

# THE PEOPLES WITNESS

SACRAMENTO

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SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE

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## LOCK-UP? = AN ANALYSIS

At midnight, November 30, 1973, Procunier ordered Tracy (DVI), Quentin, Soledad, and Folsom put on lockup status after a guard was killed at Tracy. This order by Procunier was accompanied by front-page news coverage in the capitalist media containing numerous quotes from Procunier and other CDC officials which stressed the "necessity" for the lockup due to the high incidence of violence and "gang" activity inside...with emphasis on "revolutionary" gangs (i.e. the Mexican Mafia, Nuestra Familia, and the Black Guerrilla Family). Soledad spokesman Charles Miller offered further clarification of who the lockup was directed towards: "It appears as though we are experiencing some revolutionary tactics that appear to be concentrated in the four institutions. The hard-core revolutionaries are concentrated in these institutions."

A couple of days later, Vacaville was placed on lockup status also, the stabbing of Juan Corona given as the reason.

The capitalist press suffered no lack of "get-tough" quotes from Procunier, interspersed with a few misty-eyed remembrances of "all the great guys we used to have in prison," contrasted with the new revolutionary consciousness springing up inside the walls. "From now on, we're going to go back to running these places instead of the inmates running them for us." Meanwhile, State Senator H.L. Richardson calls for Procunier's resignation due to "lack of toughness."

When the lockdown officially ended at Folsom last week, it was with vows by the "authorities" that the "get-tough" policy would be carried out with even stricter restrictions than before the lockup.

There are two ways we can look at this situation. The first, and most common, is to view it as an isolated incident, as an action by Procunier, because Procunier himself is a fascist. This is a metaphysical way of approaching a problem. Using this line of analysis, we would attack the "isolated" phenomena of the lockup; or, if a person suffered from cancer, using this line of analysis they would, feeling pain, take aspirin rather than searching out the cause of the pain. The second way that we can approach the prob-

lem is dialectically. Dialectics teaches us that there is no such thing as an isolated phenomenon: everything that happens, happens as a result of many forces, reasons, contradictions, and all are interconnected, directly or indirectly. In other words, there are many causes, at the international, national, state and inner-departmental levels, for the lockup.

### 1. Conflicts within the CDC:

It is obvious that Procunier is attempting to hold on to his job, which is threatened by various other fascists within CDC who are vying for his position by loudly favoring "get-tough" policies. Therefore, he is trying to "out-tough" the "toughs."

### 2. State of California

The buildup of the prison population, the overemphasis on inmate violence, the concept that "some people cannot be rehabilitated," is a plan of the State of California (Reagan, Younger, etc.) to institute the Death Penalty (already accomplished), Behavior Modification programs like psychosurgery and an institute to study these in UCLA (The Center For The Reduction of Violence), and an important development that took place in New York after Attica, the Maxi-Maxi prisons--new super-security prisons for the "violent" inmates who cannot be "rehabilitated."

### 3. National Scene

This general "get tough" policy is also being put into practice nationwide. For example, nearly all of the states have the Death Penalty harsher than ever (i.e. North Carolina has Death Penalty for first degree rape, burglary and arson, among other things). Nixon has proposed a new bill (SI400 in the Senate and HR6046 in the House); among its provisions are sections that provide for 15 years imprisonment and/or a \$100,000 fine for anyone who advocates or belongs to an organization that advocates revolutionary change in the US "at some time in the future." From this kind of fascism to this...section 521 permits any police officers anywhere to shoot to kill to prevent the escape of anyone arrested for any crime, no matter how petty, and without regard to the lives of others in the area.

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## LETTERS ON REFORM

Continued with our question on reform and its role in a revolutionary organisation, we are printing the following letters from various inmates in prisons throughout California. In the next issue we will print the SSC's position on reform.

