

# Prisoners Solidarity Committee

Second 8-page newsletter on Attica

Letters  
from  
Attica

pp.4-5

Attica  
executions,  
terror,  
continue

Over a week after the Attica massacre, word has leaked out (both through inmates and lawyers) that not all the prisoners who died were killed during the assault on the prison September 13. It is now known that several men who were leaders of the rebellion were alive after the assault, only to be executed and reported dead several days later.

According to Tom Soto of the Pri-

Attica  
since the  
Massacre

soners Solidarity Committee, who was in Attica during the rebellion at the request of the prisoners, Assemblyman Arthur O. Eve, State Senator Garcia, and Representative Herman Badillo all reported privately that they saw Elliot Barkley alive after the police assault.

"They told me," said Soto, "that when they were taken into D Block by Assistant Commissioner of Corrections Dunbar on the Monday morning of the massacre, they saw four inmates lying naked, face down on the ground. One of them was Barkley, and Eve said he was alive. Dunbar told them that these were the prisoners who had done the throat-slashing and castrating of the hostages (later to be exposed as a complete lie)."

The questions now remain: When was Elliot Barkley murdered and by whom?

(continued on PSC 3)



# Oppressed bury their Attica dead

by JOHN DIAZ

NEW YORK, Sept. 25—A funeral march and rally were held in Brooklyn today sponsored by a coalition of about twenty-two groups, among them the New York and New Jersey Chapters of the Black Panther Party, the Young Lords Party, Black Liberation Party, Committee against Attica Massacre, Republic of New Africa, and many others. The march, held in honor of six of the murdered brothers of Attica, also contained a contingent from the Prisoners Solidarity Committee.

On Friday, Sept. 24, the day before the march, the caskets of the murdered prisoners were taken from a funeral home in Manhattan and brought to the Sumner Armory in Brooklyn after the relatives forced their way in. The funeral services originally were to be held at the Sumner Armory, but this had to be changed to the Cornerstone Baptist Church on the corner of Madison and Lewis, because Rockefeller, even after murdering the prisoners, wouldn't allow their families to use the Armory.

On Saturday, the caskets were to be driven from the church to Fulton and Flatbush for the funeral march. At about 12:30 the cars arrived with the caskets. People lined up along the sidewalk with their clenched fists raised in solidarity as the cars slowly moved past them. One could

notice great sorrow on the almost expressionless faces of the people, but it was also evident that they were very angry because of the Attica massacre.

As the last car drove by, the people fell in behind it to begin their march through Bedford-Stuyvesant to the church. The marchers moved on, clapping and chanting "Remember the massacre—Remember Attica," while people from the community gathered along the sidewalks raising their clenched fists in solidarity. Many joined us in the march.

Just before arriving at the church, the caskets were removed from the cars and carried the rest of the way. Five of the caskets were covered with the Black Liberation flag and one with the Puerto Rican flag. They were set up on the altar in front of a speaking platform. Brothers and Sisters from the Panther Party were stationed around the altar on security, with rifles and Black Liberation flags.

At one point the church was packed with about two thousand people, with at least another thousand outside. Some of the speakers were relatives of the brothers who died in the Attica rebellion.

## BODY MIXUP

Thomas Hicks was supposedly one of the slain brothers of Attica. But his immediate family said that the body Rockefeller's government had sent as Tom Hicks was not Hicks at all. Tom had been shot in the mouth a few years back by a pig. As a result he had two front teeth missing. He also had a pierced ear.

But the body which had been sent had all its teeth and no pierced ear. So the question is, where is Tom Hicks? and who is this dead brother? To add to the mystery, the Prisoners Solidarity Committee received a letter on Saturday, Sept. 25, from a brother in Attica who was involved in the rebellion (we won't mention his name for fear of reprisals against him). He had heard that Tom Hicks was on the list of dead, but had seen Tom Hicks alive after the assault in Attica had taken place. He also saw him alive, in the custody of guards, one hour after they had been locked up in their cells. So we ask again, where is Tom Hicks?

After the rally at the church ended, the caskets were put back on the cars. Three of them had to be taken to a medical examiner to be fingerprinted to try to get proper and positive identification of them. The other three were taken to Frederick Douglass Cemetery on Staten Island where they were buried. The six slain brothers were: John Barnes, Harold Thomas, Rafael Vasquez, Manuel Johnson, Frank Williams, and an unknown brother who was supposed to be Thomas Hicks.

AVENGE ATTICA—TEAR THE PRISONS DOWN!



People raise fists in solidarity with slain prisoners.

## Harlem honors Attica

by JOHN DIAZ

NEW YORK, Sept. 18—Ever since the heroic rebellion at Attica and the brutal massacre that followed on September 13, there have been demonstrations, protests, marches, and rallies all over the country. One of these was a protest march and rally which took place in Harlem today. The demonstration was sponsored by about 40 Third World organizations and was one of the largest protests that Harlem has seen in recent years.

The march started from two different points, one at 138th Street and the other at 110th Street and converged at 125th Street and 7th Avenue into a massive rally. About 600 people began marching from 110th Street. Brightly colored banners of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee and the Third World Caucus of Youth Against War & Fascism were visible for passersby to see. They read "Prisons are concentration camps for the poor," and "Free all political prisoners." As the march grew, angry demonstrators chanted: "Remember Attica!" and "1, 2, 3, 4, open up the prison doors!" People from

the community gathered on the sidewalks all along the way and responded with shouts of "Right on" and with clenched fists. Their solidarity was so great that large numbers of them joined us in the march, and by the time it reached 125th Street, the march had grown to about 1,500 people.

The rally commenced with a speech given by Tom Soto of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee, who had been on the observers' committee in Attica during the rebellion. The crowd loudly applauded as Tom said, "I went to Attica as a representative of the PSC at the request of the brothers in Attica. My sole purpose there was to articulate their demands and to unconditionally support them. I was not there to compromise their demands or their lives."

Waiting to speak after Soto was Basil Patterson, a Black politician who ran for lieutenant governor on the Democratic Party ticket in 1970. As he climbed onto the platform, however, the crowd greeted him by chanting "No politicians, no politicians!" A vote was taken and the people voted against having



Harlem marchers condemn Rockefeller.

