



INSIDE-OUT

Same Struggle - Same Fight!

no. 10 VVAW-WSO Newsletter for Prisoners

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VVAW/WSO National Office, 827 West Newport, Chicago, Ill. 60657

McAlester--The Struggle Continues

The situation at the Oklahoma State Prison at McAlester was talked about in the February issue of Winter Soldier. After a series of repressive acts, one prisoner, Robert Forsythe was killed in a brutal gassing at the "Rock," the isolation unit. In October the Rock was burned to the ground. Ten prisoners were charged with "second-degree arson" as a result; their pre-trial hearing took place on January 24th and for the next week; what follows is the report from one of the McAlester prisoners.

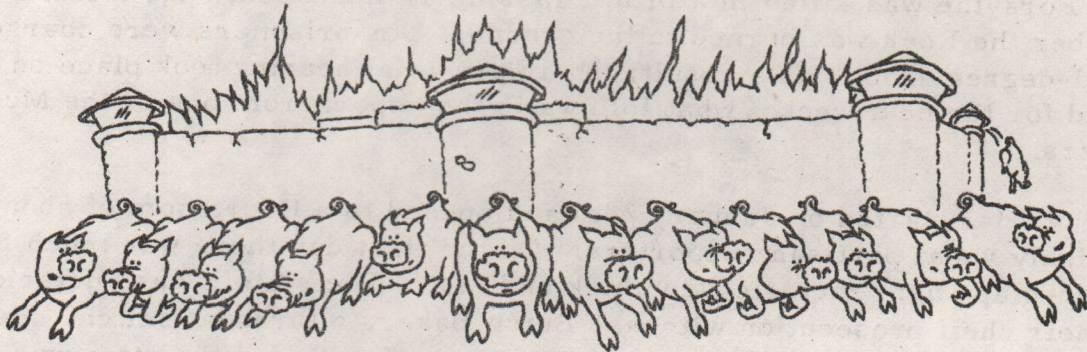
"The trial started on January 24th and opened to a Courtroom of about 120 irate highly vocal partisan supporters. On the first day there was much foot-stomping and hand-clapping; rhetoric flew thick and fast. The state's case deteriorated after their chief prosecution witness, Butch Baker, a turncoat snitch, spent eight grueling hours under cross examination. By the fourth day the state was forced to dismiss indictments against four of the brothers. By February 3rd the state's case was in shambles when it was discovered that nobody bothered to determine the cause of the fire on the Rock. The hostage guards saw mattresses being dragged somewhere and shortly thereafter the Rock was on fire but nobody was seen striking a match. Perhaps it was spontaneous combustion? Charging a man with arson without determining the cause of the fire is not unlike finding a dead body and charging a man with murder without first determining the cause of death. The prosecutor was visibly shaken when one of the hostage guards was asked to name defendants and he put the wrong names on the defendants (all blacks look alike to him), and then it was revealed that the defendants were pointed out to the witness by other guards (the administration actually decided who the 10 would be.)"

After chewing over the case for awhile, the judge decided that the 6 remaining defendants should be bound over for trial; support for the McAlester 6 is growing around the country and particularly in the Oklahoma area--a spot which in the past has not been one of the best places for organizing.

Some of the support for the McAlester 6 is in reaction to the blatant tactics of the Oklahoma prison administration. The McAlester brothers are not just involved in defensive legal maneuvers. As a result of suits brought by the prisoners, a federal grand jury, on January 29th, handed down indictments of ten former and present guards in the gassing of Robert Forsythe. Eight guards were charged with conspiracy, seven with carrying out the conspiracy to deprive inmates of their

constitutional guarantees against cruel and unusual punishment. One ex-guard was charged with assaulting two prisoners, a lieutenant was charged with perjury, and five guards were charged with another gas attack. According to Warden Roy Crisp, a retired military officer, "It's a sad day." Three of the guards are still working at McAlester, and Warden Crisp does not plan to fire them; they are "fine correctional officers," he said. He stands "100% behind them, all of them. It's a precarious position and is hard to swallow but it is only an indictment and not an announcement of guilt."