"Right off the top, reform is good. People with good hearts regardless of their politics have good ideas. In other words, a good conservative makes a good republican. But one must know that reform opens the door wide to corruption, as well as our great political heritage of exploitation. I think that a good example of reform, or the dangers of it are in Russia. It is something that I don't think can be handled from the beginning. To me, reform does not mean change, but only rearrange, so I think that we need to combine the concepts of reform with revolution, in as much as there are many things that need change, and also things that are good that only need be rearranged. However, the key to determining what method of struggle should be used lies in the correct understanding of dialectics, and not by any set rules.

"On the other hand it is very dangerous, as it is not ideologically sound, and is used by the most reactionary element when the going gets rough. So, I guess that it would be safe to say it is good only when used by those who fully understand the dangers of it. But to keep on the safe side, I personally do not trust reformist people."

--A Brother in San Quentin--

"....I am not quite in accord with reform period. Reform plays no concrete role in any revolutionary organisation, when barely at formulative stages. Reform is a term of compromising probabilities when you wish to surge into the extremities of accepting the realm of total opposition, which is a natural law of humane fervor when you're dealing with classes of oppression, repression and classes of ultimate resistance to these destructive operations. Advanced reform, once at the stages of progressive and collective mobilization, can be considered and applied, but then again, only in the degrees to create deceptive rivers."

--A Brother in San Quentin--

"Reform implies that improvements are being made on that which is in existence. I'm uncertain at this point if this is the stated goal. I would prefer to define it as a sharp turn toward a stated goal. Reforms usually end in more of the same with a different cast of actors. I would prefer both a new cast of actors and new goals with effective ways of implementing programs.

"It would be difficult to reform the existing... the rock on which it is based doesn't lend itself to real and permanent change. Accommodation can and most likely will be made on issues central to reformers and those in opposition.

"I can realize and sympathize with your goals and programs. This time last year I was working in the same capacity toward similar goals.

"Now, I realize even more the need for a real, sincere change. Concrete, realistic programs to be implemented as an interim goal, while ultimately leading to an equal chance for each individual to develop their full potential toward a common good.

"There will never be any instant solution but more of a long, hard, struggle frustrating at times to command attention to a central idea. Few people rise to the same level together or view with importance or unimportance the same issue. That which ultimately becomes the reality has to be based on some solid explained everyday reason, otherwise people don't relate.

"I would assume that a group or organisation would take a attitude of solving some everyday problems as part of the program to solicit support and dispense ideas and information furthering the organisation. I don't mean to suggest a paternalistic attitude but an endless amount of patience and restraint is required to establish a solid base."

--A Brother in Folsom--

"Reform and rehabilitation mean one and the same; Reformist. A reformist program of any kind will never serve the righteous needs of the people, therefore reformism is a lot of bullshit when you're talking revolution. Reform and rehabilitation are petty white washing words to make the people believe that something constructive is being done to serve the masses, when in reality it is nothing but tokens of nothing to serve nobody but the capitalist swine that do only harm to the people who are supposed to be made useful in serving this sick country, the so-called United States of America. (cont. next page)

-REFORM continued-

Therefore we are left but one alternative, seek a better doctrine that will give people what they have coming, better living conditions, free medical care and an economic system that fluctuates with the cost of living, not to mention community control and self determination."

--a Brother at Susanville--

"As far as your question of reform and what role it should play in a revolutionary organization, well to this I say hogwash as to me there is no such thing..."reform and rehabilitation is one and the same." There is no such thing as rehabilitation as I view it because there is no rehabilitation being done. All I see is a strong effort to reprogram a person into being a human robot which is only a modern method of brainwashing. Do you call keeping a prisoner many years "so that he's even afraid of spitting on the sidewalk in fear that he might get sent back" rehabilitation? I would really like to see true rehabilitation before my time is up but this is something that is most likely a long way off. Before this can happen all of society must first help in the first step to do away with the warehousing of human lives. You have heard that there are trades in most prisons, but what good does a trade do if what he has learned is outdated years ago. For instance at Tracy I was in the auto shop but the newest car in the whole shop was at least five years old...Anyway I think you get the drift."

