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It's widely accepted that with the activities surrounding the anticipated trial of Comrade-Brothers George Jackson, Fleeta Drumgo and John Clutchette, there arose what came to be known as the "prison movement".

The activities involved in the defense of the Soledad Brothers began in 1970; thus, we use these activities...we use this period because we think it sufficiently marks a point in the history of rebellious actions in american prisons when these actions began to take a qualitative change in character.

What we mean to say is, the "prison movement" which we say began in the period marked 1970 was and is different in nature from past struggles in america's prisons; the "prison movement" is qualitatively different from all past struggles in american prisons. This qualitative difference stems from several factors, but each of these factors are related to the escalation of the struggles waged in america by Blacks, Puerto Ricans, and other oppressed nations within the u.s. borders. Thus, in short, the "prison movement" receives its distinct character from the fact that it began to reflect the rising significance of national liberation struggles within the present u.s. borders.

By reflecting the central role of national liberation struggles within present u.s. borders, the "prison movement" also began to demonstrate that ideological and theoretical models and concepts traditionally adhered to, now had to be altered, and new analyses had to be made so that both theory and practice could be brought into accord with actual concrete conditions.

It could no longer be held that prisons were simply instruments of "class" rule; that prisons were simply places where the "surplus labor/surplus value" of prisoners was exploited/appropriated by those who rule; it could no longer be accepted that prisons were simply places used by the state to intimidate, coerce and control the "working class" of capitalist society.

None of these could remain the basis of our theory and practice, because it was more clearly understood that america was not simply a "capitalist" society. It was more clearly understood that america is an imperialist society; it dominates and exploits oppressed nations...and these dominated nations exist not only externally, but within the u.s. borders as well.

From our analysis and understanding of the nature of imperialism, and from our understanding of the relationships which exist between the oppressor nations and oppressed nations, we slowly come to see that it is the struggle of oppressed nations for liberation which play the "leading role" in the world struggle and in the struggle now taking place in america.

By the same token, what characterizes struggles in and around prisons in america today, is the fact that they are primarily used to destroy, suppress, and contain struggles for national liberation; they are used to commit genocide against oppressed peoples (Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Native Americans, Chicanos, Mexicanos, etc.).

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From the beginning, the "prison movement" was influenced by the struggles taking place on the street, and, at the same time, it exerted its own influence upon struggles taking place outside the walls. National liberation struggles were taking place outside the walls and, class struggles were taking place outside the walls. The national liberation struggles were being waged by the peoples of oppressed nations; the class struggles were being waged by the working class of the oppressor nation.

As the degree of repression against the national liberation struggles intensified, and as economic conditions in america worsened, the prisons began to fill. The people who began to fill prisons were disproportionately Third World peoples, pointing up the racist oppression which is characteristic of national liberation struggles; those whites which began to fill the prisons pointed up (primarily) the economic exploitation which is most characteristic of the class struggle in the oppressor nation.

The "prison movement", while pointing up the exploitation of prisoners as "workers", of prisoners as "guinea pigs" in medical experimentation, and as targets for psycho-surgery, and while able to focus on many of the other inhumane, exploitive, oppressive and repressive aspects and conditions in prisons...more than all these, what was pointed up was the connections between these prison conditions and the conditions of the masses of Third World people in america--oppressed nations struggling for liberation; the "prison movement" was able to point up the connections existing between these prison conditions, the conditions of the masses of oppressed nations within america, and those conditions experienced by other oppressed nations throughout the world.

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As a result of the repression exercised upon the struggles taking place outside the walls in the late sixties and early seventies, leaders and activists in these struggles were captured and imprisoned. These were the political prisoners and prisoners of war. Their initial imprisonment was a result of consciously motivated political actions.

The escalation of struggle outside the walls also resulted in a significant increase in the number of politicized prisoners already inside the walls. It is important to note that the "traditional" or "conventional" models and conceptions regard the politicization of these prisoners as a result of their being "lumpen" or "working class", and the fact that they are usually Third World is given only secondary consideration. We can admit that the economic and socio-psychological ties that these politicized prisoners had with the oppressive system were such that they represent the most conscious element among us--the most conscious, that is, of the presently waging, undeclared war between themselves and those who rule; thus, they are among the most receptive and responsive to the need to become conscious, active participants in this war; they represent those with the most potential to become "the people in uniform." BUT, their politicization resulted primarily from their being members of oppressed nations!

