

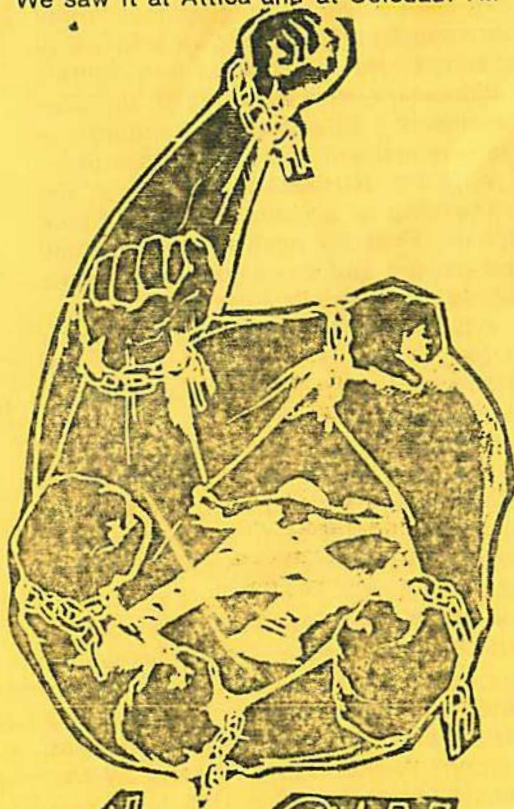
Free The San Quentin 6

On August 21, 1971, prison militant George Jackson was fatally shot in the back by San Quentin prison guards. Three guards and two other inmates were also found dead. Following Jackson's assassination, six Black and Brown prison activists — Fleeta Drumgo, Johnny Larry Spain, Luis Talamantez, Willie Tate, Hugo Pinell, David Johnson — were singled out in an indictment, charged with murder, conspiracy to murder, to escape and to possess firearms.

The aftermath of the tragic events at San Quentin August, 1971 followed a pattern which, has become very familiar to the people of this country: the authorities doing everything in their power — lying, manipulating and framing innocents in an attempt to cover up their own atrocious crimes. It is the pattern of the Pentagon Papers, Attica and Watergate. Alleging there was a conspiracy underway by George Jackson and other inmates to escape, the official report of the events that day is full of contradictions. Authorities originally claimed that George Jackson smuggled in a large pistol under his cap. After an attempt to re-enact the feat, the staff of a major S.F. newspaper concluded that it was physically impossible. In subsequent official accounts the pistol becomes a smaller, lighter Spanish Llama Corto, and the cap, a wig.

It is no mere co-incidence that the brothers singled out and blamed for the killings that took place at San Quentin two years ago are those who are most

militant in their struggle against the terrors of the prison system. Nor is it accidental that the accused are all Black and Brown. This is a recurring pattern. We saw it at Attica and at Soledad. All



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QUENTIN 6

over the country, prisoners' attempts to end the barbarous conditions, the humiliations and the terrors of prisons are met with divisive racist tactics and unceremonious repression.

WHO ARE THE SAN QUENTIN 6?

- As one of the Soledad Brothers, charged and subsequently acquitted of charges of murdering a prison guard, the progressive ideas and activities of 27-year-old FLEETA DRUMGO became known to the public.

- JOHNNY LARRY SPAIN, 24, has long been active in bringing about unity between Black and Brown and white prisoners. He was thrown into solitary confinement November, 1970 for possession of "inflammatory literature" — his personal writings about prison life.

- DAVID JOHNSON, 27, was in the leadership of a protest after a Black inmate, Fred Billingslea, was viciously tear-gassed and beaten to death while locked in his San Quentin cell.

- LUIS TALAMANTEZ, 31, is a prime target of the jailers because of his effectiveness in educating and organizing Chicano prisoners.

- HUGO PINELL, 30-year-old Nicaraguan, like Larry Spain, has spearheaded efforts to bring about multi-racial unity within the walls and has accordingly become one of the prime targets of the authorities.

- WILLIE TATE had his first encounter with the penal system at age 14 when he was charged with assault following an incident in which a white youth insulted Willie with racial epithets. At that moment Willie was ensnared by the monstrous machinery of U.S. justice — its callous public defenders, its racist judges.

There is little or no evidence to support the serious charges against the brothers. For example, Fleeta Drumgo's name is mentioned only once in the transcript of the Grand Jury hearing: a prison guard

testifies that this brother kicked a guard. Only a very warped sense of justice takes this as evidence of 5 counts of murder, and conspiracy. Willie Tate's name is mentioned twice in the transcript: the guard testifies that he saw Willie tie up another guard and that he heard what he thought was this brother's voice. Similarly the names of David Johnson and Luis Talamantez appear very rarely in the Grand Jury transcript.

