



FREE PUERTO RICO!

Newsletter of the New Movement in Solidarity with Puerto Rican Independence & Socialism Fall 1987

"Conspiracy to Escape" Case Goes to Trial October 13

Puerto Rican POW Oscar López-Rivera, New Afrikan (Black) political prisoner Kojo Bomani-Sababu, Puerto Rican independentista Dora García, and former national coordinator for the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War Jaime Delgado face multiple charges that they conspired to free Oscar and Kojo from Leavenworth Prison. Two uncaptured North Americans, Claude Marks and Donna Wilmot, have been indicted and were recently placed on the FBI's "Ten Most Wanted" list with great fanfare.

The history of this case dates back to 1983, when the government initiated a plot by encouraging prison informant George Lebosky to set up a plan to escape from Leavenworth. The government's intent in building a "conspiracy" was to repress the Puerto Rican independence movement and its supporters. The US has taken 14 months since the July 1986 arrests and two superceding indictments in their attempts to strengthen their case.

López-Rivera, Puerto Rican POW captured in 1981, does not recognize the legitimacy of the US criminal charges against him. At a pre-trial hearing on August 13, New Afrikan Kojo Bomani-Sababu stated: *As an oppressed New Afrikan and one who has devoted his life to a New Afrikan state I refuse to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the dominant class courts. I'll participate though in the trial and pre-trial proceedings to accommodate and facilitate the best meaningful defense for*

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List of 74,000 "Subversives" Kept in Puerto Rico

The revelation that the Puerto Rican Police keep a list of 74,000 "subversives and separatists" has created a storm of controversy on the island. In June, a former police official revealed that the list had been compiled by the Intelligence Division, a unit closely tied to the FBI. Faced with growing popular outrage, the Puerto Rican government at first denied the charge, while attempting to shred the list. A lawsuit by one of the listees won an injunction against any destruction. A class action suit by many activists is planned; hearings have been convened by the Puerto Rican Civil Rights Commission, a liberal government agency. Several hundred people demonstrated on Aug. 8 at police headquarters. Numerous political and religious figures have denounced the practice of keeping surveillance lists and accompanying files.

With the revelations that the list began in the 1930's upsurge of independence, the government has grudgingly acknowledged its existence, while an array of former police officials have been trading blame. But the list is only the tip of a repressive iceberg which has for many years included surveillance, harassment, blacklisting, frame-up felony charges, and death squads in Puerto Rico—all directed against an increasingly popular independence movement. The Puerto Rican Division of Intelligence had more than 200 operatives that were assigned to 10 areas across the island. Each area had 10-12 agents. Using sophisticated counter-intelligence techniques the agents photographed and videoed people and were able to penetrate organizations. The first time a suspect was observed, they were photographed and numbered; the second time, a file was begun. The third time, a more extensive investigation was begun, including collecting information from the Puerto Rican Public Works and places of employment and neighbors. These files were available to the FBI and Puerto Rican Police, as well as US companies in Puerto Rico.

While only 990 names have been released from the list thus far, the wide
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credit: Claridad

CAMPAIGN BUILDS TO SHUT DOWN LEXINGTON CONTROL UNIT

The conditions at the Lexington Prison Control Unit have created a broad demand to shut it down. Last March 8, on International Women's Day, hundreds marched outside the Control Unit. In response, the all-white sensory deprivation environment, was repainted beige. Visits continue to be limited to immediate family and attorneys. Correspondence is routinely read before being given to the women—and censored if it doesn't meet the administration's approval. Phone calls are limited to two times a week, taped by the administration. Every movement the 3 women prisoners make is noted into a log, with the goal of collecting data on the impact of psychological and sensory deprivation. The Control Unit is affecting the women; their ability to concentrate and their health have been weakened.

A June 27, 1987 *Nation* magazine article detailed the conditions of the women in the Lexington "High Security Unit", as it is referred to by the prison. Letters in support of the women poured into the *Nation*, and to the National Lawyers Guild Puerto Rico Subcommittee.

On July 25, the National Campaign to Abolish the Lexington Control Unit was formed. Groups involved in the effort to shut down Lexington met to consolidate a national campaign with demonstrations in New York and San Francisco on October 24, the first anniversary of the opening of the unit.

In Chicago, a People's Tribunal will hear testimony about conditions in the Lexington Control Unit and Marion Prison. Leaders in the struggle for human rights and former political prisoners will be present at the Tribunal. Shelley Miller, a former grand jury resister and member of the New Movement, and others including Dave Dellinger and Morton Sobell, will testify about conditions political prisoners face.

Recently members of the ACLU National Prison Project, including a correctional criminologist and a psychologist, went on an inspectional visit to Lexington.