Chances are you haven't heard a whole lot of wardens making the same point when it is a prisoner under indictment. Which points toward the consistent use of law, of rules and regulations inside the prison system--the only consistent thing about them is their inconsistency. Rules are applied to whom and when the administrators feel like it. The same is true of the "law" both inside prison and outside. It just isn't quite the same "law" when you are black or poor or disagreeing with the government.



Nowhere is this clearer than in McAlester; despite several court decrees, the brutality continues. But the repression is, as always, breeding resistance, and the brothers in McAlester know what they have to do. In their words,

"The battles we've won are part of the Peoples' struggle... we can't stop. It is common knowledge, both inside and outside the towering concrete walls, that the physical and mental torture inflicted on McAlester prisoners exceeds the bounds of human justice. Yet, we will not submit to the cruelty of conditions existent here; the beatings, gassings and starvation diets will not cause us to desist in our struggle. Even when the vultures resort to murdering a few in our ranks, they do nothing but fuel the fires that rage inside us. We know that finally, the People will be responsive to our clarion call and enlist in the Army that is being mobilized. The voices of the vast masses will ultimately echo ours in saying "NO" to exploitation and repression!

The Path to Victory is no less perilous nor
are the obstacles strewn across it diminished in size.
But now, neither Dragons nor Gargoyles, real or chimerical,
can prevent us from travelling down it.
Uncertainty and defeatist attitudes no longer are
capable of penetrating us softly.
Violent Determination instead, stays all of our fears.
And Quiet Confidence is emblazoned across the fast fast
unrolling scrolls of our minds.
Our voices no longer whisper old sad songs or lamentations.
Our voices now roar with the same reverberating clamor of
CONQUERING LIONS!!!

We, comrade-brothers of the M^kAlester Maxi-Kamp, proclaim our support and Revolutionary Solidarity for the struggles of all the Oppressed--Blacks, Native Americans, Chicanos, Mexicans, poor whites, women, students, workers and all the world's prisoners behind walls, visible and invisible. Let us unite to defeat the bloodsucking capitalists/imperialists who seek to rap, maraud and murder the masses of People.

DARE TO STRUGGLE
DARE TO WIN



"1974"

The following sum-up of the year is written by a brother in the Federal Penitentiary in Atlanta. We print the entire letter because we feel it makes some important point worth reading and discussing. At the same time, we think there are some serious errors--which we will talk about at the end of the letter.

"During the year of 1974 we saw some changes here at the Big Concentration Camp commonly called the US Penitentiary, Atlanta, Georgia.

The prisoners could feel the inflation pinch more than in previous years.

The food reached a very low level. More potatoes, gravies and biscuits were served. On various occasions, the meats were spoiled.

The prisoners were forced to eat on dirty tables with no salt, pepper or sugar containers on the table. The prisoners would become scavengers at mealtime to get the necessary items to make the meals more edible.

The prisoners could only see a doctor once a week. In short, you could only get sick on a Monday. One week, there was no doctor period, as they were all attending a conference in Missouri.

The prisoners in the "hole" were given paper spoons to eat with. Can you imagine a person trying to eat a grapefruit with a paper spoon? The tiger cages are kept hot in the summer months and cold in the winter. This is someone's idea of a joke!!!

The government made so much money from the prison industries that they allowed the prisoners to work double shifts.

Even the Congress passed a furlough bill for the prisoners. After the prisoncrats in the Bureau of Prisons got through chipping and chopping it up, only the same few prisoners who had been eligible prior to the passage of this bill benefitted. Even though Congress intended for all prisoners to take part in this program and go home once in a while.

The "leeches" on the parole board improved a (very) little. It was a thrity percent turn-out for the year. As usual, the Blacks and Latinos were hit the hardest. The percentage for them is like, twenty-five percent. Of course, some progress was made. There is a token Black on the parole board. This is supposed to show the Black prisoners that they are moving on up, and to soothe their harsh feelings towards the white-oriented board.