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The relationship existing between the "prison movement" and the overall struggle, the relationship existing between prisoners and people outside the walls supporting struggles in and around prisons, has been and will continue to be a dialectical relationship. This is simply to say that the struggles taking place inside influence those taking place outside, while at the same time the struggles taking place outside influence those taking place inside. This dialectical relationship between the inside and the outside has had several rather distinct phases or levels. What we mean here is that there have been periods when we notice influence flowing from the inside to the outside which tends to heavily determine both theory and practice for outside forces; and, that there have been distinct periods when influence flowing from the outside to the inside has tended to heavily determine both theory and practice for the inside forces.

But, it is our belief that what has heretofore characterized each of these phases or levels is that the "control" and "direction" of the outside forces has been more or less the norm; this control and direction exercised by the outside forces has occurred even during those phases or levels when the influence was flowing from the inside to the outside.

We believe that we're approaching (have approached) another phase or level (actually, another stage in the whole movement), where the influence again flows from the inside to the outside--but the difference is that prisoners will now be more involved in the direction and control of this influence and the things which this influence gives birth to. In particular, we mean to say that prisoners are/will be the impetus for the formation of a national prisoners movement, and will exercise significant control and direction over this national prisoners movement. And, on a more general level, we believe that prisoners will play a significant role in the formation of a national, revolutionary, black political party, and, in the formation of a national, revolutionary, black united front.

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We're talking about moving from the particular to the general; about moving from where we are right now, in the process of organizing the masses of black people, other internally colonized peoples, and contributing to the struggle of the oppressed people of the oppressor nation....We're talking, more specifically, here, about agitating, educating, and organizing in each prison, so as to build the foundations upon which will stand the national prisoners movement. We're talking about beginning to lay foundations which will become contributions in the building of a national, revolutionary black political party. We're talking, also, about beginning to lay foundations for what will become contributions in the building of a national, revolutionary, black united front.

To succeed in each of these objectives, we need organization. We understand that as we level blows against prison walls and the entrenched power of those who rule, we cannot entertain thoughts of decisive battle (the abolishment of prisons (as they now exist), self-determination, socialist reconstruction/society), until we have the requisite power to do so. In order to obtain this power, we must acquire and effectively use the weapon/instrument of organization. Any and all activities initiated by us in this protracted struggle must be organized.

Such organization demands that we be conscious, skilled, disciplined and united in thought and action; it demands fundamental change in our thought and in our practice; it demands the acquisition of a sense of confidence, a belief in our ability to struggle and to win, to break the chains (physical and mental) and go on to build and control a new way of life for ourselves.

Such organization is needed by the movement as a whole, by the masses of the people. Such organization is also needed by those who would help to organize the people. Just as organization is the weapon/instrument that we must have in the struggle to obtain the power that we need to effect revolutionary change, correct ideology/philosophy, theory and practice are the required weapons/instruments we need in order to insure effective organization.

Cadre, vanguard elements, those who are and who aspire to be true revolutionaries and freedom fighters, those who would be true political prisoners and prisoners of war--these must be organized; these must be equipped with the most correct/appropriate ideology/philosophy, the most correct/appropriate theory, arising from "concrete analysis of concrete conditions," and tested and enriched by practice.

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The chains that bind us are mental as well as physical. We cannot "organize a sleeping people around specific goals" until awareness and understanding of the need to fight has been achieved; until the WILL to fight has been inspired; until the belief that we can win has been acquired.

These mental/psychological chains obscure, mask, and misdescribe the way the real world works; incorrect philosophical approaches prevent awareness and understanding of real social, political and economic relations; backward philosophy stifles the growth and development of genuine revolutionary consciousness; causes repeated confusion and frustration, apathy and disillusionment; conceals the need that we have to fight; dulls the will to fight; erodes our confidence and impedes effective organization for revolutionary national liberation struggle.