They documented all aspects of the situation there including interviews with the uncooperative Warden DuBoise. They reported that the women were being held in an "underground tomb" in conditions which violate the women's human rights and jeopardize their mental and physical health. The report calls for the immediate transfer of the women from the Control Unit and the closure of the unit. Bureau of Prisons officials, reacting defensively as the campaign grows, are limiting access to the unit. The BOP is

planning a response to the ACLU report and some conditions could change. Prison officials are beginning to realize that the opposition to the Lexington Control Unit won't go away. In fact, the outcry is building. Join the effort to shut down Lexington.



"Subversives" List (continued from p. 1)

sweep of the list is clear: there are not only independentistas but also those seeking more "autonomy" for Puerto Rico and even community activists. The entire membership of a condominium that boycotted electric bills to protest a rate increase were listed. The list represents a broad cross section of society including artists, environmentalists, unionists, religious people, teachers, doctors and lawyers. According to Rita Zengotita of the Unitary Committee Against Repression (CUCRE), the FBI clearly had a key role in formulating this list. "For instance, the list includes the numerous lawyers for the 'Puerto Rico

Independence 16.' [see article on p.4]. Among these lawyers are North Americans who have never set foot in Puerto Rico." Zengotita added, "It isn't the Puerto Rican government but the US government which defines 'subversive.' But we think the true subversives are those who place obstacles before the independence of our nation." She expects the popular anger spurred by the revelations to aid the cause of independence.

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTESTS MOUNT ON ISLAND

CLUB MED PROTESTS

On July 25, 300 Puerto Ricans marched in Guanica to protest the planned construction of a Club Med resort in this town on the western coast of Puerto Rico. Club Med has already bought land on the proposed resort site, which includes part of a unique dry subtropical forest, home to 40 species of birds and 800 species of plants. The demonstration in defense of Guanica occurred on the 89th anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Puerto Rico in this town where US troops first landed.

The Bosque Seco (dry forest) of Guanica is recognized as the best-conserved sub-tropical forest in the world. Club Med officials plan to build on one-third of the forest as well as on the adjacent Playa Ballena beach, whose waters are home to the local fishing industry.

The Committee for the Defense of Guanica has submitted an alternative proposal which would preserve the environment and build the local economy. At the rally, Pedro Vargas, from Guanica, expressed the feelings of the crowd, saying: "Any piece of earth that is taken from Puerto Rico is taken from the collective Puerto Rican homeland."

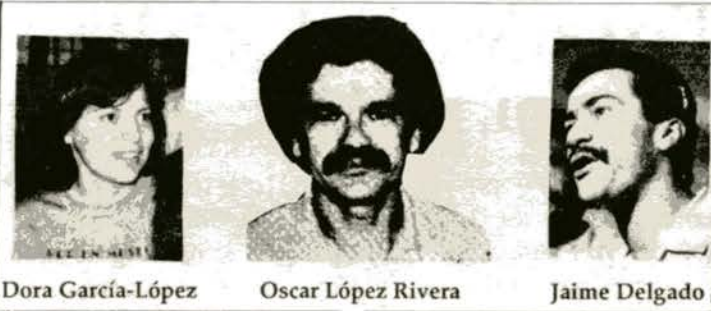


Club Med Demo in Guanica

credit: Claridad

INSECTICIDE CONTAMINATES WATER

Over 800 cases of gastroenteritis (stomach and intestinal inflammation) broke out in July in the Puerto Rican mountain town of Yauco. Residents suspect the illnesses were caused by dumping of a toxic insecticide. Desiton was discovered in February in garbage on a farm near a watershed linked to the local reservoir. Puerto Rican health officials denied Desiton was implicated in the outbreak, blaming instead water-borne bacteria not properly filtered by the regional treatment plant. Just after the first illnesses, a new spill of the insecticide was detected in the nearby Guayo River. Meanwhile, Puerto Rico has eight toxic dump sites on the federal "emergency list" of threats to public health.



Dora García-López

Oscar López Rivera

Jaime Delgado

"Conspiracy Trial" from p. 1

the Puerto Rican independence movement, a movement being criminalized because freedom loving people want self-determination....While the government has manufactured a case for a year, they have placed us in some of its most inhumane unfathomable conditions imaginable, surpassing some of the treatment of Nazi concentration camp guards. We have lived in hermetically sealed coffin type cells, no outdoor exercise, no recreation area, without toilet usage or running water in cells, all in an effort to disorient, also disrupt our preparation for trial. But we still come out of it sparkling like diamonds - a direct result of our will to survive...