We were treated to Two Circus' this past year. The first was last January when the newly appointed Attorney General Saxbe and Norman Carlson, the Head Guard of the Bureau of Prisons toured here. That was the day that Saxbe stated on television that the Atlanta Pentitentiary was the model for the Federal Prison System. No circus could be complete without its clown.

The second circus arrived in November with Carlson leading a large number of federal judges. The day before the second circus the prisoners were forced to clean the "pen" from top to bottom. Not a speck of dirt could be found anywhere. Even the hospital was clean (very unusual). The prisoners didn't realize that they were only hurting themselves. The "pen" should have been left exactly the way it normally is, no more, no less. But I guess the prisoners have been too intimidated by the paper tigers to resist? Can you imagine what some judge will say when confronted with a prisoner's lawsuit challenging the unsanitary conditions, etc? The judge can only believe what he had seen here for himself.

What were the prisoners doing in the Atlanta Pan during the year, 1974? That isn't hard to answer. They were standing around in the corridors calling each other niggers, honkies, dagos and wetbacks. But the most amazing thing is that they call the enemy "boss," "sir," and just literally kill him with kindness. Can you understand people who respect the enemy, but resent their own kind? Each day the prisoners are constantly telling the enemy "good morning sir," "good afternoon, sir," "good night, sir," "How is your family sir?" You would think that they would say, "I hope you have a car wreck or your house burns down." The guards are the open enemy, and they certainly don't try to hide it. You can look at Leavenworth, Marion, Attica, and Long Kesh--all the same!

Of course, all is not lost. They are (prisoners) and were, killing each other over a pill, or a pack of cigarettes. A human life in here is not worth more than a pill, or a thirty-cent pack of cigarettes. Unbelievable, but true. But I did see one thing though, no one got angry enough to harm the enemy. For some strange reason or another, the enemy is given a wide berth. As usual, prisoners are still being raped. Yes, I said raped. Can you imagine big time bank robbers and dope pushers, known world wide, raping a man? That is coming a long way, from bank robbery to the degrading act of man-raping. Strange though, for no one asked for a conjugal visit or raped on of the enemy.

On various occasions we were fed spoiled meat, and some or more than half of the men ate it. Their reasoning being that it all smelled so bad that they couldn't tell the difference. Monkeys and chimpanzees will refuse bad food. But as prison officials are saying today, "Prisoners are cheaper to feed than monkeys and chimpanzees." Guess they know! At least they treat us so, I was thinking that if a man's wife fed him spoiled meat or forced him to eat on a dirty table, he would probably beat or kill her. In here, he thinks nothing of it (or at least doesn't make his dissatisfaction known to the enemy); strange characteristics, indeed!

The men are still gaming for a piece of meat or another portion of dry cake. Others are helping the enemy to keep us here by building new gun towers, replacing old bars, and making records on their own brothers so the pigs can use the information to hunt him down. I keep asking myself, what animal will maintain a cage to keep itself imprisoned?

