

C O P Y

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Dear Comrade Brothers and Sisters:

I am a Black political prisoner at the U.S. P. Marion, Illinois. Enclosed is a draft proposal for a National AFRICAN PRISONERS' ORGANIZATION/BLACK COALITION AGAINST REPRESSION. It is my hope that the entire Black movement will study this proposal, and more importantly, implement it! We owe it to ourselves.

Prison support groups, political prisoner defense organizations, Black community groups, National Black social, political, and religious organizations, and last but not least, prisoners inside, must unite into a powerful force and confront the government over its repression of the Black movement, and fight for the enactment of a Prisoners' Bill of Rights and General Amnesty for all Black political prisoners and frame-up victims.

We must make this proposal widely known: public it in Black newspapers, magazines, newsletters, professional and theoretical journals, and even in pamphlet form. Duplicate the proposal and send copies to Black groups, institutions, and individuals all over the country. Get this paper before as many Black people as possible!

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A DRAFT PROPOSAL FOR A NATIONAL
AFRICAN PRISONER ORGANIZATION//
BLACK COALITION AGAINST REPRESSION

I. BLACK COALITION AGAINST REPRESSION

The Black Liberation Movement of the 1960's was decimated by U.S. government repression. In fact, the activities of the government resembled (and in fact was) a secret war against Black leaders, activists, and organizations. Bugging and wire-tapping, spying and entrapment, interception and theft of mail, burglary and sabotage, writing and sending "poison pen" letters, infiltration and disruption of group meetings by police agents and informers, frame-up and railroading of political activists through the courts, false imprisonment, character assassination by agents in the news media; all this and more--even murder--was committed by U.S. government secret police agencies against the Black Liberation movement. Hundreds were killed, fired from their jobs, and imprisoned as a result of these government crimes. The Black Panther Party, the leading Black revolutionary organization of the 1960's, was seriously crippled and discredited.

Yet the agencies responsible, the CIA, FBI, and the "Red Squads" of the major metropolitan police departments, have never been brought to justice, and it merely serves to prove that we cannot depend upon the white Capitalist government to police itself. Therefore it becomes the responsibility for the Black movement to raise and assert these issues. We need and must build a Black anti-repression coalition to confront the government over these crimes, and to educate our people about how the government operates, (and has operated in the past), to crush the Black Liberation Movement and kill its leaders. Further, we as revolutionary political activists, need to deeply study these repressive techniques so that we can defend ourselves and our movement in the future. We should never again be caught ignorant of government repressive tactics, and our main task now is to fight back! We must show the people who the real criminals are, and in the process reestablish our credibility and respect in the Black community, now filled with cynicism and defeatism. And we must protect our future leadership and organizations from attack.

Such a coalition should fight to end the death penalty (which is genocidal and discriminatory toward Black people), as well as against the racist judicial railroading of Black victims to savage sentences of 30-100 years of life imprisonment. It should demand the abolition of all political police organizations and an end to government political and racial repression, as well as the exposure and expulsion of all secret police informers and agents provocateurs in Black organizations, and the financial compensation, immediate release from imprisonment, and professional rehabilitation of all victims of government crimes. Such a coalition should also work against

the passage of reactionary legislation like S.1437, which is a further threat to Black civil liberties, and should fight for the rights of Black workers and students, whose rights to equal employment and education are under attack by the Bakke court case and other racist methods. Finally, one of the most important functions of such a Coalition will be educational, therefore a permanent Investigating Committee should be established, made up of Black community leaders, organizations, and residents to investigate the deaths of Black political leaders like Malcolm X, Dr. Martin Luther King, George Jackson, and Fred Hampton, among others, and also investigate police crimes and official corruption in the Black community; the Attica massacre, the violent suppression of the Black Panther Party, and other incidents as they may occur. Such an investigating committee would hold public hearings in the Black community, and will distribute a report and its verdict to major Black organizations, the Black and white newsmedia, the Black community-at-large, and to public officials, with the demand that the criminals be prosecuted by the government or that they will be put under Black Citizen's Arrest and given revolutionary justice by a Black People's court. Further, in the future, we must exercise armed self-defense to retaliate against such attacks.