--a Brother at CMF Vacaville--

"...The whole system should be destroyed as Mao did in China, as Castro did in Cuba..."

"Before I had the pleasure of meeting the California prisons, I actually thought that justice played a role in the conviction of any person before the courts of law. Was I mistaken! If reform is to take place, the judicial system should be the first to go, or change completely. With all the laws and new rulings taking place everyday, the constitution will be obsolete."

--a Brother in Soledad--

-LOCKUP continued-

But to assume that heavy-handed fascism is the result of individuals is not dialectical. The worsening economic crisis that is hitting hard at the world capitalists is warranting measures to be able to cope with the masses of people who will be paying for the depression that is to come. When the conditions begin to get ripe for revolutionary ideas and actions to become part of the peoples' thinking, the

repressive apparatus must be put into effect --immediately. The capitalists will not be able to buy off the working and poor people of the US.

4. International Scene

This crisis is of course not isolated to the US. Internationally the losses suffered by the imperialists have been costly, in both money and prestige. Victorious wars of national liberation by people fighting imperialism (e.g. Indochina and Africa), plus the continued guerrilla fighting that drains the capitalists, do not add up to endless colonial profits. These wars cost the people in the imperialist countries through taxes, while at the same time they build consciousness about the nature of imperialism, and its terrible price in human life.

But the costly wars have not been the only problem. There is a World Depression brewing on the scene for the capitalist countries. England predicts 10 million out of 24 million workers unemployed and they have now gone to a three-day work week. Japan's Vice-Minister of International Trade and Industry has predicted a world depression before long. The oil shortage because of Zionist expansion into the Arab countries in a land-oil grab, and the Arab oil boycott, has particularly struck the European common market hard. All of the oil crisis is not the basic problem; the problem is deeper. Because of technological achievements and harsh competition between the capitalist blocs--Japan, the Common Market, and the US--tremendous surpluses of goods have been produced. Due to the non-expansion of Imperialism and the inability to gain new markets to exploit, the capitalists have been forced to deal with the Socialist countries on an "equal-trade" basis instead of the ripoff colonial trade. This has created surplus goods and lower profits. The capitalists must slow down or stop production in order to sell their surplus goods at a profit--that is, to drive the prices up by creating a demand. This leads to unemployment and more poverty among the poor.

As the economic conditions among the workers and the poor worsen, the revolutionary consciousness will correspondingly grow, heightening the antagonisms between the interests of the ruling (capitalist) class and the interests of the working class. In the imperialist countries, especially the US, workers who have reaped a few crumbs from the fruits of imperialism exploitation will suddenly find themselves in the position in which the English workers find themselves. Since the capitalists, in order to make more

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## THE PEOPLES' VERDICT--To Be Considered

In the November issue of The People's Witness, we reported on the Folsom Strike that began on October 15, 1973. We printed the list of demands that inmates in the striking Adjustment Center had sent outside to the people. The fourth demand read..."We want sufficient medical aid and practice." We also reported that the media reported inmates had torn up the plumbing in protest of conditions. At the time we did not know the reasons for this action. Now, we have received information in the form of official reports that shed more light on the action that took place on October 20 by striking inmates.

An inmate in AC complained to an officer Cervetti that his knee was infected and he was running a fever. Cervetti reported this to a Sgt. DD Lee. Lee called the hospital and requested the MTA (Medical Technical Assistant) bring a thermometer when he made his rounds. Later the MTA G. Grannis tried to give some medication to the inmate, which was refused. (The medication had been prescribed previously.) Apparently, the doctor had seen the inmate the day before and said the inmate had picked at a pimple and inflamed his own knee. Officer Duenas tried to give the inmate some more medicine that was prescribed over the telephone. The inmate refused and demanded adequate medical attention.