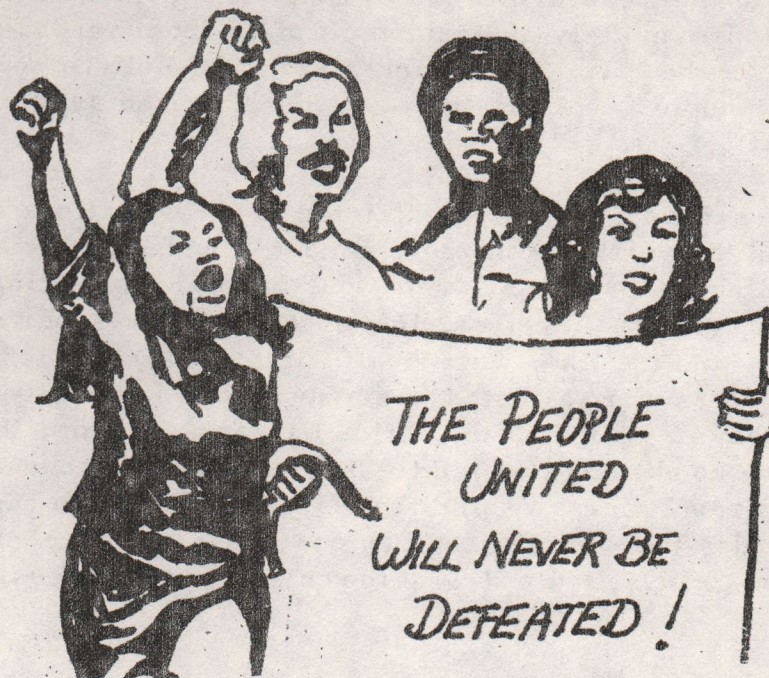
The men accepted a Christmas party from the enemy. On Christmas Eve of 1973, prisoners thought the system refused to accept the traditional bag of candy and stated that they wanted furloughs and conjugal visits. But during the year something happened and they accepted a cream-filled doughnut and some potato chips. Guess this is what they wanted--Wow! But when you can only think about a pill or a pack of cigarettes, then furloughs, conjugal visits and freedom become meaningless.

After the three major setbacks to the prison movement by the Supreme Court, I thought the prisoners would open up guerrilla warfare and make each camp a "no man's land" for the racists, bigoted running dogs, but I guess they aren't ready yet. Maybe tomorrow!

What did happen in 1974? Did the spirit of the people die? Did the movement curl up in its cozy chair in front of some fire and snooze for a year, because there was nothing left for it to do? Not from where we are. Not from Cambodia where the people are knocking down the gates of Phnom Penh ready to hang the traitors from the nearest pole. Not from McAlester where the "fire" was the isolation unit in flames. Not everywhere were people so caught up in fighting over cigarettes that they did not deal with the enemy, as best they could.

Almost any struggle has its positive and negative aspects--there are moves forward and there are steps backward. We have learned to deal with the backward steps because we can see that the overall motion is forward--toward the goal of a peoples' victory. There will be a whole lot more setbacks on the way to that goal, but that isn't going to stop us from getting there.

We agree fully with the main point the brother from Atlanta is making--the people are going to get nothing and the repression is only going to get worse if there is no resistance. The history of struggle, whether of veterans or prisoners or workers or anyone else teaches us that lesson really clearly. We also know that the brother who wrote this article has not given up the struggle, despite what the article says. At Atlanta, and a lot of other places, many people haven't yet seen the need to get off the fence, to declare what they are and what they stand for. Some of this comes from the idea that the system is strong and the people are weak--but everyday brings us new indications of the fact that this is wrong. When people fight back, they can and do win victories. The system is in a state of collapse, but if you don't hit it, it ain't going to fall.



What we see as the meaning behind the letter from Atlanta is that there is a job to be done--and if we don't do it, it's going to take that much longer. We have the sense that this newsletter goes to a whole lot of brothers and sisters who clearly understand exactly what it means to put politics in command and who have the

ability to show the system up for what it is. We also know there are a whole lot of people dedicated to changing that system, and who know that it is not going to be a few individuals who are going to make that change. Struggle goes on at all levels--sometimes in large, newsworthy confrontations, much more often in struggle with a single individual who is so caught up in his own problems that he or she does not see the need to be a fighter for all. It's our job--and that means us in VVAW/WSO and you who are getting this newsletter--to help people see that need.



Government Plans for Prison Movement

The following is taken from an article we received from a brother in a Federal Correctional Institution in California. Space does not permit us to reprint the entire article, but the highlights and the point of the article come through loud and clear.