LNS Women's Graphics

any politicians speak at the rally.

After the no-politicians vote was taken, Hassan Sharrief El-Shabazz spoke. Hassan, a former inmate at Auburn and Attica and a member of the PSC, is the only brother from the Auburn 6 who is out on bail. (The Auburn 6 are six prisoners framed up on assault charges following a rebellion in Auburn prison last November.) Carmene Garrigia, the wife of an Attica inmate, followed Hassan with a brief talk. Among the other speakers were William Kunstler, Juan Fi Ortiz from the Young Lords Party, and Kinshasa from the New

York 21.

The rally lasted a few hours. The people had come out in large numbers and their interest, their anger, their unity, their awareness, and their class solidarity were clearly visible in the speeches, in the people's chants, in their comments, and especially in their militancy. They made it clear that the heroic struggle of the brothers in Attica would never be forgotten and that the day will come when we will tear the prisons down. ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE! REMEMBER ATTICA!



# Prison rebellions erupt nationwide

In the wake of the Attica massacre, prison rebellions spread like wildfire across the United States, as the country's 200,000 prisoners expressed their solidarity with the Attica rebellion. The 13 reported rebellions since the Attica massacre doubles the total number of reported prison rebellions since the beginning of this year.

▲ At Parish Prison in New Orleans, La., 267 inmates broke cell doors, damaged plumbing, and set fires in protest over Attica and their own imprisonment. One floor of the prison was held by 54 inmates for over 18 hours.

▲ At Norfolk Prison in Massachusetts, 400 prisoners went on strike against the prison's factories on September 27 in support of 22 demands for reforms and amnesty. After a three-hour meeting with state officials, Lester Richards, chairman of the inmate council, announced that the grievances were being handled by negotiating committees. An inmate spokesman said, however, that the prisoners "were just about to explode

if something isn't done."

▲ At Walpole State Prison in Massachusetts, about 200 inmates also staged a day-long strike against the prison factories on September 27.

▲ At Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary, prisoners went on strike against the prison's factories.

▲ The prison at Atlanta, Georgia, was also the scene of a protest strike against the Attica massacre and similar conditions prevailing there.

▲ In Terre Haute, Indiana, prisoners launched another protest strike.

▲ At Wayne County Jail in Detroit, over one hundred police armed with shotguns and tear gas surrounded the prison on September 13 in anticipation of a rumored rebellion planned to protest Attica. Inside, a "shake-down" was carried on.

▲ At the Women's Prison in Alderson, West Virginia, 37 women, "the more vocal, revolutionary types," as one prison official put it,

rebelled against being transferred to maximum security prisons, until finally subdued by pepper gas.

Throughout New York State, billionaire Gov. Rockefeller ordered all prisoners kept under tight security restrictions. Nevertheless, prison rebellions continued:

▲ At Clinton Prison in Dannemora, N.Y., 250 prisoners, some wearing black armbands, tried to march on the mess hall on September 15 after hearing about Attica, before being turned back by shotgun-carrying prison guards and state troopers.

▲ At the Great Meadow Prison in Comstock, New York, about 75 inmates rebelled for three hours on September 15, throwing bottles and setting fires.

▲ At Elmira Prison, New York, about 200 prisoners staged a protest of several hours on September 14, chanting slogans in their cells expressing solidarity with Attica inmates.

## Chicago responds to Attica

CHICAGO, Sept. 18—Rockefeller's brutal massacre at Attica Prison prompted the Chicago Prisoners Solidarity Committee to sponsor a demonstration at 12:00 noon Saturday at the Federal Building. A picket line was started with approximately 150 people and soon grew to a crowd of close to 400.

Chanting loudly, the militant group marched out of the Federal Building and through the Loop (which is always bustling with shoppers on Saturdays). A lot of the onlookers were young and Black, but even the old and the white responded with cheers, "Right On!", etc., as demonstrators marched down State Street chanting "Attica's Blood on Rockefeller's Hands"; "Support Heroes of Attica—To Rebel Is Justified"; "Hey Hey Ho Ho, Racist Prisons Got to Go."

After marching around the Civic Center once, the crowd gathered there for a rally. The speakers included representatives from Rising Up Angry, the Prisoners Solidarity Committee, the Iranian Students, and the Black Panther Party. Jeff

Sarles spoke for the Prisoners Solidarity Committee and gave a report on Tom Soto's observations and experiences after spending a night with the prisoners in Attica. He ended by saying the prison cells are already overcrowded, but "we should use these cells to lock up the few billionaires who make up the American ruling class."

Harold Bell of the Black Panther Party directed his speech against the Progressive Labor Party, which had been very disruptive at the demonstration. Bell pointed out that Bobby Seale was requested by the prisoners to be on the negotiating committee and that PL had received no such request. He looked at the PL contingent when he announced that "we don't need any reactionary criticism in the Black community."

The Chicago Prisoners Solidarity Committee views this demonstration as only the first step in the long struggle against the fascist prison system.

Tear Down the Jails!  
All Power to the People!



Rally of 2000 at Capital steps in Albany hear Tom Soto of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee tell of Attica atrocities.

## -Terror continues

(continued from PSC I)

Several reports from Attica indicate that others were also summarily executed inside Attica's walls after the Monday attack. A letter from an Attica inmate to the Prisoners Solidarity Committee (see centerfold for full text of the letter) reveals that Tom Hicks was also alive Monday morning one hour after the takeover of the prison—"I know," wrote this prisoner, "I seen him."

The reign of terror in Attica continues, "I'm still awaiting my turn to die," wrote the above prisoner to the PSC. "My brothers and I (how many I can't say) who are in segregation are branded as leaders (chalked X on our backs)."

Still another prisoner who was recently transferred from Attica told a relative that after the police and troopers took control of D Block, inmates from C Block who

were in solitary confinement during the rebellion were taken into the yard, stripped naked, and used as target practice. (Although those in solitary did not take part in the rebellion, many of them are known to the prison authorities as militant and political.) One inmate saw a guard with a rifle aimed at another prisoner. When he stepped in front of the brother, he himself was shot and killed.