The indictment was nevertheless rammed through over vehement objections and then resignations of three Grand Jurors.

The case of the San Quentin 6 is obviously not a simple criminal case as the State would have us believe. The prosecution of these brothers has unmistakable political and racial overtones. As one of the Grand Jurors who stormed out of the indictment proceedings in horror put it: "What they are seeking is not justice but vengeance." The State is vengefully seeking not only the lives of the six young men. But by way of example, they also seek to annihilate the entire prisoners' protest movement which the six represent. At the same time the State is attempting to use this case to cover up the murder of George Jackson, himself a monumental symbol of the growing movement behind the walls.

LIFE IN SAN QUENTIN

At San Quentin, the Six brothers are all confined to the maximum security area euphemistically called the Adjustment Center. Interestingly enough, 88 per cent of its inhabitants are Black and Brown. Life in the rat and roach-infested Adjustment Center is a terrible travesty of all that is human. The men go for months without seeing sunlight. For beds there are steel pallets. At the most, one is able to shower twice a week. Participation in prison educational and recreational programs is forbidden. Educational material

discovered in the cellblocks is confiscated. Several times inmates have reported that their food had been contaminated with urine. When the brothers refuse to bow down, refuse to accept these abject conditions, they are beaten. They live in fear of being killed. Numerous affidavits and suits have been



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filed with the courts demanding a halt to the physical assaults to which the brothers have been repeatedly subjected. To no avail.

THE MARIN COUNTY COURTROOM

A bus in which 3 cages have been installed carries the brothers to and from court. They trudge into the specially built highly secured courtroom in leg-irons, shackles, hand-cuffs and chain. Chains from the arms to the waist wrapped in chains. Chains binding the legs. More chains to bolt down the body chains to the chairs in which the brothers sit. A murky bulletproof shield separates the spectators' section from the rest of the court. A special detachment of San Quentin guards and deputies is assigned to the court. These conditions create a very militaristic atmosphere in the courtroom, implying that the defendants are extremely dangerous and threatening characters. Thus the court has completely undermined the Six's basic right to presumption of innocence, fundamental to the notion of a fair trial.

The list of violations is endless. Despite the constitutional guarantee, the Six have been denied attorneys of their own choice. Because of their refusal to accept those hand-picked by Judge H.J. Broderick, they have often been ejected from court and severely beaten. After much protest, Charles Garry and Howard Moore have finally been able to enter the case as "associates" to the court-appointed attorneys. This is a partial victory — partial because the state still refuses to grant them status of court-appointed attorneys.

The chains, the militaristic atmosphere in the courtroom, the repeated assaults on the brothers by the guards, the judge's attempt to run roughshod over their crucial right to attorneys of their choice, look frightfully like the state's preparations for a legal lynching.

As if this were not enough, at one of

the last hearings, the judge pronounced: "While the law respects their right to attend the trial, we will seriously consider the necessity of their appearance."

Now he is seriously considering permanently removing the brothers from the courtroom, having the trial piped into their San Quentin cells!

What is happening to these brothers reflects an extremely alarming national trend of intensified all-out repression by the government. The charges of government espionage and sabotage that have emerged from the Watergate revelations echo the long-standing accusations of political activists which for years fell on deaf ears. If we are to combat the trend that would have political rule in this country become fascist rule, then we must begin to put up an undying fight for the preservation and extension of our democratic and human rights.

That we come to the defense of our brothers and sisters behind the prison walls is especially urgent as it is they who are most often the targets of unbridled aggression and repression. This terrible truth can be no more graphically demonstrated than in the case of the Six.

The waves of the Watergate attempt to crush all political opposition do not begin nor end at the doors of the Democratic Party headquarters. They were already present in full force in our communities, in the shops across the country and behind the walls of San Quentin.

Whether the basic rights of these brothers continue to be trampled on; whether they are treated as men rather than animals and slaves depends largely on us, on the kind of commitment we are willing to make. What is at stake is the dignity and lives of six Black and Brown men. What is more, it is a fight for all of us — an answer to the alarm that Watergate sounds.

*It will be you and thousands of others
who will secure justice for the Six.*

Funds for legal fees and defense committee expenses are badly needed. Write your checks to San Quentin 6 Defense Fund — 3169 - 16th Street, San Francisco.

The Brothers need your Help!

If interested in working on committee, call us at: 626-0690.