but also to ensure our ability to be effective militant voices in our movements -- and to build the long-term struggle to free all political prisoners and POWs!

-- Judy Clark

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# MARILYN BUCK

## A Personal Recollection, by Judith Clark

One day in the mid-70's, I was visiting some friends, who like me, were women who had been active anti-imperialists throughout the 60's and early 70's and were now stumbling through a period we then described as a "lull in the movement". Their home was a gathering place for movement friends around the city and people passing through New York. That night, a mutual friend, Susan, from the West Coast, was visiting. She had passed through Chicago where she had visited an old friend in jail -- Marilyn Buck.

I had not known Marilyn personally, though we had both been active in SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) and the anti-imperialist movement. But, I had heard of her when she was arrested in 1973, along with another white woman accused of supporting the Black Liberation Army (BLA) by buying ammunition. While I had been angered by her sentence - 10 years for 100 bullets! - I hadn't done anything about it. But when Susan told us that most of Marilyn's friends from the New Left (our movement) had either been scared off by the state's repression or too busy re-entering mainstream America to write or visit Marilyn, it struck a chord in me, and I decided to write her. I could identify with Marilyn to an extent, because I had been in jail for 8 months. Moreover, I identified with her political stand in solidarity with Black liberation. I felt frustrated at the dissolution of our movement and the apathy around me, in the face of such stark events as the Attica prison rebellion and massacre, the murder of George Jackson (a Black revolutionary prison organizer) and the early trials of former Black Panthers who were accused of being part of the BLA. So I respected Marilyn's continuing political commitment to support the Black liberation struggle and its

right to struggle with every means necessary, including armed struggle.

I began to write to Marilyn and eventually to visit her. At first it felt awkward because we did not know each other. But quickly our friendship grew, fueled by common political perspectives and mutual respect. In fact, our friendship became special and enriching for me - because Marilyn is special. By any yardstick, and certainly in terms of our movement's experience, Marilyn was doing long and hard time. For 2½ years, she'd either been moved around from one small, horrible county jail to another, or she'd been kept in locked-down isolation at Alderson federal penitentiary. Despite all the deprivations she faced and the disappointment she must have felt about old friends, Marilyn never once complained about her personal circumstances. She never expressed cynicism or regrets. Her anger was always political and directed against the enemy. Her concern was never for herself, but for the revolutionary forces of the national liberation struggles and particularly other political prisoners and POW's. No matter what the prison was doing to attack and harass her, her attention and vigilance was more directed toward her illustrious sister prisoner Lolita Lebron, the heroine of the Puerto Rican Independence struggle, and the needs of all the women imprisoned with her.

If Marilyn had been willing to bend or compromise just a little, the government might well have been more lenient towards her. Yet she never, for one moment, wavered from her principles or weakened her resolve. Her steadfastness grew, not in the limelight of public movement acclaim; she didn't do it for glory or self-satisfaction. She wasn't grandiose about herself, but worried more how to struggle to change her weaknesses.

She always pointed to others, particularly other political prisoners and POW's, whose courage and determination gave her inspiration.

Over the years, I looked forward to my trips to visit Marilyn. The long overnight bus ride into the hills of West Virginia to the incongruous looking prison at Alderson - a campus like setting hiding a rigid, racist, reactionary regime. Marilyn was like a touchstone to me. She reaffirmed the best of my own politics and fueled my con-

tinuing commitment to revolution. In the mid-70's, I like many others in the white left began to abandon anti-imperialist politics. The upsurge of revolution was subsiding. Along with it was ebbing the support of the large anti-imperialist movement which had grown in response to the struggles of the Vietnamese people and of Third World people here at home. Revolution and national liberation was no longer so popular. It was easier and more rewarding to follow the path to reform and to define our movement's primary task to be building a multi-national working class movement. This position allowed us to shirk our responsibility to fight white supremacy or to support self-determination for oppressed nations. Marilyn remained adamant in her internationalism and support for armed struggle, criticizing our deviations, while always comradely. To her, the point was not to flit from one cause to another, depending on what was most popular, but to dig in for the long run and build our faith in revolutionary principle and the people. Her ability to sustain a protracted view meant she never lost sight of the fact that the dominant force of history in this era, was the struggles of Third World people for national liberation and socialism.