Lawyers who have been allowed to interview Attica prisoners have reported that the men told them of the torture and beatings they have endured since the retaking of the prison. The guards forced the men to crawl around naked, as they were being kicked in the faces, burned with cigarettes, and jabbed with clubs. The men were forced to run a gauntlet of guards who clubbed them in a racist frenzy.

It appears now that the list of dead inmates was not immediately released because the prison authorities wanted to cover up the executions later on. "The story about inmates hiding in tunnels," said Soto, "made it possible for the guards to torture and murder more prisoners without their families or supporters knowing what happened to them."





## Statement of

## Attica Liberation Faction

Following are extensive excerpts from a statement drawn up by the inmates of Attica prison in the week following the massacre. It was given to lawyers who were able to get into the prison to see the inmates. The statement was released September 22.

ATTICA, New York (LNS)—We are making this statement to expose the vicious political machine that exists in all New York State prisons. We at this time intend to clog the wheels of that machine....

We are not criminals, nor are we enemies of the people. Government and public institutions are established to serve and promote the needs and welfare of the people. Why must they subjugate and exploit us through the labor process and oppress the people of America through increasing taxes, paying for emergency health care, transportation, housing, food, etc., when everything is "pay on the spot" or credit with interest. Looking at this objectively, this capitalist system creates opposing tendencies among ourselves; examples: racial, religious, and class biases. Our job as concerned people is to expose the system, which is really run by approximately 400 families (DuPonts, Rockefellers, Fords, Mellons, etc.) and show that these people, a minority, are only a breed infected by money and have no concern whatever for the people in general. True, we have truthful representatives in our government. However, they are puppets whose strings are pulled by that monopoly of families.

We have discovered, as Madame Binh no doubt knows, the frustration of negotiating with a political system bent on genocide. Killings are being committed not only in Viet Nam, but in Bengla Desh, Africa, and South America. Is it not so that our Declaration of Independence provides that when a government oppresses the people, they have a right to abolish it and create a new government? And we at "Attica" and all revolutionaries across the nation are exercising that right! The time is now that all third world people acknowledge the true oppressor and expose him to the world!!!

Racist control has been instituted through various devious means in all concentration camps here in Attica and all through New York State. For instance: even though Black and Puerto Rican brothers number conservatively 85 percent of the total population of these contemporary plantations, we are collectively allotted only 1 percent of the controlling inmate positions.

Just as Hitler instilled fear in his concentration camps, so has Rockefeller, allowing and sanctioning the same tactics to be perpetrated here; the fascists deal with fear and psychological control, such as not allowing grown men to talk when we walk down the halls; marching us to and from each meal; segregations of facilities, such as black and white level.

The fascist regime can only exist when fear is the controlling factor. But when intelligence is used, then the fascist pigs must resort to violence to cover up their atrocities against the poor people. In conclusion: those brothers whose lives were taken by Rockefeller and his agents did not die in vain. Why?

Because the uprising in Attica did not start here nor will it end here! Moreover, the storm trooper-like tactics of Rockefeller's gestapo again proves to the third world that the Nazi element in this racist system will stop at nothing to eliminate the forces who are the oppressed masses, who are struggling for human recognition and are crying out for Freedom, Justice, and Equality.

In Solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the human communities,

In Peace/Power and Brotherhood  
ATTICA

## Letters from imprisoned brothers

The following letter, sent out of Attica during the rebellion, is from prisoner Sam Melville. Melville, accused of many political bombings in New York City, was murdered when D Block was retaken by state troopers.

Agincourt, Sept. 10, '71  
Evening (around the campfire)

## ATTICA

Power People!

We are strong, we are together, we are growing. We love you all, we need your continuing love & support. Brother Huey is on his way and Counselor Kunstler, too. YAWF is storming the walls. What shall we do? Cha Cha Cha.

Ho Ho Ho Chi Minh  
Please inform our next of kin

Sam Melville

## CLINTON

Please give our greetings of Peace and Power to all our hard working comrades dedicated in our common struggle for Liberation....

We are now fifteen (15) along with eight (8) other brothers which is a total of twenty-four (24) are in a very dangerous situation, as we are not receiving any outside mail from our attorneys. They just beat up brother almost to death as he came from visiting his mother. They also beat up (another) brother before he went back to Rikers Island.... They are getting ready to kill us and you must come up immediately with newspaper reporters and with a court order....

They are trying to put fear into us for our political beliefs by beating us one by one and it's a very precarious position we are in, in regards to the Attica massacre. There is a connection and they are trying to justify their criminal acts by doing something awful to us. You must do something as they have stopped all outgoing and incoming mail.

Power!

P.S. As a result of what happened to we refuse to submit to shackles, chaining us.

## LEWISBURG

Greetings to the PSC:

The superheroic uprising at Attica prison, New York State's maximum security dungeon, has already established itself as a milestone in the history of the revolution which is exploding in this country, the very citadel of world imperialism and the arsenal of global reaction.

The inmates overcame seemingly impossible obstacles and rose up,

held out, and fought for four days around the clock, knowing that, in the end, death, immediately—or slowly—would almost certainly overtake them.

That fact alone proves, beyond even a shadow of a doubt, that the conditions in the house of bondage made life unbearable. The slave drivers, smeared with blood, forced things to the breaking point.

Governor Rockefeller, member of the billionaire dynasty which plunders seven continents and chokes the seven seas, blamed "militant revolutionaries" for the bloodshed, while he and his cronies rigidly dictated the mass murder of the prisoners

and the sacrifice of his gestapo-hirelings.

Just like in Vietnam, helicopters sprayed gas on the already unarmed convicts, so as to render them totally defenseless. Then came the cowardly armed bands of the state to pump lead into their bodies, immediately killing twenty-eight, and, according to NBC News, wounding over one hundred, "most of whom are not expected to live," especially after the medical hacks get through treating them.

The NBC News tried to jerk public tears with their cheap old trick of showing the wives and children of the dead or wounded storm troopers.

