

SOLIDARITY STATEMENT TO THE APRIL 19th DEMONSTRATION FROM
NORTH AMERICAN ANTI-IMPERIALIST POLITICAL PRISONERS

April 19, 1986

We send our solidarity and love to all the friends and comrades demonstrating today, to all the brothers at Marion, to all New Afrikan, Puerto Rican, Mexicano and Native American political prisoners and Prisoners of War, to other North American political prisoners, and to all the revolutionary armed clandestine organizations in the field. We send our appreciation, too, for all the support this demonstration gives us in our struggles as North American political prisoners.

We join wholeheartedly in the campaign to end the Marion lockdown and oppose the construction of maxi-maxi units. These units are aptly named "control" units. Units to extend and tighten the control of US imperialism against Third World peoples, against oppressed nations. Units to perfect the colonialist and repressive prison system to threaten and try to destroy the will of the masses, of the oppressed nations to fight for their human rights and human dignity. Units to "modify the behavior" of the oppressed nations, to try to destroy the will to resist oppression.

These units expose the US government's program of repression and counter-insurgency. They are units to try and isolate and silence POWs and political prisoners. Units to subject revolutionary combatants to systematic, sensory deprivation and other vicious and insidious forms of torture. Units to try to rob the revolutionary struggles of some of their strongest and exemplary leadership. The units are designed to try to control the inexorable advance of the struggles of oppressed nations for national independence and self-determination. They are units to try to stem the initiation of a combative tradition of proletarian internationalism and socialist revolution within the oppressor nation.

Until the 1980s, the US government was able to isolate and to attack women political prisoners on a one-by-one basis. Women were thrown into the control unit, Davis Hall, at Alderson, a prison within a prison, or have been held, like Assata Shakur, in men's prisons. Since the capture of 5 Puerto Rican POWs six years ago, the Bureau of Prisons has begun to develop special maxi-maxi units to isolate women Prisoners of War and political prisoners from the general population. MCC-Tucson is such a unit. Puerto Rican POW Alejandrina Torres and anti-imperialist political prisoner Susan Rosenberg are held there today. A more permanent maxi-maxi unit is under construction at Lexington. Completely underground, it is modeled after Marion.

The US government has attacked many heroic women POWs and political prisoners, through sexual harassment, assault and degradation. These attacks are aimed at diffusing the powerful role and example of revolutionary women who fight for the liberation of their colonized nation and who fight against this imperialist system. The large number of women POWs and political prisoners speak to the essential role of women in our revolution. There will be no victory for oppressed nations or for socialist revolution without the full equality, liberation, and participation of women. Among us are workers, mothers, wives, lesbians, organizers, theoreticians and guerrillas, with long histories of fighting for national liberation and self-determination, and an end to class exploitation, white supremacy and women's subjugation.

The imperialists have never been able to succeed in these counter-insurgency goals-- not when they tortured Sekou Odinga in New York in 1981, not when they assassinated Angel Rodriguez Cristobal in Tallahassee in 1979. Not when they sexually attacked Alejandrina Torres in Chicago in 1984. Not when they captured Mutulu Shakur in Los Angeles earlier this year. The "control units" are a more technologically sophisticated, systematic way to do what they have failed to do before, will fail at again, but will keep trying to do in their need to maintain empire. Each capture of revolutionary Prisoners of War, each political prisoner locked up has been a blow. But the imperialist state has never been able to make these captures, trials, long sentences, or physical and psychological attacks on revolutionary prisoners add up to a real defeat, for any of the revolutionary movements, nor for the development of revolutionary armed struggle. As revolutionaries of the oppressor nation have been captured and imprisoned over the past few years, we have been able to look to the lessons and examples of New Afrikan, Puerto Rican, Mexicano and Native American comrades to help us, too, to learn to turn setbacks into advances.