One of our most important tasks is to free all Black political prisoners and victims of racial injustice, who are languishing in prison cells all across the country: the Wilmington 10, Gary Tyler, Dessie Woods, Charles Merritt, Assata Shakur, Dhoruba Moore, Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt, Sundiata Acoli, and so many others. They desperately need our help. We must build a Black mass movement to expose and counter government crimes, and to free all Black political prisoners and victims of racial injustice. We must call for general amnesty (complete and unconditional) for all political prisoners and racial frame-up victims. We must write protest letters, circulate petitions, demonstrate in the thousands, take armed support actions, lead strikes, everything (!); everything that we can possibly do to free our people and stop this oppression. Hopefully, through tying this issue with the overall Black social and economic plight, we will be able to revitalize and rekindle the tremendous momentum of the Black Liberation Movement of the 1960s and take it to its final conclusion: freedom and Socialism.

Finally, it must be said that the entire capitalist judicial and penal system is racist and biased to the core, and only serves as an instrument for racial and economic class oppression, and state slavery. Therefore it is the bounden duty of the Black Liberation Movement to support Black prisoners; to expose and struggle against Capitalist economic and political servitude (which causes crimes of survival, i.e., "hustling", and also Black-on-Black attacks), as well as to fight government repression. The repression has fallen most heavily on the Black movement, but also the criminal "justice" system victimizes young Blacks more than

any other category of offenders. Black youth are most likely to be arrested by racist cops, railroaded in the racist courts, and sent to prison or given the death penalty. Once put in prison they are likely to serve a much longer sentence because of the racist parole boards, and if sentenced to death, are more likely to be executed. Therefore inside the prisons, Black prisoners suffer under a double yoke of racism and repression, from both white racist prisoners and guards. Every year hundreds of Black prisoners are killed in a vicious, racist fashion by either white prisoners and/or guards. Racist organizations, such as the Ku Klux Klan, American Nazis, John Birch Society, National States Rights Party, and others, have strong support among white guards and prisoners, and further, have organized branches in the prisons. All this adds up to genocide (!), and we must must stop it if we are to further survive.

II. NATIONAL AFRICAN PRISONERS ORGANIZATION

We, as Black revolutionaries, must demand and struggle for an end to phoney arrests, judicial frame-ups and railroadings of Black people, as well as for the abolition of prisons. The struggle for justice is never-ending, and since we know that prisons are an essential instrument of white capitalist rule, we must demand that prisoners be given a "BILL OF RIGHTS" to protect their humanity while they are in prison and to secure their early release. A Bill of Rights would contain such things as:

- * A mandatory and uniform sentencing policy, which would eliminate sentence disparity, and thus favoritism based on race and class;

- * The elimination of the racist and bureaucratic parole board, and the mandatory release of all prisoners at the end of the service of $1/3$ of their sentence or after 5 years imprisonment, whichever is less;

- * The immediate release of all prisoners who have served 10 years or more of continuous prison confinement; thus putting an end to perpetual imprisonment, "sealed" life, natural life, and other forms of life-long slavery;

- * That all prisoners who have served their sentences be given a Certificate of Rehabilitation, which would act as an expungement order of the conviction, pardon, and would restore all their civil and human rights;

- * An end to probation and parole supervision/spying, and the odious practice of "violation" and thus return to jail or prison on "technical grounds". A released prisoner could only be returned to prison for the commission of another offense.

* The immediate release of all prisoners over the age of 55; any prisoner who has a serious, life threatening, terminal, or permanently disabling mental or physical disease or injury;

* The right to immediate and competent medical attention for any injured or sick prisoner, and to have access to medical personnel 24 hours-a-day. The right to full medical and dental treatment, including the right to choose and consult with a personal physician.