## CLINTON

Brothers and Sisters I greet you...These sub-pigs beat me and gas me. It looks like the only way I am going to be free is to die. I, , thank you for your time and consideration, and understanding of our situation. It is understandable that you tried to help and look out for the welfare of us up here. Any news that you could send on anything. Please do so. We need news up here. How long must our People be cooped up in these concentration camps?

Your Brother at arms

## COMSTOCK

All Power to the People!

I sit here in this box trying to organize my thoughts and whip the thought of Attica from my mind, not the incredible slaughter, but the repercussions it will cause behind the walls of doom, repercussions that have already begun to form, that may create more killing.

I will use this concentration camp as (proof) for my (statement). First, when the reports of the assassination of Brother George Jackson (came out) all articles that were in the newspapers and magazines were cut out. The explanation that was given for this oppressive act was that the articles were inflammatory! Then came the attack at Attica and the taking of lives. Here, before the news reports were broadcast, the administration ordered that all inmates were to be kept in their boxes.

When the news was released here, head pig Cowboy (J.P. Conboy) placed the prison under a "State of Emergency." The explanation that was given to the press was for "reasons of security."

... As I write today, the first day anyone has been allowed out of their cell, the state trooper who has been placed on a tower in front of my window is standing, looking into the yard with his gun out so all can see it. They have created a condition here that is horrifying and dangerous. There is nothing that is more a threat to security than pigs standing over men with guns. There is no reason for men to have to live under dehumanizing conditions and be treated as animals. ...

Rockefeller too shed crocodile tears in phony sympathy for them.

Hacks are like trained watchdogs. To a Rockefeller, a DuPont, an H.L. Hunt, a Morgan, a Mellon or a Glanini, they are a dime a dozen. If one should get killed, the big bosses just go out and buy a new one.

The convicts, who spared the robots they had taken into their custody, showed far more mercy, even for these torturers, far more human empathy and understanding, than did the corporated state, which didn't give a damn if they lived or died when push came to shove.

It is significant that President Nixon, speaking for the whole capi-

ATTICA  
"I saw Tom Hicks alive"

To: Prisoners Solidarity Committee  
Tom Soto and staff  
Brothers and Sisters:

As a revolutionary fighting for self-determination for all oppressed people, what can I say for the hermanos whose lives were sacrificed for our struggle. And about those whose behavior patterns are not conditioned as ours. However, they believed in what we were doing. Many are newsworthy—vigilant towards the "pigs," but had to get shot, wounded, beaten, looked and scowled upon like animals which we're not, to make this imperialist-racist government here in AmeriKKKa see that we are still struggling while we're physically incarcerated in a concentration camp.

Brothers, sisters—others, for the time being I'm still alive. How or why, are questions which I can't answer logically.... Nevertheless, my brothers and I (how many I can't say) who are in segregation are branded as leaders (chalked X on our backs). Even hermanos who were wounded (shot) are bere with "minor" medical attention, and in pain.

To tell you of that disastrous day 9/13—it's like telling you about My Lai and bloody massacres of Vietnamese people under the yoke and subjugation of U.S. militia teams—munition which they used—45 sub-machine guns, 12-gauge shotguns, 357 mags, hi-powered scoped '30-'30's, 30-'06's, M-14's, CN gas, helicopters—state troopers, pepper gas and even concussion grenades were used. That day, 9/13, the pigs everybody was a nigger—Black-white-Spanish—the aged, shot, wounded, sick, the beaten, everyone had to crawl the length of "A" block yard without rising our gluteus maximus and hands on our heads, face in the ground and nakedly run through two lines of troopers—correction pigs, etc. Not only that, Tom Hicks (inmate) was alive during the security of the institution in the hands of the pigs, and the Lawyers Guild reported him dead. He was alive one hour after take-in—I know, I seen him. To add to that I still heard shots that afternoon, I'm still awaiting my turn to die; however, as a revolutionary, that does not mean to be executed by the pigs, to plant fear in the oppressed people who'll take similar procedure such as us. And before they do that I'll sacrifice my own life, for my beloved oppressed people's success.

My job until my death, is to expose the system, re-educate the people and establish a government which promotes and serves their needs. I'm enclosing this letter with the revolutionary spirit of the times.

Power/Venceremos

ATTICA LIBERATION FACTION

talist class, momentarily interrupted his campaign for economic fascism to telephone "congratulations" to Rockefeller for his tactics.

The money men who own the governments and prisons of the United States are swinging to fascism to save their profits.

They are fanning up racism to a genocidal heat. They are transforming the prisons to extermination centers, especially for the Third World peoples. Time is running out.

There is only one way to defeat fascism. The would-be fascists must be shown, in no uncertain terms that if they want to wage war against the oppressed, they will not wage it the way they want, in which only the fascists are armed.

No, they will get civil war and they

will lose. The imperialist army will collapse from within, as its enlisted men and draftees turn their guns against their real enemy, the war lord officer caste and the banker generals.

Attica is only the beginning. There will be much more of the same, and much bigger, in every prison, in every city, in every factory, in every mine, in every place where a slave confronts a master.

It must be a solidarity in deeds—a truly tangible solidarity. Across the country, and especially now in Attica, this is the greatest hour of need for anything that can relieve the atrocious conditions that make life unbearable and, even more urgently, to prevent the genocide program from being put into practice.

conscious is dead. In a sense, he's physically walking around, but mentally he's in a state of what I would call limbo. A prisoner who walks around, who bends to the will of the guards, a man who lets himself be led, instead of leading, a man who takes everything and does not fight back, is in effect a dead man.

In prisons today, prisoners have become aware of their heritages and their cultures, and here I'm speaking mainly of the Black and Puerto Rican brothers. The white prisoners are also becoming aware of the fact that the administrations mainly direct their rule of death, brutality, and fascist might against the Black and Puerto Rican prisoners, and, in effect, this heightens the political consciousness of the white prisoners. In view of this, solidarity is born, as you can see from the Attica rebellion. Therefore, as I said, political consciousness is definitely a trend in prisons today and it will continue to be a trend. What I'm really saying is that there are going to be more Atticas, not only in Babylon, but across the world, until people are treated like human beings and not animals.