There was much Marilyn and I shared in common, but also ways we were different. I was a child of Jewish ex-Communists, who grew up in the liberal, cosmopolitan atmosphere of New York City. From the age of 14, I questioned the norms of McCarthyist, racist Amerika and was drawn to the Civil Rights movement, both for its political goals and alternative cultural values. Marilyn had grown up a child of a Texas minister and his wife, and she had sought more traditional Amerikan dreams through her early school years. Yet, eventually, she was moved by the use of revolution around the world to join the Movement. I was often struck by ways in which Marilyn remained traditional and circumscribed in her manner and style. She wasn't caught up in the flighty faddishness of the youth culture.

What gave Marilyn her energy and persistence to maintain a revolutionary stand through those lonely years? A clue can be found in the common themes of our conversations. We talked for hours about each of our experiences working closely with people and organizations from the New Afrikan/Black

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Free All Political Prisoners & POW's!**

liberation struggle, the Puerto Rican and Mexican struggles. For Marilyn, national liberation was not just an abstract idea, but life and blood people whose battles, sacrifices and spirit kindled her own visions, hopes and sense of responsibility. She understood our own accomplishments as a movement as in large part a product of the leadership of Third World struggles. Marilyn internalized the principle of support for self-determination, such that it was living, breathing part of her day to day consciousness and motivation. She was more invested in the ability of the struggles to advance than in her own personal comforts and survival.

For both Marilyn and myself, our experiences working with the Black Panther Party had made us recognize the necessity for clandestine and armed struggle. The assassination of Black Panther Party leaders Fred Hampton and Mark Clark by the Chicago police in 1969 had been a turning point for me in deciding to go underground as part of the Weather Underground Organization. Marilyn had worked closely with the Black Panther Party in California, had seen the police and FBI imprison, disrupt and murder Black Panther Party leaders and cadre she worked with, and she'd learned from the successful armed self-defense of a Black Panther Party headquarters led by Geronimo Pratt in Los Angeles. Thus, she supported the Black Liberation Army as a strategic response to the need for armed clandestinity in order to ensure the survival and continuity of Black revolutionary nationalist struggle.

Marilyn always said that revolutionary combativity entailed more than taking part in specific armed actions. It meant approaching each part of one's life, each task and responsibility, conscious of the state of war that existed between U.S. imperialism and oppressed and exploited peoples. Whether we were organizing a group on a campus or among women, leafleting on the street, going to a demonstration, doing political study, raising children, working on our job -- each and every aspect of our lives had to be approached consciously and principled, such that it contributed to the struggle and fortified our resistance.

We often talked about our struggles as women and

about the women's movement. For years, I'd been active in the struggle to build an anti-imperialist women's liberation movement, and I'd felt the impact of the women's movement on my own process of coming out as a lesbian. Marilyn had worked in women's groups and projects. Both of us felt that the rejection of internationalism and radicalism was proving fatal to the best efforts of women in our movement. But, the vicissitudes of our own movement in no way dampened our burning desire to challenge inequality and male supremacy and to fulfill our full potentials as women. For both of us, this had been a driving force in our becoming involved and struggling to participate fully in revolutionary activity. And both of us had been inspired over the years by the example, of women from national liberation movements, such as Lolita Lebron, Assata Shakur, Madme Nygen Thi Binh and Leila Khalid. We also shared a love for children and a yearning to raise children. So it was only natural that I thought of my sister comrade when I had my daughter a few years later and hoped that word of the happy event somehow reached her through the whirlwinds of clandestine struggle. In the hardest moments since I've been imprisoned, when my spirits have ached at my separation from my daughter, I've taken heart by mentally conjuring up the image and spirits of all the valiant women freedom fighters, political prisoners who face similar separations, and of sisters like Marilyn who sacrificed their personal desires for children in order to fulfill their responsibilities and tasks.

When I first got to know Marilyn, I felt that her temperament suited the particular political role she had chosen. She was shy and talked about how much she dreaded to speak publically. I, on the other hand, loved nothing more than spending a day on the streets or in mass meetings, talking to new people. Years later though, I came to appreciate that beyond temperament and leanings, there was also sacrifice involved in Marilyn's choice to become an anonymous worker and fighter. It is difficult to give up the relative comfort of a movement lifestyle, surrounded by like-minded friends who can praise you for your activities and comfort you when times are hard. To struggle in clandestinity entails work that demands courage, patience and a careful meticulous, conscious care, the fruits of which are

rarely publically recognized or appreciated.