* The right to full religious and political freedom, including the right to hold unhindered, unsupervised group meetings. An end to harassment of Muslims, Church of the New Song, Black Culture programs, revolutionary collectives, communist study groups and others. An end to using a prisoner's religious or political beliefs as a basis of denying parole.

* The abolition of all prison censorship of literature, unless it is determined by court order to be a clear and present danger to prison security. End censorship of newspapers, magazines, letters, and other publications coming from the publisher.

* The abolition of all organized racist groups among white guards and prisoners, an end to racist attacks on Black prisoners, and the investigation of such attacks and deaths by an independent community investigating committee.

* Provide adequate (and properly cooked) food, clothing, and shelter for all prisoners.

* Allow unhindered access to the press, through both personal uncensored interviews and written articles.

* An end to guard brutality, i.e., torture, beatings, forced rectal examinations, murder, etc.;

* Regular opportunity for conjugal visitation by the granting of home furloughs.

* The absolute right to funeral trips or sick bedside visits whenever the family member of any prisoner is seriously ill or has died. Such trip or visit would be totally at government expense.

* An end to solitary confinement; and isolation for no more than 30 days, unless by court order.

* The right to be present during all security searches (shake-downs) of cells.

* Unrestricted ability to petition for a redress of grievances. The creation of an independent non-governmental agency, the National Grievance Commission, to investigate prisoner's complaints against guards or prison conditions. The employment of a team of Ombudsmen to investigate, resolve, and fully settle complaints, who would be empowered to file a civil service complaint against prison personnel and secure disciplinary action, including dismissal of employment.

* Full rights of communication, including the right to unhindered, unrestricted phone calls at own expense; the right to visit anyone in the free society (unless it can be proven that such person's visit is for criminal activity); the right to send and receive mail from anyone.

* An end to medical experimentation and behavior modification in prisons. The immediate closing of all coercive behavior modification units, full financial compensation to the victims, and their immediate release from custody. Criminal prosecution of all prison officials responsible for the management of such units for violating the civil rights of prisoners, 18 U.S. Code, Section 241, and the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

* An end to mail censorship. Prisoners must be allowed the right to correspond with anyone without restriction.

* The right to organize Unions (and other workers' associations), and to receive the minimum wage for all prison labor performed, workmen's compensation, social security, unemployment assistance. End slave labor!

* These are just some of the demands for a Prisoners' Bill of Rights. This would amount to a "human rights" program for American prisoners-of-war in America! But even the most progressive program would only constitute a mass of words on paper as long as the prison movement does not act to enforce it and demand change. Whether the courts give favorable rulings for prisoner's rights, whether Congress or the state legislatures pass favorable legislation improving prison conditions and safeguarding prisoner's rights, and whether the President orders any political prisoners released is entirely dependent upon the strength of the prison movement. Prison support groups, prisoners inside, and their families outside, must unite into a powerful force and fight for the enactment of the Bill of Rights and general amnesty. Rights for prisoners are not ends in themselves, but once established, should be tools prisoners can use in influencing public policy about the penal system and in defending themselves against an oppressive bureaucratic system. To that end we must furiously work!

CONCLUSION

As has been previously pointed out, it was the Black Liberation Movement which has borne the brunt of government repression. But the Black movement of today has lain dormant instead of challenging the U.S. government about its crimes, and as a result white socialist groups like the Socialist Workers Party, and the Communist Party-led "National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression" are the ones raising the issue. They are fighting the fight that we should be fighting! We cannot therefore complain about our struggle being "coopted" if we do not seriously assert our right to leadership; we must struggle! We (Blacks) are the ones who have been killed, beaten, framed-up and imprisoned, not the white socialist groups; they were merely spied on and had "dirty tricks" played on them; in our case the intent was to crush the life out of our movement altogether. We suffered the most, so we should scream the loudest!

An opportunity exists now to turn our setbacks into victories. The disclosures since the Watergate scandal about secret police crises and government corruption have caused the capitalist government to be on the defensive, and provides a perfect opportunity to further weaken its credibility and moral authority to such an extent that it may never recover. We must act now, however, as we may never get another opportunity!