Hassan of  
"Auburn 6"  
speaks

Following is an interview with Hassan Sharief El-Shabazz, one of the Auburn 6 indicted on charges stemming from the Auburn prison rebellion of November 4, 1970. Hassan was recently bailed out by the Prisoners Solidarity Committee. The PSC is currently organizing the legal defense of the Auburn 6 as well as building public support for their case.

PSC: What do you feel caused the Auburn rebellion? Hassan: The Auburn rebellion was caused by the same conditions that prevailed at Attica. Some of those conditions are: drugs being rampant in the prison, sold by the pig guards, forced homosexuality, brutality by the guards, and racism perpetrated by the administration.

But the demands to end these conditions were only some of the demands. The main demands of the Auburn rebellion were for freedom to control our own destinies, the freedom not to be treated like animals, not to be turned into mindless, spineless robots. Just as the students at Kent State rebelled for the same purpose, to control their own destiny, the same demands prevailed in Auburn. The men were tired of the many promises that were made and broken, the

many lies that had been told to us. The system caused the rebellion at Auburn.

PSC: Hassan, how did you come in contact with the Prisoners Solidarity Committee?

Hassan: After the rebellion at Auburn, we wrote Youth Against War & Fascism for assistance and as a result, the Prisoners Solidarity Committee was formed. They supported us tremendously. We (the Auburn 6) had a federal hearing at the insistence of the PSC to protest the fact that our lives were in danger at Auburn. We wanted to be removed from Auburn. As a matter of fact, we still haven't received a decision from that hearing. That goes to show that in this racist, capitalist society, life is not worth a damn, only property. And that's what the laws are made to protect. At any rate, it was through the support and efforts of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee that myself and five other members of the Auburn 6 are alive today.

PSC: You were in Attica. Can you tell us what Attica is like?

Hassan: Attica is really like any other concentration camp. It has a little more harsh security than most, but in general the conditions are the

same. The guards are all racists and the administration is also racist. And, as you can see from the rebellion at Attica and the prisoners' demands, the conditions there are the same as they were in Auburn.

The men were asking for social, economic, and political power which is the freedom to control their own destinies. The food at Attica is despicable; the atmosphere is pregnant with racism, and in general, as I said, conditions are the same at all concentration camps.

PSC: The Attica uprising seemed to be very politically conscious. Is this political consciousness a trend in prisons today?

Hassan: Emphatically, Yes. Political consciousness is not only a trend in prisons, but it is the trend of all people in Babylon today. Or rather, should I say, the majority of people in Babylon are beginning to wake up to the fact that this system is just no good and that in order for the people to survive, the system's got to be torn to the ground and built up anew.

In prisons today, if one is not politically conscious, one does not survive because a person who is in prison today who is not politically



# The old lie about prison reform

by JERRY ZILG

In a large smoke-filled auditorium in Manhattan, sour-faced politicians counted the votes between yawns. On the floor, their partners mulled about noisily, not even bothering to listen or pretend interest. Then the presiding committee of this Democratic Party state convention announced that the resolution on prison reform had been overwhelmingly endorsed as part of the party's electoral platform.

"Our prisoners are housed in buildings that are unsanitary and out of repair," the platform read. "They are employed with meager instruction upon inadequate machinery of obsolete type, lacking safeguards required by law in factories. Opportunities for education are almost totally lacking." Instead, the platform held the promise that the prisoners would be "usefully employed" and taught "trades."

The Democratic politicians were not happy about admitting that such conditions existed, but they had no choice. It had been a year of prison rebellions, attempted escapes, mass political arrests, and exposes on cruelty to prisoners that had already caused a public uproar, too much publicity.

The year was 1920, and New York's governor was Alfred E. Smith, later to be the 1928 presidential candidate and still later, in the thirties, a wooer of Nazi Germany. But 1920 was a year that Smith had to be a wooer of the people instead, confusing them with rhetoric about prison reform.

## WOMEN PRISONERS REVOLT

On January 3, just one day after U.S. Attorney General Mitchell Palmer launched his night-time raid on thousands of workers and other "subversives" across the country, a rebellion broke out at the Reformatory for Women at Bedford, N.Y. Touched off by the prison administration's denial of recreation for the women, the outburst was only the end result of a long series of cruel abuses inflicted on the prisoners. These atrocities included torturing the women by forcing their heads under water until they almost drowned, stringing up inmates by their arms while they were handcuffed behind their backs, poor food and degrading treatment by prison matrons and guards.

It took a full day for prison officials to put down the rebellion. The women had armed themselves with sticks and pipes, but in the end prison guards armed with guns overwhelmed them, and many were thrown into solitary confinement. The prison officials refused to comment on the number of women injured by the police assault. Enough of a battle had been put up, however, to capture publicity on conditions inside

the prison.

The floodgate had been opened and a tidal wave of protests followed. On January 23, the National Civil Liberties Bureau in a detailed report accused Alcatraz's warden, Col. R.D. Johnson, of cruel treatment of conscientious objectors (to World War I). The next day, Secretary of War Newton Baker promised he would investigate. He never did. Instead, the issue was ignored and the brutality went on.

So did the criticisms. Before the month was over, it was revealed that influenza had swept through New York and New Jersey prisons and that sick inmates were not getting adequate medical care. Later, in North Carolina, the Prisoners Relief Society issued a report on the deplorable prison conditions in that state, and was promptly barred from the state's prisons by the governor.

## SLAVE LABOR IS THE ANSWER

In response to these exposes, the federal government proposed its version of prison reform. On May 3, 1920, the National Commission on Prisons and Prison Labor proposed the industrialization of the country's prisons to end the "idleness and boredom" of prison, train inmates in skills, and, by exploiting their labor, make them produce profits that would not only pay for their own maintenance, but also provide a surplus for state treasuries.

