

# **KLAN, NAZIS EXPOSED-P 3**

**PONTIAC PRISONERS SUPPORT COALITION**



## **NEWSLETTER**

**Oct. '79**

**No. 8**

**Rally For Human Rights**

### **Marion/Pontiac Demonstration**



- **Close The Marion Control Unit!**
- **Smash The Frame-Up**
- **Free The Pontiac Brothers**
- **Put The State On Trial**
- **End The Death Penalty!**

**SATURDAY**

**NOV. 3rd  
12 noon**

**FEDERAL BUILDING  
219 S. DEARBORN ST.  
CHICAGO, ILL.**

## 2 VENUE STRUGGLE CONTINUES FOR 14 CASES MOVED TO BLOOMINGTON

"Everyone is very familiar with the saying, 'A house divided cannot stand,' but few seem to understand just what it means. The state knows that if they can take the 14 Brothers facing life to trial separately from the other 17, then the chances of convicting both groups are greatly increased." -- 14 Pontiac Brothers  
(Lamont Richards)

In Newsletter #6 the Pontiac Brothers revealed the State's ongoing strategy of "divide and conquer." The 14 Brothers facing terms up to life imprisonment are divided into eight separate cases. They are being tried before five different judges. Four of these judges have ruled that the trials be set in McLean County. The fifth, Judge Harrod, is expected to follow suit. The trials will take place in the town of Bloomington, Illinois.

McLean County borders Livingston County, where Pontiac is located. It is 95% white and predominantly rural -- not much different than Livingston County. Many guards and other prison employees live in McLean County, too. The 14 are continuing to fight for venue (the site of the trial) to be changed to Cook County, as it was in the case of the 17.

The change of venue reflected the State's realization that convictions obtained in Livingston County might not be upheld on appeal because of the obvious bias in the area. But by moving the cases to another county almost equally hostile to Black and Latin prisoners, the judges are following Governor Thompson's move to railroad the 14 as quickly as possible. (See "Racist Offensive in McLean County," this issue.)

### D.O.C. BLOCKS DEFENSE

Consider the following: During the early part of July, Judge Glennon ruled that group meetings of all the defendants on one indictment and their lawyers were necessary to insure the preparation of a defense. He issued a court order requiring the Department of Corrections (DOC) to permit such meetings in the cases being



heard by him. However, even in the face of the court order the DOC refused to allow two Brothers who are now on the outside to meet with their co-defendants in Pontiac. Almost one month later, Glennon refused to hold the DOC in contempt of court for this. Consequently, as of this date, these Brothers have still not had a single meeting to prepare their defense!

The 14 do not have access to the law library to work on their cases. They do not have phone calls. Three of the Brothers were transferred to B House, the noisiest, filthiest part of the segregation unit at Stateville. They were forced to sleep on the floor for the first three days, competing for space with the rats, until a legal visitor learned of the situation and protested to the administration. Inadequate lighting, a constant din of noise, no access to law books, and stagnant water in the cells are the conditions under which these men are forced to prepare for trial. Just a few more parts of the State's plan to carry out Thompson's show trials: The Pontiac frame-up.

## 3 KLAN AND NAZIS MOBILIZE RACIST OFFENSIVE IN McLEAN CTY.

Governor Thompson's frame-up has moved the trials of 14 Black and Latin prisoners charged for their alleged participation in the Pontiac rebellion to McLean County primarily because it is a segregated white community, close enough to Pontiac to be the home of many prison guards and employees and to reflect their racist attitudes toward and fear of Third World prisoners.

