

42F

alabama's

We of the IFA (Inmates For Action) feel that an analysis of the present situation within the Alabama penal/plantation system is called for so that the people might better understand what is happening here and see through the lies, distortions and biased reports the Board of Corrections have been manufacturing in order to manipulate public opinion.

The IFA is an organization of prisoners within the penal/plantation system of Alabama whose goal is to change the wretched and inhumane conditions here wherefore our humanity will be recognized and respected and we would be treated as human beings. Thus, our struggle is one of resistance to conditions of slavery, a dungeon like/concentration camp atmosphere, and the denial of our constitutional and human rights

The IFA has established survival programs among its members who live in small collectives, usually in segregation and punitive isolation units. We try to provide prisoners with basic educational skills that officials fail to provide. We educate ourselves and others on all levels and try to instill in each other self-respect, knowledge of self and kind, pride, motivation and human dignity. At present, we hold meetings/classes on Monday, which is Political Education and current events; Tuesday is General Education and Constitutional/legal first aid; Wednesday is a study day; Thursday is Black History; Friday is Revolutionary Theory and the truth of capitalism and its ill effects; Saturday and Sunday are study days also.

GOALS AND PROGRAM

One of our goals is to prepare ourselves for the transition from convict to citizen. We know that we, the prisoners, have been indoctrinated to see ourselves as some type of anti-social creature who are inherently criminal and evil, and have had our thinking restricted within the confines of the convict mentality that has been foisted off on us and we must begin to see ourselves as human beings-human beings who have been victimized by the social conditions created by an exploitative and oppressive system of government. Also, we want to give prisoners a new sense of values and a new perspective. For if we are to become responsible and productive citizens we must acquire an altogether new sense of values, perspective, etc. We seek to rid ourselves of selfishness, individualism, and that dog-eat-dog, every man for himself, capitalist philosophy; so that we might begin to think collectively, relate more to human values, rather than material oriented values, and thus, take an active part in transforming (this) society into one with a socialist basis/economy.

We have a political program of stated issues and demands around which we organize, educate and unify the convicts within Alabama's penal/plantation systems. These issues and demands are concrete, immediate, (transitory to the extent that they are pending the transformation of society). They include better food; adequate and competent medical/health care; upgrading of facilities; improvement and expansion of educational and vocational programs; improved correspondence privileges; more humane and expanded visiting privileges and no less than 3 conjugal visits per year for each inmate; minimum wages for all working inmates as well as the right to join or form labor unions; lowering of prison store prices in accord to



DANNY LYON

the present financial limitations of the inmates along with the equal distribution of store profits (50-50%) divided uniformly between the Inmate Welfare Fund and the Board of Corrections; religious freedom for all faiths; and an inmates' workers insurance program, the members of the parole board be elected to their position by the public.

Along with those we demand the abolition of segregation (lock-up/solitary confinement) and punitive isolation (hole/doghouse) cells; that the state legislature increase the time a convict should have deducted from his sentence to 15 days a month on all sentences and that paroles be mandatory on life sentences after serving 7 years, automatic after a maximum of 10 years; that a legal aid program be established and institutionalized to assist us with our cases, pleadings, appeals, etc; self-determination, that is the creation and establishment of Ombudsman offices and prisoner-elected Inmate Committees to represent within the system, our interests, needs, and desires in the totality of prison life, on disciplinary boards, classification boards, custody boards, parole boards etc., an end to racist, sexist and political persecution, that our humanity be recognized and we receive the same human/constitutional rights and protection as those unincarcerated citizens where we would be treated as human beings instead of Alabama's chattel slaves; and that the death penalty be unconditionally abolished; (that the state finance a community review board which would have the authority to redress prisoners' grievances and to discipline penal officials found acting inhumanely, illegally, or unreasonably); that all further construction of adult prisons, jails, and juvenile training schools should be terminated, and the implementation of community based treatment centers as an alternative to incarceration begin now; that all sentences and trials be fair impartial trials, that is, trials by a jury of our peers (other black or minority people who come from the same economic and social backgrounds) as guaranteed by the constitution; etc.... These are some of the issues and demands we are struggling to implement.

REPRESSION AGAINST THE IFA

The prison officials response has been to harass and beat prisoners for participating in IFA programs. The IFA and its members have been singled out for suppression and have been threatened, intimidated, attacked, beaten and murdered. Officials have compiled a death list of prisoners they intend to kill. All active IFA members have made the death list as well as other inmates who resist or refuse to be broken by submission, or as officials say "who buck the system." Certain inmates have been propositioned by officials to kill so-and-so for the officials and told it would be to their benefit...

cont. on p. 9

atticas

cont. from p. 8

[ed. note: The following is a brief chronology of events preceeding the bringing down of charges against the eleven brothers now facing trials:

Oct. 1972--a list of greivances and demands was prepared by IFA members, Black and white prisoners united to stage a work-stoppage and to protest conditions at Atmore Prison Farm. In the end, the promised reforms were forgotten and the brothers brutally punished.

May, 1973--26 inmates in the segregation unit at Atmore Prison Farm were tear-gassed, stripped nude, and beaten for protesting those same conditions.