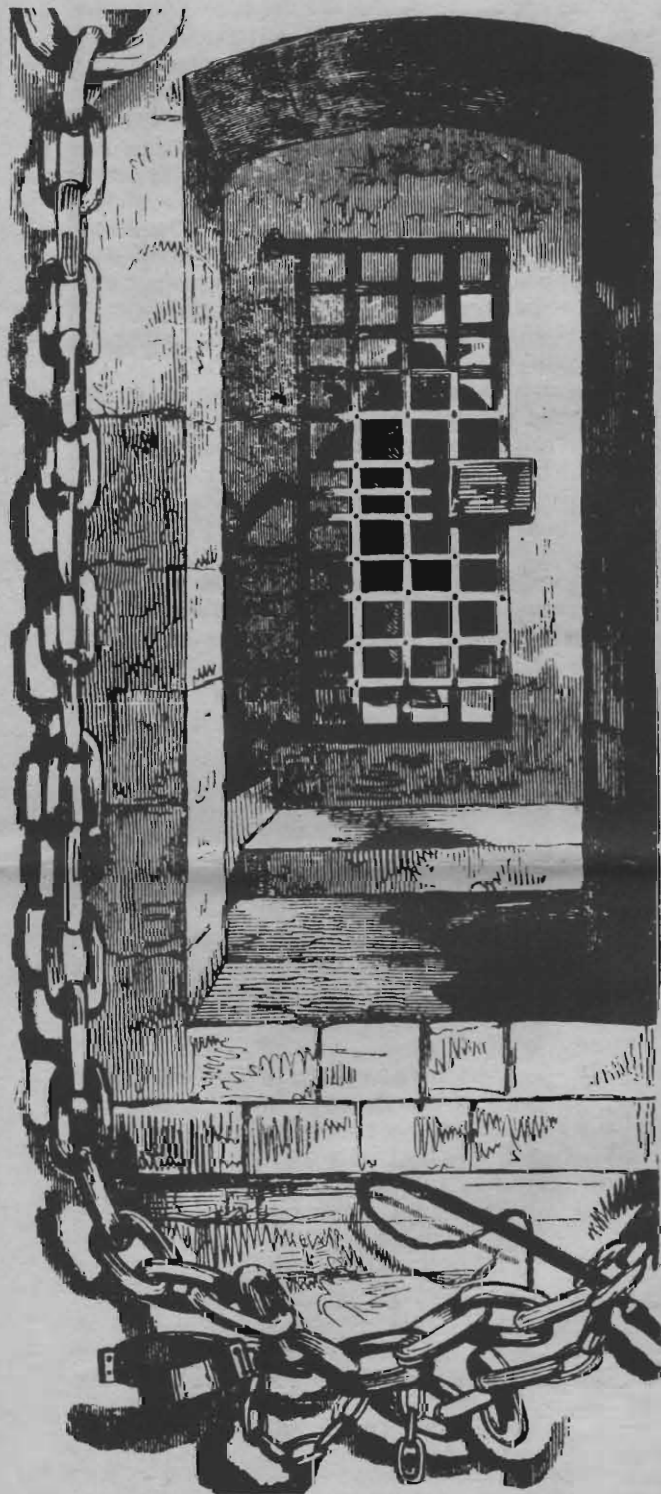
Not surprisingly, New York, the country's front-runner in many things, including number of prisoners, was the first to heartily adopt the federal proposal. In fact, according to an economic report on March 8, New York's prisoners had already generated over \$60,000 in profits for the state treasury in six months. This represented an increase of 25 percent in the inmates' productivity over the previous year—in other words, speed-up. "Even higher returns can be expected next year," boasted the report.

New York State's Prison Survey Committee made other recommendations, including "fair" wages, allowing support of relatives, and the abolishing of Sing Sing as a prison, transforming it into a clearinghouse for newer prisons. Everything will be improved, promised the committee, promised the Governor, promised the Democratic Party platform, promised the federal government. The year 1920 closed with Attorney General Mitchell Palmer sending personal greetings of Christmas cheer to the country's trapped prisoners. Meanwhile, at Dannemora Prison, two inmates died after being served poisoned salmon, and at Auburn, prison officials chalked up one dead prisoner, seven wounded in attempted escapes that year from a living hell.

## PRISONS STILL THE SAME

Half a century later, Sing Sing prison still stands as a monument to continued oppression by a rich ruling class. Auburn still stands also, and the murders, beatings, bad food, and degradation still go on. But one thing has changed—the prisoners.

Most of them today are members of oppressed nations—nations that are struggling for liberation. As in Auburn and now Attica, men and women are standing up to their tormentors and fighting back, armed with a political consciousness and unity of determination never before attained, responding to the beat of revolutionary drums, deaf to the plea of false fifty-year-old promises. It is time, they say, that the walls come down.



# Police attack Attica pickets

MILWAUKEE, Sept. 21—Police viciously attacked a demonstration protesting the Attica massacre here today, arresting and beating six people. The target of the police assault was the Prisoners Solidarity Committee which, along with several other groups, called today's rally and march.

After the rally at the Civic Center Plaza, a march of about 150 people moved to Wisconsin Avenue along the sidewalk. At 4th Street, under the pretext of giving a jaywalking ticket to Jim Miller, a PSC leader,

police attacked the demonstration. They particularly sought out active PSC members for arrest. In addition, a Black photographer, Harold Hampton, was jumped and beaten by racist cops. He was later charged with obstructing an officer and resisting arrest.

Among the six arrested were Jim Miller, who was beaten by two cops and then charged with resisting arrest, and Benita Orozco, another PSC leader. She was charged with battery to a peace officer and resisting arrest. Bill Colangelo of Youth Against War & Fascism was charged with

resisting arrest.

In a press release issued today, the Prisoners Solidarity Committee in Milwaukee has strongly condemned this attack and charged that it was part of a trend toward repression of political opposition to racism and fascism in this country. "The same repressive system that caused the bloodbath at Attica is behind this attack, and the racism of the police department is clearly seen in the cases of Hampton and Orozco," the statement read. Benita Orozco has been active in many struggles in the Latin community

here against police brutality. The statement continued:

"The movement on the outside to support the prisoners has been growing. Such groups as the Prisoners Solidarity Committee and the Wisconsin Inmate Peoples Union have begun to both educate the American people as to the true nature of those prisons and have begun programs to concretely aid prisoners and their relatives. The role of prisons as concentration camps for poor and oppressed people is being exposed more and more each day."