At bottom of our difficulties in getting people to struggle in and around prisons, at bottom of our difficulties in getting people to struggle for national liberation and the destruction of capitalist relations, is backward philosophy. The majority of people still cling to beliefs in the appropriateness of american law and the defined purposes and functions of prisons; still cling to beliefs in the appropriateness and legitimacy of the american system of government and in the right of the oppressor to exercise authority over us; still cling to the philosophical perspective which is the foundation for all of this.

In essence, we're saying that those who are into the "super fly" bags, into the "gangster" bags, the "america the beautiful" bags--all these "bags" and others are realities among us today primarily because we cling to incorrect, backward philosophy. Until our philosophy changes, until our outlook on the world and how it works changes, we will be unable to organize ourselves to carry out effective struggle for national liberation

As men and women throughout the world organize themselves to engage in revolutionary struggle, as they 'consciously remold themselves to remake the world,' they necessarily change their philosophies, their ways of thinking about themselves and the world. They adopt new values and discard old ones; the approaches to and relationships with all other people and all institutions on national and international levels are altered, and in most cases completely reversed: where people were dependent, they become independent; where they were passive, they become aggressive and assertive; where they were powerless, they take power into their own hands.

Upon engaging in revolutionary struggles, where people were before kept unaware, unconscious, uncreative and unable to involve themselves in the varied processes and structures aimed at shaping the quality and direction of their lives, they become aware of social/historical laws underlying change, growth and development; they become conscious of themselves as the enforcers of these laws; their heretofore imprisoned creativity is released, and they involve themselves in every phase and aspect of building and safeguarding new social orders.

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We begin with ourselves. We begin by study and practice. We emphasize, though, that our study must be critical, must be independent and creative; the method(s) that we use must be "guides to action" and not "levers for construction."

We begin with ourselves, with study and practice, the result of which will be that advanced elements in each prison will come together, will organize themselves in preparation for their part in organizing the people.

Moving from the particular to the general for captured Brothers and Sisters means first of all coming together where we are. We get ourselves together, and then reach out to the most advanced elements among our fellow captives, among our family and among our friends--among all those close to us who demonstrate the most potential, the desire and the willingness to learn and to commit themselves to service of the people, to struggle for national liberation.

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As we come together into study groups, collectives, organizations and fronts in the prisons where we are, and as we then move to bring each prison into statewide fronts, we must do so in an organized, systematic manner.

In general, we can say that the means we'll use should be Agitation, Education, Organization.

As a rule, Agitation is done when we talk about the brutal pig, the bad food, the absent doctor and other bad conditions. When we agitate, we talk about the recent shooting of a black youth by pigs on the street; the reasons for drugs in our communities; for prostitution; for huge numbers of our people on welfare rolls; for miseducation of our children in the schools controlled by the enemy, etc. When we agitate, we simply stir general discussion, arouse feelings; excite and disturb the calm and tranquil among us; we move against potential threats or actual conditions of a more immediate nature. But none of these alone will increase understanding, instill revolutionary consciousness and commitment, or unseat the emperor.

First we Agitate, then we Educate. After we've stirred discussion, aroused feelings, excited and disturbed the general calm and tranquility, we begin to direct the discussion toward specifics; we harness the energy and intensity of the feelings we've activated and begin to shape revolutionary consciousness. When we educate, we begin to instruct each other and those around us into the why's and how's of struggle; we impart knowledge; we teach, train, bestow and share skills, we distill method--all of which implies planning.

From Education we move to Organization. When we organize, we begin to give a definite structure to our activities; we create a coherent unity and arrange all things in systematic ways, according to plans; we shape into a whole the many heretofore loose, interdependent parts.

All of this Agitation, Education and Organization, while aiming towards the general objective, must be based on the particular, i.e., on the actual conditions prevailing in each prison. The issues around which much of our activity will be based will differ from prison to prison and from state to state. Also, the conditions under which we'll have to carry out our work will differ; some prisons will offer a relative mobility, while others will be increasingly repressive.

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