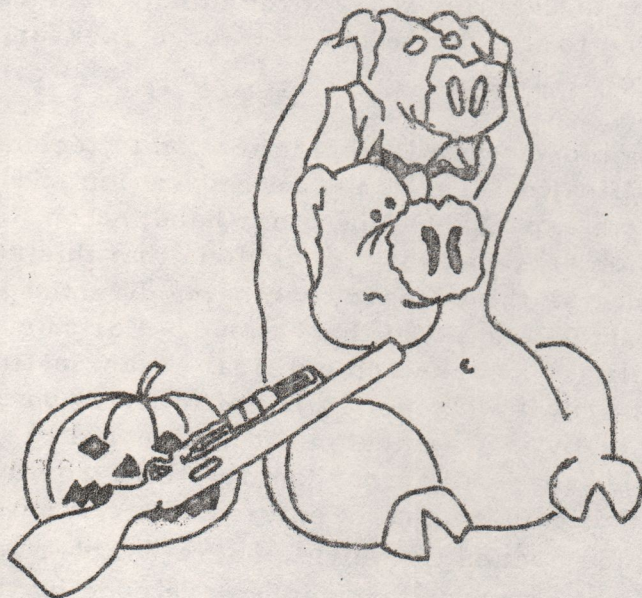
In the Sept. 1974 issue of the FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin there is an article entitled "Prisons--A Target of Revolutionaries." In Feb. 1974, the House of Representatives' Committee on Internal Security (HCIS), under Richard Ichord of Missouri, began to investigate "allegations that groups committed to Marxist revolutionary theories and practice were exploiting the issue of prison reform and had become a source of some of the unrest then afflicting the nation's prisons." In Dec. 1973, HCIS issued a report entitled "Revolutionary Target: The American Penal System." In June 1974, the FBI sponsored a three day "National Symposium On The American Penal System As a Revolutionary Target" at the FBI Academy in Quantico, Virginia. Present at the symposium were Attorney General William Saxbe, FBI Director Clarence Kelly, Director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons Norman Carlson, Chairman Ichord of HCIS, and approximately 100 prison officials from across the nation and many representatives of the FBI. The article in the FBI Bulletin -- which is not available to everyday people -- reports on the FBI sponsored symposium and the events that led up to it.

According to this article, "HCIS is restricted to investigations of organizations and groups which seek to overthrow the government by unlawful means." They tell us, consequently, that such issues as "probation, parole, sentencing, inmate living conditions, availability of legal services, inmate crimes, prisoner's rights, rehabilitation, recidivism, and the like, were dealt with," Chairman Ichord said, "only to the extent these matters were affected in some way by the activity of revolutionary groups." When they investigated the Attica Prison Rebellion, therefore, they ignored the oppressive conditions that led to the rebellion and concerned themselves solely with the prison revolutionaries and their associations with radicals on the outside. In other words, they ignored the obvious cause of the rebellion, isolated its effect, and went on to investigate it with the intention of repressing such effects in the future.

At the symposium, FBI Director Kelly promised prison officials assistance in dealing with prison radicals "whenever and wherever appropriate and possible as we pursue our responsibilities." Furthermore, Kelly instructed the FBI to "promptly furnish to correctional officials all pertinent information regarding revolutionary

groups and their activities touching on the prison system." Kelly went on to say that the "threat represented by those of revolutionary mind and practice requires that all of us team up...to reduce that risk and danger to an orderly society."

HCIS Chairman Ichord said of the prison authorities: "You necessarily do your work in an unnatural environment with unwilling subjects in whom the flaws of human nature are aggravated (emphasis added)." Ichord concluded that the greatest "problems" confronting prison authorities in this area are the "influx of revolutionary literature into the prisons, inflammatory correspondence between inmates and known revolutionaries, and personal contacts with members of revolutionary groups under the guise of attorney-client relationship."



The article went on to mention Director Carlson's speech at the symposium: "Inmates today, present a far greater challenge to prison officials than in former years and are more difficult to deal with in terms of their authority concept. Many offenders see themselves as political prisoners, regardless of their type of offense, who should not be held responsible for their criminal acts. This notion comes from groups outside the prisons and obviously gives the inmates a distorted image of themselves and the system." In conclusion, Carlson said of the revolutionary groups, "There is no question in my mind that these groups do present a very definite threat to the internal order and security of the institutions. The question is: How do we respond?"