"The Prisoners Solidarity Committee will have a meeting on Monday, September 27, at 7 p.m. at the Suburb Bookstore, 1618 W. Wells to plan future activities. All interested in building the necessary link of solidarity to the prisoners inside are invited to come. Contact the Prisoners Solidarity Committee at 150 E. Juneau, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53202."



Ludlow, Colorado, 1914

# ROCKEFELLER'S OTHER MASSACRE

It looked like a tent city. Hundreds were huddled under makeshift shelters to protect themselves from the cold. All around the encampment national guards with rifles and machine guns stood ready.

The sun was just rising when the assault began. When it was over, the camp was a mass of charred debris. The dead and wounded were strewn on the ground. The New York Times expressed measured, neutral horror at the bloody scene. But Rockefeller had given the order—end the strike!

No, it wasn't Attica. And it wasn't Governor Nelson D. Rockefeller who ordered the assault then. But it was a similar scene—another Rockefeller massacre—only at that time the blood was on the hands of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Nelson's father. Like money, massacres of working and oppressed people run in the Rockefeller family.

The place was Ludlow, Colorado; the time, April 20, 1914. Hundreds of miners were on strike, struggling to get the Rockefeller-owned Colorado Fuel and Iron Company to recognize and negotiate with their union, the United Mine Workers of America. The company met the workers' strike with brutal reprisals. First, the miners were evicted from their company-owned homes in Ludlow to face the freezing Colorado winter. The company got court injunctions and indictments to stop the strike. Then Rockefeller imported gunmen from the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency. These goons rode around in an armored car, shooting down strikers on sight. Finally, the National Guard was mobilized to protect Rockefeller's profits.

The miners fought back against this reign of terror. They set up a tent city in Ludlow, determined to carry on the battle for a union, decent wages, and working conditions. Then Rockefeller ordered the attack.

On the morning of April 20, 1914, while the miners and their families were still sleeping, company-hired goons and national guardsmen drenched their tents with oil and ignited them. When the dazed victims ran out of their flaming shelters, they were machine-gunned down. Many women and children who were hiding in holes dug to protect them against rifle fire were burned alive or suffocated in underground furnaces. Nineteen people were murdered and scores were wounded. Over two-thirds of the dead were women and children.

FROM LUDLOW TO ATTICA

It's a long way from Attica to Ludlow, both in distance and time. But a bond of struggle

against a common enemy unites the two events. In Ludlow it was the exploited workers, mostly white, who were fighting for a decent life; in Attica it was the oppressed prisoners, mostly Black and Puerto Rican who rose up. Yet their demands had a similar thread—demands for a union, an end to slave wages, and better working conditions.

In Ludlow the boss, the enemy who had the workers shot down, was a Rockefeller, repre-

senting an empire of wealth that was built on the sweat and blood of miners and other workers. In Attica, the boss was a Rockefeller again, this time carrying out the slaughter not for his own personal profits, but in the interest of his entire class of billionaire rulers. Rockefeller explained away the murders by saying he did it to safeguard "the very essence of our free society." In 1914 it was the same story—the strike was called illegal and the strikers "criminals." Therefore a massacre was "justified."

But words have different meanings for the oppressed and the Rockefellers. Who is a criminal and what is illegal?

BILLIONAIRE ROBBERS MAKE THE LAWS

In the U.S. today, as in 1914, it's the Rockefellers and their rich pals who define these terms and make the laws. They say it is illegal for the poor to steal in order to live, but legal for Rockefeller to steal from workers; they say it is illegal for prisoners to take hostages, but legal for the government to hold vast numbers of Black and Puerto Rican people hostage in prisons; they say it is illegal for prisoners to rebel (just like they used to say that strikes were illegal), but legal to run concentration camps for the poor, based on racism and brutal terror.



mands of the prisoners. In Spanish and English, they described the concentration camp conditions inside and the tremendous unity, courage, and determination of the prisoners fighting back against Rockefeller and Oswald.

During the questions and discussion at the end, an ex-prisoner in the audience asked how we were going to be sure that the struggle would be continued and how prisons were really going to be changed. Tom Soto answered that prisons are a part of this system—the same system run by Rockefeller and Co. which exploits working people every day and maintains concentration camps to oppress Black, Puerto Rican, and poor people. Those concentration camps will only be abolished when the workers take over outside as the prisoners are doing inside, and the whole system is changed.

**PRISONS ARE CONCENTRATION CAMPS FOR THE POOR!  
TEAR DOWN THE WALLS!**

## 200 hear inside report on Attica

**BUFFALO, Sept. 19**—About 200 people, mainly from the local Puerto Rican and working-class community, filled a meeting hall here tonight to protest the Attica massacre. Many who gathered had relatives and friends inside Attica and heard reports from those who were inside the prison during the rebellion.

The meeting, called by the Prisoners Solidarity Committee, BUILD (a Black community organization), Black Student Union, El Comité (a Puerto Rican community organization), PODER (a Puerto Rican student group), and Youth Against War & Fascism, was held under

revolutionary banners proclaiming "Attica, Auburn, the Tombs, San Quentin—Nada Que Perder—Solo Candendas! (Nothing to lose but their chains!)." Behind the speakers' platform, a Puerto Rican flag was pasted over the symbol of oppression, the U.S. flag.

The meeting was chaired by Joan Marquardt from the Prisoners Solidarity Committee (PSC) and Evelyn Rodriguez from PODER. Tom Comar, an ex-prisoner and member of the PSC, told how the committee has been trying to inspect Erie County Jail despite government resistance. Then Sharon Chin, from the national office of the Prisoners

Solidarity Committee, spoke of how the Committee has supported the struggles of prisoners since its formation around the rebellion at Auburn Prison. At this point, an ex-prisoner from many of New York State's dungeons, who cannot be named because he is on parole, exposed how the prison authorities use any vile means to divide prisoners by racial background and other false barriers.

Tom Soto, also from the national office of the Prisoners Solidarity Committee, Alberto Capps, and Domingo Rodriguez spoke. They had all been inside Attica during the rebellion, supporting the just de-





Sisters extend fists from old Women's House of Detention.