Jan. 9, 1974--at Holman Unit Prison, Jesse James Clanzy was beaten, and thought to be dead. Clanzy was beaten. Again beaten, he was thought to be dead.

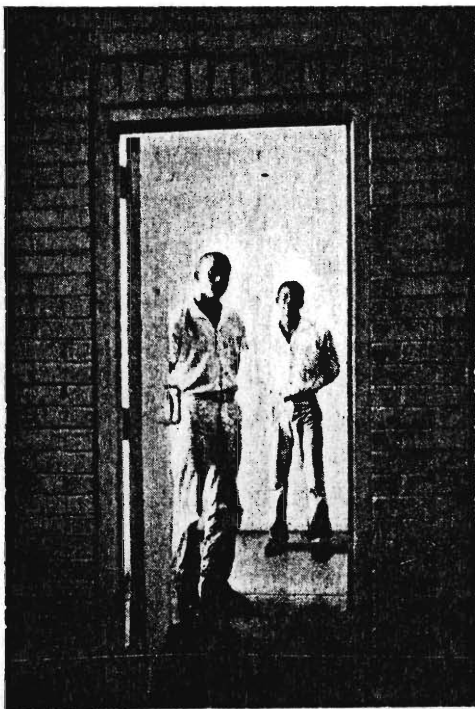
Jan. 18, 1974--Atmore inmates rebell, taking two guards hostage, to try to force the authorities to let them get word out to the public that the prisoners all feared for their lives. The prison authorities responded by rushing the prisoners, shooting, clubbing, screaming "kill them." Brother Chagina (George Dobbins) was shot and subsequently killed while being taken to a hospital. Indictments against seven brothers come out of this incident.

March 12, 1974--a guard died at Holman prison. Three brothers indicted for that, even though they were confined in their cells at the time. A brother, Tommy Lee Dotson (Bro. Yukeena) was beaten to death.

ALABAMA'S ATTICAS - REPORT #2

The state of Alabama is now using its courts against inmates to kill the movement for human rights and simple decency that it could kill with guns, clubs, and knives. It's trying to give one Brother the chair and add decades to the sentences of ten other Brothers, because they organized to demand their rights as human beings inside Alabama's inhuman prisons...

The Brothers who did not die with Chagina and Yukeena are now being tried for murder. Their crime is this: they organized the IFA and refused to submit meekly to the physically brutal and mentally poi-



Danny Lyon.



sonous conditions in the prisons, and later they refused to submit peacefully when guards and troopers in mass attacked them for keeping the IFA alive and continuing to demand their rights. Inside the prisons, the Brothers defended themselves well enough against these attacks that the state decided to step back and transfer its attacks to the courtroom. The Atmore-Holman Brothers need support in the courtroom just as much as they needed it before and will need it later inside the prisons.

A small success has now created a big chance of eventual victory for the Brothers in court, if the people make their voices heard and their presence felt. This Jone the Brothers were supposed to go on trial, near the prisons, in the isolated town of Brewton, the seat of Escambia County, which was the last county in the country to officially free its slaves. In May the court records showed 75 or 80 charges against about 45 "boys", as the court-appointed lawyer called his clients. The charges ranged from riot to first degree murder. But the state dropped most of the charges, leaving the 11 Atmore-Holman Brothers on the docket. Some of the inmates whose charges were dropped are now expected to return the state's favor by testifying against the Brothers. And the attorney general of Alabama has declared that he would come to Brewton and personally mastermind the state's courtroom moves, instead of leaving the Brothers' trials in the hands of the local county prosecutor.

What the officials, from the attorney general on down, did not expect was the anybody else would come to Brewton for the trials. A couple of observers attended the arraignments in May. The courthouse started receiving phone calls: when do the actual trials start, how many seats are there in the courtroom, etc. Legal workers started arriving at the prisons to see the Brothers about their cases. And on the morning of June 11, when the first trial was supposed to start, car-loads of supporters rolled into town...The attorney general decided at the last minute that he just couldn't find the time to make it to Brewton that day. The jurors were given their checks for the jury duty and sent home before noon without doing a lick of work. The judge apparently decided it was a wise time for his summer vacation to start. He called off the trials of all the Atmore-Holman Brothers until Sept. or Oct. The delay was a temporary victory that gives a chance which must not be lost to build a movement for the Atmore-Holman Brothers defense...

And if you can't do anything else at this time, just send some letters to the Brothers. They are locked in isolation cells where it's hard for them to hear the voice of the people in their support. The mailing address for Anthony Paradise, Johnny Harris, Lincoln Heard, Grover McCorvey, Oscar Lee Johnson, George Parker, Charles Beasley, and Johnny Lee Wilson is Rt. 2 box 38, Atmore, Alabama 36502. For Frank X Moore write Rt. 2 box 37, Atmore Alabama 36502. For Edward Ellis and Jessie James Clanzy write Rt. 5 box 125, Montgomery, Alabama 36109.

Faternally yours,
ATMORE HOLMAN BROTHERS DEFENSE COMMITTEE
1260 Davis Avenue
Mobile, Alabama 36603