I thought of this when I heard in 1977 that Marilyn had not returned to prison from a furlough. I knew that she had made that choice not just from a personal desire for freedom, but out of a sense of responsibility to re-double her efforts and effectiveness in building anti-imperialist resistance. That's why her freedom inspired me and challenged me to expand my own revolutionary activity and to fight in solidarity with the New Afrikan Independence movement.

I remember some time after Marilyn's disappearance, going to court in New York to support Haydee Torres, one of the 11 Puerto Rican POW's captured that year - who transformed a court appearance into a vibrant demonstration for Puerto Rican independence. There was Lolita Lebron leading us in militant chants of defiance against the colonial court. Lolita and the four other Nationalist Prisoners of War were freed after 25 years of steadfast refusal to accept the authority of U.S. colonial rule. Their freedom was won by the strength of the Puerto Rican people's struggle and the pointed actions of its armed clandestine movement, along with international solidarity. Seeing Lolita there -- free, defiant, still struggling and supporting a new generation of Puerto Rican freedom fighters -- made me think of my visits to Alderson. And I revelled at the small triumph of Marilyn's freedom, because it represented a step in our own movement's development toward a tradition of armed anti-imperialist resistance.

I was captured in 1981 during an attempted revolutionary expropriation of a Brinks truck, an action in which I and other north american anti-imperialist revolutionaries acted in solidarity with comrades from the BLA. I and others had stepped forward to join in building armed anti-imperialist resistance. Marilyn was captured in the spring of this year (1985) after many years of struggling underground in armed clandestine struggle. These last few years have been important because some north american anti-imperialists have taken up the task to fight for a full revolutionary program of resistance to U.S. imperialism. Though many are now in captivity,



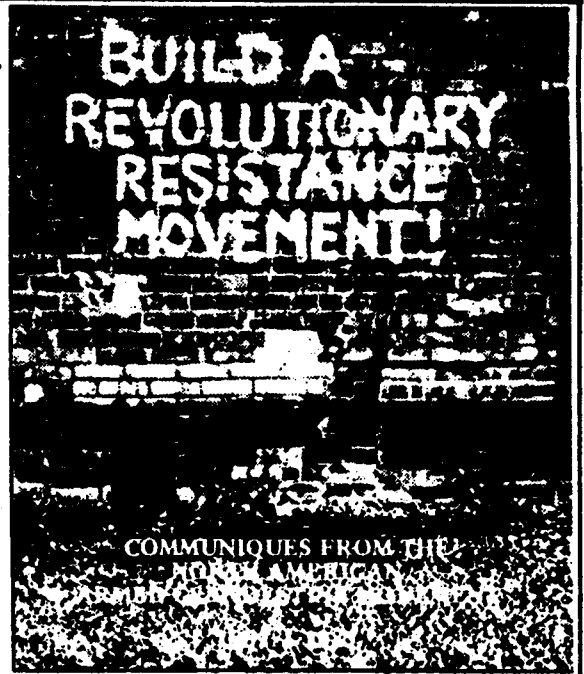
anti-imperialist resistance is not captured. As long as there are women and men who understand that there can be a world free of national oppression, class exploitation and the oppression of women, in order to develop the full potential of humanity, we will build a movement that will sacrifice and will fight to the death to defeat the common enemy of all oppressed and exploited peoples.

Support for political prisoners can be shown in many ways. Marilyn will be going on trial in the winter of 1986 in Federal Court, Foley Square, NYC. Her charges are attempts by the government to criminalize solidarity with the Black liberation movement. She faces charges of having helped to liberate New Afrikan Freedom Fighter Assata Shakur from prison in 1979, and having fought for years in solidarity with the Black Liberation Army. Our presence in court can dispel the aura of danger and criminality the government tries to create. It is also making a statement that we are not intimidated by repression and will not allow the government to determine the legitimacy of any part of the progressive movement. Both Marilyn and Judy can receive letters and welcome this way to engage in dialogue and struggle with people. Write: Marilyn Buck, 5 South, MCC/NY, 150 Park Row, New York, NY 10007. Judy Clark, Bedford Hills Prison, 247 Harris Rd., Bedford Hills, New York .0507.

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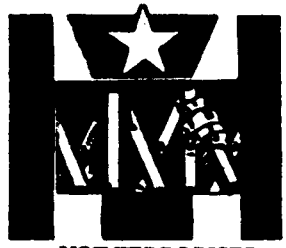


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