# Bail fund women aid imprisoned sisters

by VERONICA GOLOS, Women's Bail Fund

The Women's Bail Fund was organized to aid and draw attention to women prisoners, who suffer under conditions just as brutal as those in Attica or San Quentin.

Through demonstrations, leaflets, and especially by bailing women out of the Women's House of Detention in New York City, the Bail Fund has focused on the imprisoned sisters. It has also organized many militant demonstrations outside of the prison to let the sisters inside know that they were not alone.

Recently, the House of D was moved from Greenwich Village to the city's penal colony on Rikers Island. When the move was announced, a whole campaign was launched to expose the Rikers concentration camp for what it was. And on the day of the move, hundreds of women gathered outside the jail at dawn to protest the transfer to an island where the women would be more isolated than ever.

In the new, "improved" prison, each woman is in a tiny cell. She is punished for the slightest infraction of rules that she is never informed about, and forced to undergo horrible internal searches which frequently result in vaginal infections. The women have no access to

the new facilities that are supposed to be for their benefit. Sentenced women are forced to work at prison industries that pay 3 to 10 cents an hour.

Everything is done to frighten and demoralize the women. Lights are kept on 24 hours a day, forcing prisoners to lie under their beds to be able to get any sleep. There are no clean clothes, no food fit to eat, no medical care when it is needed. Women who speak Spanish find it is impossible to get whatever few rights they might have because the staff does not speak their language.

Women are extremely isolated, both from each other and from their family or friends. They are denied any news of what is happening on the outside that might affect their lives. Most of the sisters suffering under these conditions have not even been convicted of a crime—they are awaiting trial in jail because they are too poor to raise bail of even fifty or a hundred dollars.

The racist system which puts such a large percentage of Black, Puerto Rican, and poor people in jail, which only builds more jails and refuses to meet any of the prisoners' most basic demands, and resorts to cold-blooded massacres when its ordi-

nary brutality fails to crush the spirit of the prisoners—that system has no right to judge the actions of people trying to find a way to survive.

The plight of our sisters in prisons across the country has not been dramatized by large rebellions like the one in Attica. The women, nevertheless, suffer the same kind of racism and terror that male prisoners suffer. They, too, are jailed primarily because they are poor and oppressed. The Women's Bail Fund, recognizing the special oppression that women in this society bear, is dedicated to exposing the conditions in women's prisons and helping to free the victims of this concentration camp system.

\* \* \* \* \*

(The Prisoners Solidarity Committee would like to extend special thanks to the Women's Bail Fund for their contribution to the PSC transportation fund. This fund is used to transport prisoners' relatives to prisons. Most of the relatives are too poor to pay for visits to the prisons which are situated in remote areas, often hundreds of miles from the prisoners' homes.)

## Women prisoners rebel in

## West Virginia

by ELLEN PIERCE

The county, state, and federal jails that dot the map of the USA are filled with women prisoners as well as men. Alderson Federal Reformatory for Women in West Virginia is the showcase of these women's concentration camps. There are "cottages" instead of cells and surrounding mountains, instead of bars at this maximum security jail.

But the prisoner struggles which have swept the concentration camp system have touched Alderson too. Women there held a memorial service for the murdered Attica inmates. Prison authorities responded by transferring 66 "ring-leaders"—ten percent of the population—to maximum security jails.

A transfer doesn't just mean a change of scenery. It means being condemned to do time in terrible state and county jails. Although county jails can legally be used only for short-term prisoners, the women transferred out of Alderson could be forced to serve their sentences, no matter how long, under inhuman county jail conditions.

When 37 women refused to be transferred, tear gas was used to force them onto a bus. A spokesman for the prison called the sisters, "the type who take things in their own hands... sparkplugs in this sort of thing, the more vocal, more outspoken, more revolutionary types." His description was meant as an insult to the sisters, but it is really a tribute to strong and courageous women who dared to honor the dead of Attica and defied their own prison-keepers.

The 66 women were sent to the Federal Youth Center where they will be "screened" and shipped out to maximum security prisons. The government has contracts under which it pays state and county jails to house federal prisoners. The Alderson rebels will be sent to these institutions where conditions are extremely bad. Often there are no facilities at all for women prisoners. They spend 24 hours, day and night, crammed into their cells while the county collects a large fee.

Maryann Weissman of Youth Against War &

Fascism and the Prisoners Solidarity Committee served a 6-month sentence, partly in Alderson and then in Passaic County Jail, which received \$22.50 a day for keeping her under the contract system.

"After a week in Southern county jails with double bars, Alderson looked much like an all-girl campus," she recalled. "There is sunlight, grass, trees, the beauty of the West Virginia mountains... I could hardly wait for the freedom of moving out of a locked cell, without my hands cuffed and locked to a chain around my waist..."

"But their basic principle for 'reforming criminals' is still to dehumanize you. The favorite game of the cops is to find out what you want and then not let you have it."

The small rebellion at Alderson in response to the Attica massacre gives the lie to the theory that newer and better jails are a solution. The women at this "model" prison identified with the Attica rebels because they, too, are the poor, the Black and Puerto Rican people who fill all the U.S. jails for the "crime" of being poor.

## Are you interested in supporting the prisoners?

Please return form to: PRISONERS SOLIDARITY COMMITTEE  
58 West 25th Street  
New York, N.Y. 10001

Anyone wishing to help in the work of the PSC should also contact us at the following chapters:

NEW YORK CITY  
58 West 25 Street (212) 989-3932

BUFFALO, NEW YORK  
938 Main Street (716) 882-1112

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK  
69 Rohr Street

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK  
120 Dell Street (315) 474-5551 474-5551

BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
P.O. Box 8875 (617) 661-0345

CLEVELAND, OHIO  
Box 2576, East Cleveland (216) 231-1456

DETROIT, MICHIGAN  
2515 Woodward (313) 962-4979

MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN  
150 E. Jureau Avenue (414) 273-8089

WILMINGTON, DELAWARE  
P.O. Box 972 (302) 456-8451