

# FREE GERONIMO PRATT

Elmer Geronimo Pratt, an outspoken fighter for the liberation of Black people, has been a target for over a decade of COINTELPRO, the FBI-leg counter-insurgency program. For almost nine years he has been held as a Prisoner of War in California state penitentiaries -- more than seven of those years in solitary confinement. Now, through the efforts of the National Task Force for COINTELPRO Litigation and Research and Geronimo himself, the illegality and injustice of his confinement have begun to come to light. It has become clear that the FBI, Justice Dept., California state police, prison authorities and attorney general have conspired to deprive Geronimo of his human rights. It has finally been revealed that:



--the FBI lied about the fact that Geronimo was under surveillance at the time he allegedly committed a murder

--the state attorney general's office covered up this and other vital evidence and had to be held in contempt of court

--FBI and state prison authorities set up and tried to entrap Geronimo in an attempted jail-break

--an FBI informant infiltrated and worked on Geronimo's defense team.

This evidence, as shocking as it may be, is still just the tip of the iceberg of the U.S. government's counter-insurgency war against Geronimo and the entire Black liberation struggle.

The conspiracy against Geronimo began when he was a leader of the Black Panther Party in 1969. In 1967, J. Edgar Hoover issued a directive initiating a national program "to expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit or otherwise neutralize Black nationalist organizations." The FBI expanded its program in the next few years in an explicit attempt to "prevent the rise" of leaders who could unite the movement and, specifically, create "imaginative and hard-hitting counterintelligence programs aimed at crippling the Black Panther Party. Geronimo Pratt is such a leader -- a man who has consistently struggled for the necessity of Black people to fight for their liberation. He has also been a champion of the human rights of political prisoners and POWs like himself, who have borne the brunt of "counter-intelligence" programs.

Geronimo, in fact, has committed no crime and is only in prison as a result of COINTELPRO. In December 1969 the L.A. police staged a military assault on the Black Panther Party office, similar to the raid a few days earlier in Chicago in which Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were killed. Unlike the Chicago raid, the Black Panther Party members inside the L.A. office were able to defend themselves and successfully hold off the police until community residents forced the police to stop shooting. There is direct evidence that the FBI hoped Geronimo would be killed or at least "neutralized" in this raid. Failing at this they continued to harass and threaten him, finally succeeding in framing him for a 1970 murder, despite testimony that he was 350 miles away at the time.

Geronimo's case is far from unique. Assata Shakur, a revolutionary Black woman, was imprisoned for 6½ years under similar circumstances. Despite overwhelming evidence of her innocence -- including acquittals in 6 trials -- Assata was being held under a life plus thirty year sentence. On May 2, 1979 the armed forces of the Black liberation Movement were able to free Assata and defeat this particular COINTELPRO strategy. Geronimo's continued imprisonment is part of the government's attack on the growing strength of the Black liberation movement. But COINTELPRO's attempt to "criminalize" the activities of revolutionary Black leaders, to isolate them from their communities and support has not been able to stop the intensification of the Black nation's struggle for human rights. On November 5, 1979, led by the National Black Human Rights Coalition, thousands of Black people from all over the U.S. marched on the United Nations under the banner of self-determination and an end to the genocide of the Black nation. This demonstration brought international attention to the existence of political prisoners and Prisoners of War in the U.S.

It is clear that Black people are determined to defend and free POWs, leaders of the struggle against U.S. imperialism, by any means necessary. Most white people, however, have refused to support the struggle to free Geronimo Pratt and other Afrikan POWs such as Assata Shakur, Dhoruba Moore, Sundiata Acoli and the Republic of New Afrika II. This collaboration with COINTELPRO concretely aids the FBI's conspiracy to attack revolutionary Black leadership. FBI documents and files show how COINTELPRO counts on the white supremacy of the left and other forces to carry out its programs. As the government reiterates its position that Geronimo Pratt will not be released despite the tremendous amount of evidence, progressive white people must take an active position in support of his immediate release. Under the leadership of the Black liberation movement and the particular work of the National Task Force, we must fight against the government's cover-up and organize political and financial support for the battle to free Geronimo Pratt and all Afrikan POWs. The fight against COINTELPRO is part of the overall struggle of the Black nation for human rights and self-determination. It is a struggle which demands the support of all progressive people.

FREE GERONIMO PRATT!

FREE THE RNA-11, DHORUBA MOORE, SUNDIATA ACOLI AND ALL AFRIKAN POWs!

SMASH COINTELPRO!

DEFEAT US IMPERIALISM!

For further information please contact: Committee for the Suit Against Government Misconduct, PO Box 254, Peter Stuyvesant Station, New York, NY 10009

Contributions to the struggle to free Geronimo Pratt may be sent to: National Task Force for COINTELPRO Litigation and Research, PO Box 65, Bronx, N.Y. 10473.