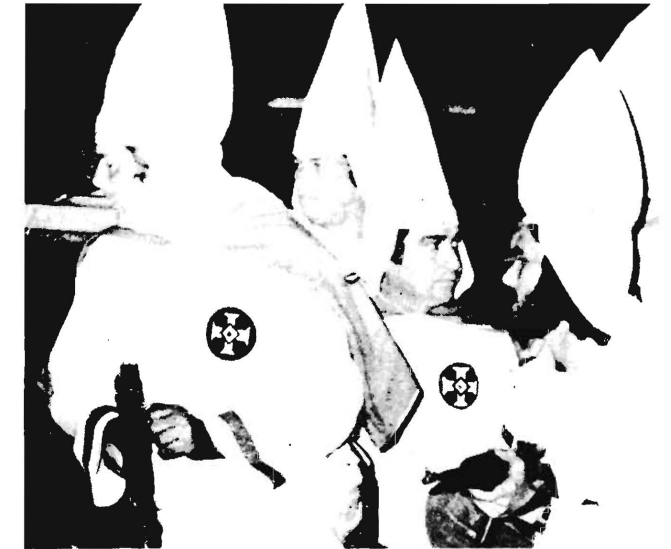
There is another factor involved when you place Black and Latin prisoners on trial in a rural county like McLean and charge them in connection with a rebellion that took three white guards' lives. That is the historic fact that rural areas are strongholds for white supremacist groups and organizing.

McLean County is no exception. To begin with, Bloomington, (the town where the trials are to be held), is the birthplace of George Lincoln Rockwell, father of the American Nazi Party. Each year on March 9, Rockwell's birthday, a contingent of Nazis march through downtown Bloomington. In a statement to the Pantagraph, Bloomington's daily newspaper, Nazi marchers referred to Bloomington as "sacred."

On August 19 of this year the Nazis held a twenty-four hour rally on a farm in Tazewell County, just twenty miles west of Bloomington. This rally was attended by some 75 people, some of them armed. The Tazewell County Sheriff's Department and state troopers watched the rally (through informants) and knew people were armed. But no one was arrested, as the Tazewell County Sheriff stated, "As long as they abide by the law there's nothing to do or nothing we should do about it."

A week later in Bloomington's white east side, residents found copies of The Klansman neatly tucked under their cars' windshield wipers. The Klansman is published by the Invisible Empire, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Denham Springs, Louisiana, a faction of the Klan led by Bill Wilkinson. This KKK group is the most militant and most armed faction of the

Klan in the country, according to a recent New York Times article. Wilkinson has been observed on numerous occasions in public accompanied by body guards openly displaying automatic weapons.



Klansmen scurry to protect leader Bill Wilkinson (c. at left), after shots were fired during a rally.

Wilkinson says of the guns openly carried by his men: "They're not for hunting rabbits. They are for wasting people."

### PRISONS: KLAN STRONGHOLD

In the last few years the Klan, the Nazis and other white supremacist groups have been making a real drive to become a dominant force in many white communities. This is especially true in and around prisons. White supremacist forces--especially the Klan--are actively recruiting white guards and white prisoners in prisons across the country. Earl Schoonmaker, Grand Dragon of the Independent Northern Klans, the largest Klan organization in New York State, worked as a teacher in the state prison at Napanoch, New York until 1975. Many guards there are known members and have carried out numerous attacks on Black prisoners, especially those active in the prison NAACP chapter. Yet the State Supreme Court ruled that it was illegal to prohibit Klan members from serving as guards. Similar organizing drives in other prisons have led to countless attacks--including murder--on Black and Latin prisoners.

Cont'd on p. 4

Whether it's armed Nazis in Tazewell County or Wilkerson's bodyguards, one thing is clear: there is tolerance of armed white supremacist groups. When white fanatical racists bear arms and openly declare war on Black and Latin people, law enforcement officials say, "There's ...nothing we should do about it." Yet when Black people sleep in their apartments with guns registered in their names, as happened to Fred Hampton, law enforcement officials break in and shoot to kill. This is one example of "equal rights" for Blacks and whites.

#### PUT THE STATE ON TRIAL

We do not assert that the Pontiac Brothers can get a "fair trial" in Chicago, or anywhere else. The only fair trial would be putting the state on trial for letting the conditions in their prisons become so intolerable that prisoners are forced to rebel.