At the trial, the defense will demonstrate that the government from the beginning has had the objective of repressing and criminalizing the progressive Puerto Rican independence movement. Jaime and Dora were surveilled by 100 FBI agents in Chicago during the 2 years preceding their arrests.

To help defeat the US strategy, the courtroom must be full so that the jurors will see the solidarity which exists with those on trial. Then the jury can decide who are the real criminals. The trial is set to begin on Oct. 13 in Judge Hart's court room in the Federal Building in Chicago.

U.N. VOTES FOR INDEPENDENCE

For the eleventh time since 1973, the United Nations Decolonization Committee voted August 12 to call on the US to grant independence to Puerto Rico. The vote of 9 in favor, 1 (Chile) against, and 10 abstentions, followed testimony by two dozen Puerto Rican organizations, nearly all pro-independence. Also testifying for the resolution, citing centuries of hemispheric solidarity with Puerto Rico, was the head of the Latin American social democratic conference, among whose members are the ruling parties in Columbia and Mexico and the Sandinistas in Nicaragua.

Conspicuously absent from the supporters was last year's co-sponsor, Venezuela, which this time abstained. The US brought intense pressure against Venezuela. Vernon Walters, US ambassador, spoke to Venezuela via satellite, stressing that the case of Puerto Rico was an internal, not an international question. He suggested that since the status of Puerto Rico is being discussed by the US and Puerto Rico that the committee's discussion of Puerto Rico should be postponed for at least 3 years.

THOUSANDS MARCH ON AUGUST 30TH

Thousands of activists marched through the streets of San Juan, Puerto Rico and Hartford, Connecticut on August 30 in support of the 16 independentistas arrested two years ago on that date. The 16 are under indictment in Hartford on conspiracy charges related to the \$7 million Wells Fargo expropriation in 1983. The size and breadth of both demonstrations showed the continued growth of support for the defendants throughout all sectors of Puerto Rican society and among progressives in the U.S.

The march in Puerto Rico included 5,000 supporters from virtually every independence group on the island, as well as those from labor, solidarity, and other movements. In Hartford, a predominantly Puerto Rican crowd of 2,000 demonstrated in support of the defendants. One of the key speakers was Gloria Gerena, long time independentista and mother of Victor Gerena. Although still eluding the FBI, Machetero Gerena has been charged with taking part in the Wells Fargo expropriation.

The 16 defendants were arrested during and after the para-military invasion of Puerto Rico by 300 FBI agents on August 30, 1985. Two are still being held without bail. Under Reagan's Preventive Detention Act, Juan Segarra Palmer and Filiberto Ojeda Rios are beginning their third year of pre-trial detention, the longest in U.S. history. The defendants are accused of activities connected to an action by the clandestine



Aug. 30 in Hartford

credit Guardian

group, Los Macheteros, when over \$7 million was taken from a Wells Fargo depot in Hartford in 1983. Two years after arrests, it is still unclear when the trial will begin.

On August 19, independent voice and tape experts Frank and Michael McDermott presented to the court their report on over 1,000 hours of secretly taped phone and home conversations by the defendants. These tapes are the backbone of the government's case and have been the subject of intense pre-trial disputes. The McDermotts concluded that none of the 22 tapes tested is original, as legally required for the purposes of evidence, but copies. They also determined that portions of conversations were omitted or erased. If the court accepts these conclusions, it could compromise the government's entire case due to evidence tampering.

Note of interest : A new book has been published chronicling police and FBI efforts to reconstruct the Macheteros' expropriation action and to investigate the events leading up to the August 30 arrests. *Los Macheteros: The Wells Fargo Robbery and the Violent Struggle for Puerto Rican Independence* by Ronald Fernandez, was recently published by Prentiss-Hall Press. Of particular interest are the efforts of the author, who is not a political activist, to investigate the politics of the Puerto Rican independence movement and determine if they are justified. The portrait of US colonialism in Puerto Rico that he uncovers makes a damning indictment that supports the independence struggle.

The New Movement in Solidarity with Puerto Rican Independence and Socialism is a national organization that works to develop understanding and support for the struggle of the Puerto Rican people—invaded and seized by the US military in 1898—to liberate their nation and to establish an independent socialist society. We have written material, slide and film programs on such topics as the 2020 Plan, the history of Puerto Rico and the independence movement. A video entitled, "Have you Seen La Nueva Mujer Puertorriqueña," is now available. Please write or call the chapter nearest you to obtain an audiovisual brochure, or to set up a program and discussion.
Chicago—Box 295, 2520 N. Lincoln, Chicago, IL 60614 (312) 278-6706
San Francisco—3543 18th St. #17, S.F., CA 94110 (415)561-9055
New York—POB 2512, Cadman Plaza, Brooklyn, NY 11202 (212)243-0202