At the same time another inmate was discovered on the floor of his cell unconscious by Officer Duenas. He reported this to Lee, who again called the hospital and reported it to MTA Morgan. Morgan called back after checking the records and said that the man had a history of epileptic seizures and that he would come out of it in a few minutes. Other inmates were "insisting" that he be given medical attention and that he had had a heart attack. They claimed that he had a bullet lodged near his heart, and that he had been shot and had complained the previous week.

Finally the inmates erupted and toilets, sinks and windows were broken and fires set. When officers removed the inmates from the cells to clean up, "no physical force was required." According to this report, the inmate who was unconscious was taken to the hospital for examination..."the Chief Medical Officer Dr. Owens reported that the inmate did not have a bullet near his heart and never had one in this part of his body." The report ended up with a detailed list of damages to the cells.

Points to consider:

1. Why were the two inmates not taken immediately to the hospital...or given examinations by a doctor?
2. How can phone calls determine whether a person is ill or not? Can it be positively ascertained that the inmate who was unconscious was not having a heart attack? Would an epileptic Proconier be allowed to lay on his office floor until he "came out of it"?
3. Why do guards Lee, Duenas and Cervetti not care about the welfare of the inmates before threat of violence and finally actual violence forces them to act?
4. If the inmate was shot the previous week or even if the claim had been made, why was it not properly investigated until Dr. Owens refuted the claim. Surely shootings must have gone on, and indiscriminately, if the guards themselves were not even sure if the inmate had been shot.
5. Does CMO Owens only thoroughly examine inmates to "refute" the claims of the inmates rather than to cure the illness?
6. Is the demand of "proper medical aid and practice" an unreasonable demand, or is that simply a human right?
7. Lastly, why is more attention given to the destruction of property...than the condition of human beings?

The People's Witness leaves the verdict up to you, the people!!!

-LOCKUP continued-

profits, cannot continue to buy off the masses, they must resort to their time-worn methods of direct, heavy-handed repression: tougher law-and-order, tougher prisons--the attempt to destroy the revolution which can never be destroyed because its very existence is the result of the failure of capitalism!

QUESTION: For Debate and Definition

In order to help us to define ourselves in a progressive manner and maintain a progressive dialog, we would appreciate hearing of your ideas, theories and positions on the lumpen proletariat: How should it be defined? Is it by nature a revolutionary class? What is its role in the peoples' struggle and the revolution?

THE PEOPLE'S WITNESS is the monthly newsletter of the Sacramento Solidarity Committee, and is sent free of charge to inmates and other interested people on request. Address requests to: SSC, P.O. Box 13051, Sacramento, CA 95813

THE DIVIDED STATES OF AMERICA

My spirit looked down through clouds of time  
upon the land of my people  
and there was a deepness within all that there is  
--a silence that did not know peace

For there was our Mother, Earth  
from great salt waters in East where sun looks over world  
to great salt waters in West where sun rests and darkness is everywhere  
even between the stars

Vast the land--and silent in agony  
for Americans have poured filth upon Earth  
the land of my people  
the island of our dreams

America speaks through bared fangs saying:  
"united", "free", "peace", "honor", "democracy"

...But as my spirit looked with long eyes upon the land  
the silence grew great within  
for this is what there is:

Americans have seperated the land and called it "united"  
Americans have severed the seperated land and called it "states"  
Americans have sliced up this as with a Flint-stone knife and called it "cities"

Within the "cities"  
Americans dwell in "blocks"  
which are square sections of all that is apart

Within all this  
Americans build gmarled houses  
and when they gather to eat the fruits of Beautiful Mother Earth  
Americans are seperated one from another

This building apart gives Americans no happiness  
for they are also dividing the hearts of my people  
and long to own all of the Earth with the incomplete-seperateness  
that dwells within them  
--for they have no place to rest their terrified spirits

My spirit thought of all these things before muttering:

"There, upon the land of my people  
waiting in angry uneasiness  
is THE DIVIDED STATES OF AMERICA"

Now, my people  
is the ripe season to unite all that has been divided

Darryl Wilson  
Pit River Territory

April 25, 1973--30,000 feet over Wounded Knee

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