By setting the 14's trials in Bloomington--far from Black and Latin support and in an area that has visible white supremacist activity--the state exposes its continuing drive to frame the Pontiac Brothers. It's not much different from the states's tolerance--hence encouragement--of white supremacist groups bearing arms.

Governor Thompson must feel that he can count on the white citizens of McLean County to hand in some quick convictions. McLean County is the state's choice in its search for white people to do the dirty work. If they do, the media and all of Thompson's henchmen can set in motion a "Guilty as charged" atmosphere for the trial of the 17 in Chicago. Thompson used the phony "re-taking of Stateville" to create a racist scare about "gangs"; he hopes to build an even greater racist hysteria in McLean County to help carry him to a ghoulish "victory."

The people of McLean County are facing a choice: whether or not they will participate in the genocide of Black and Latin people in this case. Already we know that some white people in Bloomington don't want to be part of a legal lynching. There are people in the area who are beginning to organize to build support for the Pontiac Brothers in that community. We think that a base of visible support--to counter the visible racism--is possible, and that it can play a significant role in defeating Thompson's genocidal ambitions.

FOR CURRENT INFORMATION ON TRIAL DATES FOR THE PONTIAC 14 CALL SHEL BANNISTER AT (312) 663-1119.



On July 22, 1978, prisoners at Pontiac State Penitentiary in Pontiac, Illinois, rose up against the inhuman conditions and racism of the prison. The causes of this spontaneous rebellion were so obvious that the director of the Illinois prisons said, "It came a year later than most of us anticipated. You can only crowd so many people into a warehouse for so long before something happens." 3 guards were killed and 3 others injured; damages were estimated at \$4 million. Many prisoners were injured by guards and National Guardsmen retaking the prison.

The entire prison population was then put on deadlock -- locked in their cells 24 hours a day without showers, visits, recreation, work, or basic necessities like soap and toilet paper. The deadlock continued for 8 months.

The "investigation" that was carried out under deadlock conditions consisted principally of attempts to coerce prisoners to testify against selected scapegoats by threats and bribery. Not until 3 months after the rebellion did State officials begin to claim that the prisons were "run by the gangs" and that the Pontiac rebellion had been a "gang" conspiracy. This phony story both took the responsibility off Governor Thompson and the State officials running the prison and placed it on Black and Latin prisoners and prejudiced the public against the men to be indicted.

Administrative charges were brought against 67 prisoners, each of whom was sentenced to a year in segregation and loss of one year good time without a single witness being presented.

On March 5, 1979, an all-white grand jury handed down indictments against 31 prisoners -- all Black and Latin. 17 were charged with murder and 14 with other felonies. The State's Attorney had already announced that he would seek the death penalty for any prisoner convicted of murder, making this the largest mass death penalty case in the U.S.

## WHO WE ARE

The Pontiac Prisoners Support Coalition is a broad-based coalition of community and human rights organizations. The PPSC is organizing in primarily white communities while other organizations are working in Black and Latin communities.

We share the conviction that the Pontiac Rebellion was a natural and predictable response to the inhuman treatment of prisoners, most of whom are Black and Latin.

We understand that this inhuman treatment begins on the outside, in the community, where Black and Latin people live with many different forms of oppression. Those men and women who organize against this oppression are warehoused into cages in overcrowded prisons and jails where slave labor, inhuman conditions and arbitrary rules are enforced by racist guards.

We know that the indictments against the Pontiac 31 are the product of a frame-up carried out under coercive conditions and not a genuine investigation.

The PPSC respects and supports the initiatives of prisoners, takes leadership from them, and unites with them on the following demands:

- \* Abolish all inhuman and abusive conditions at Pontiac and other Illinois prisons.
- \* Repeal Class X legislation.
- \* Revoke the death penalty.
- \* Expose the investigation and its coercive strategy to scapegoat prisoners.
- \* End the deadlocks.