We have looked to the BLA, who showed us that revolutionary struggle advances in an uneven path, that in order To Build To Win, you must put ideology into practice -- that if a movement's goal is to avoid risk, sacrifice and possible set-backs, then that movement can never hope to advance against the enemy. We have looked to the FALN and all the Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and armed clandestine organizations who have shown that by upholding the revolutionary principles and ideology of a movement, by an unrelenting struggle against reformism and opportunism, the capture of combatants can be turned into a weapon to build stronger support for a revolutionary strategy. We've looked to the exemplary practice of the POWs and political prisoners of all the national liberation struggles, who have never ceased to play an active role in their nations' struggles, who have resisted all attempts by the state to weaken and destroy them, or to divide them from their struggles; who have set an example of courage and creativity in fighting for their human rights and their dignity; who have never stopped fighting for their freedom; who have inspired others to take up the revolutionary struggle. They show why US counter-insurgency programs are fundamentally incapable of defeating national liberation and revolution.

We take this occasion to reaffirm our commitment to fight at every level and on every front to defeat US imperialism, in solidarity with the struggles for national liberation, independence and self-determination.

We would also like to address a few words to the North American friends and comrades here today.

One of the best strengths of the movement we've built has been the struggle to consistently support the right of oppressed nations to self-determination, support for POWs and political prisoners of the national liberation struggles, and recognition of the role they play in advancing their nations' strategies of revolutionary armed struggle and popular Peoples War against colonialism and imperialism. The necessity has arisen also to support imprisoned white revolutionary comrades captured in the course of fighting imperialism and building revolutionary anti-imperialist armed clandestine organizations. Enthusiastic support for these comrades will build our movement's ability to fight imperialist repression and help build a revolutionary resistance movement. It will reflect our movement's serious commitment to fighting imperialism and white supremacy with revolutionary character and determination, as well as our understanding that fighting for women's liberation is an inseparable element in any revolutionary anti-imperialist strategy. Support for North American political prisoners will help to advance the consciousness of the oppressor nation anti-imperialist movement to make socialist revolution, and to fight in solidarity with national liberation.

The brothers who have endured and resisted the brutal conditions of isolation and 23½-hour lockdown at Marion for the past two years have provided all of us with an example of the strength and courage it takes to struggle for human rights against US imperialism. What a stark contrast: on the one hand the dignity, courage, endurance and strength of the brothers; on the other, the decadence and viciousness of a system that fears and imprisons the oppressed with more and more high-tech weapons of repression. Who can doubt the ultimate outcome of a struggle between these two forces?

We urge that those of you here today see this demonstration as the beginning of a concerted campaign to shut down and stop future maxi-maxi units. This is a winnable struggle if taken on in a determined, organized manner. We can learn from the successful challenge, led by the Puerto Rican Independence movement, that won the transfer of Puerto Rican POWs, Lucy Rodriguez and Haydee Torres, and the closing of the special unit within Davis Hall in Alderson; from the hunger strike and campaign that won the transfer of Native American POW Leonard Peltier from the Marion control unit; and from the relentless battle waged by all the brothers in the Marion control unit who are the front line in this battle. Just as the stakes in this battle are high, for the lives of the captive revolutionaries are at stake, the potential gains are also great: building support for political prisoners and Prisoners of War, defeating a key counter-insurgency weapon of the enemy, and showing the seriousness of our movement to defend the captive fighters. In this context, we add our support to the demands of the immediate transfer of New Afrikan POWs Sekou Odinga and Sundiata Acoli out of Marion. DARE TO STRUGGLE, DARE TO WIN!

STOP THE MARION LOCKDOWN!
NO CONTROL UNITS!
FREE ALL PRISONERS OF WAR AND POLITICAL PRISONERS!
VICTORY TO NATIONAL LIBERATION!
DEFEAT US IMPERIALISM!
STOP THE US IMPERIALIST WAR AGAINST LIBYA!
BUILD A REVOLUTIONARY RESISTANCE MOVEMENT!

Judy Clark
David Gilbert
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Susan Rosenberg
Tim Blunk
Alan Berkman
Laura Whitehorn
Marilyn Buck
Linda Evans
Shelley Miller