\* Drop the indictments.

\* Free the Pontiac Brothers!

We have taken responsibility for:

- \* Educating white people about the racist nature of the prison system.
- \* Combatting anti-prisoner, racist attitudes and practices.
- \* Winning support for the demands of the prisoners.
- \* Providing ongoing political and legal support for the Pontiac Brothers.

ACT NOW! WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I want to work on one of the PPSC committees.

\_\_\_\_ I can arrange for PPSC to show its slideshow or give talks to people or groups I know.

\_\_\_\_ I enclose \$10.00 for a 1-year subscription to the *PPSC Newsletter*.

\_\_\_\_ I enclose a \$ \_\_\_\_\_ donation to the Pontiac Brothers Defense Fund.

RETURN THIS FORM TO: PPSC  
c/o Alliance to End Repression  
407 South Dearborn Street, Room 1000  
Chicago, Illinois 60605  
OR CALL: (312) 427-4064

# from the kamps

8/28/79

Brothers & Sisters,

Today I received a letter asking me to describe conditions here in the Pontiac segregation unit where myself and 19 other brothers are being held and have been since the July '78 rebellion (and the more famous "frame-ups"). Describing the conditions of seg, the hole, isolation—by any of the many names given this abyss, the meaning still remains the same—this is one of the easier tasks I have been called on to perform since my arrival here 36 days before the rebellion.

Being born and raised in the ghettos of Chicago, summarizing my present surroundings brings a vivid re-call to mind, drawing a reflective panorama of the back alleys around Madison & Paulina, only the little critters of the night (which the Dept. of Corrections call officers have taken on human proportions and lurk not only in the gloom of night but on a round the clock basis.

Segregation seems to be home base for the most demented and perverted officials of the d.o.c.'s staff. Their main purpose seems to be to humiliate and debase and bring one to a psychotic state. Only after one reaches that plateau has he been "REHABILITATED."

But what the hell, the way it's been explained to me, (and I'm sure it's been told to you the same way),

there is no wrong done when 7 or 8 officers come to your cell and handcuff and beat you unconscious for maybe asking too often for some medical help, or when you're listening to your stomach growl from 9 A.M. until 11 P.M. because your taste buds just can't seem to adapt to Elmer's Glue, which seems to be the cooks' and dieticians' specialty. Nor when the stench comes up from a backed up cesspool, or perhaps it is just the natural odor of our "HOUSING" unit. In any event these things are not debasing or in violation because (I'm sure you all remember) we are "animals," as stated by the Hon. Governor "Big" Jim Thompson. We would be fools to refute this kind of treatment—even wrong, because we all know that "animals" don't have any legal or constitutional rights—unless you are a bald eagle, the American symbol. . .

To take a human and lock them away is to castrate them physically. Now Gayle Franzen has moved a step further, seeking mental castration in his "total" control plan. He has introduced a bill (which the legislature has accepted) to take away all audio and video equipment. The bill is now on "Big" Jim's desk waiting to be signed. It's up to all of us to stop Thompson and Franzen NOW or we are going to look up and see Thompson in the White House and Franzen the governor. . .

IN SOLIDARITY  
THE PONTIAC BROTHERS  
Build to Win . . .  
Brother Elroy Johnson

**PUT THE STATE ON TRIAL!  
FREE THE PONTIAC BROTHERS!  
TEACH-IN SAT. OCT. 13**

**SPEAKERS:  
CHOKWE LUMUMBA, TONY AXAM  
PEGGY SMITH MARTIN**

PPSC is sponsoring an all day teach-in for people who want to build support in the white community for the Pontiac Brothers. It will provide participants with a strong understanding of the case, the Illinois prison system, the death penalty, and the role of Black leadership. Workshops will deal with specific areas. Cost, including meals, will be \$10.



**REGISTER NOW! CALL 427-4064**