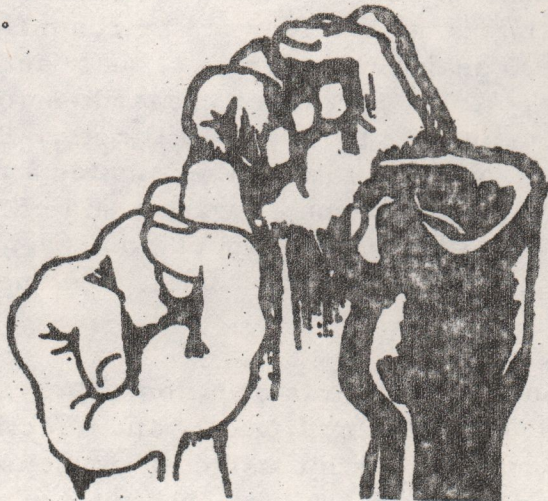
The FBI Bulletin goes on to answer this question. "A training program is necessary to enable correctional staffs to intelligently and effectively cope with the challenge posed by revolutionary activists outside the prisons and their inmate allies inside," the symposium concluded. When Director Carlson said prisoners today "present a far greater challenge to prison officials," he was speaking of the two aspects of the prisoner movement: The politicalized prisoner on the inside, and the small segment of the left which gives him support on the outside. This new training program will be designed to introduce more sophisticated techniques of repression into what George Jackson called "war without terms."

Those of us who were members of organizations and "have been convicted and committed to prison for crimes of violence," who read "revolutionary literature,"

who have "contacts" with attorneys, and whose correspondence with "known revolutionaries" is "inflammatory," will undoubtedly be subjected to these new sophisticated techniques of repression. The prison authorities now employ such tactics as murder, psycho-surgery, shock therapy, drugs, and years of segregation; the destruction of mail, newspapers, and magazines; the denial of visitors, the denial of parole, and so on. Although these techniques of repression are not sophisticated, it is difficult to imagine what innovations they will introduce in the future. If 1984 is already here, what will follow?

Prison is a closed, lawless world, and all crimes against the people are sanctioned without question. While only a minority of the prison population is politicized and radicalized, the prison authorities will murder many prisoners in the hope of eliminating one as dedicated to the revolution as George Jackson, which has the added effect of intimidating many more.

As the prison authorities move towards sophistication in techniques of repression, we anticipate an intensification of psychiatric repression and psychological warfare. But this is not all we expect. On the other hand, when Rockefeller sent troops in to crush the rebellion at Attica, it was obvious that this attack was directed at us in the same manner as the warfare then being directed at the Vietnamese and all anti-imperialist struggles in the third world. For this reason, along with the many other such military attacks and political assassinations we have been subjected to, we anticipate a growing sophistication of military warfare in prisons. The International Police Academy in Washington, DC, directed by the FBI, trains representatives of US imperialism from throughout the third world in tactics of counter-insurgency, with significant emphasis on torture techniques. The CIA, who is responsible for genocide around the world, operates internationally as well as domestically. The tactics of counter-insurgency developed by the FBI and CIA for use in the third world, are undoubtedly applicable to US prisons and the metropolis as a whole.



Whether you are a US convict, a Chilean worker or a Vietnamese peasant, the enemy is US imperialism. For whether you live in the Black ghetto, the Chicano barrio, the Indian Reservation, the US Prison System, a Vietnamese village or a Chilean city, you are a victim of US imperialist exploitation and domination, repression and murder. Nixon, the former Godfather of the executive committee, once said that prisons were schools of crime. We must strive to transform these schools of crime into schools of revolution. Prisoners will continue to struggle

for better living conditions within prisons. We hope prisoner support groups and organizations will continue to do likewise. Our primary objective, however, is to raise the level of political consciousness among both prisoners and people outside, which in turn will lead to a higher level of political practice. As the FBI article emphasized, we must expect more repression as a result of our commitment to the struggle. The movement in general, those working around the prison issue, and especially those inside of prisons should be prepared to confront the aftermath of the recent FBI symposium. A more apt title for the symposium would have been: Fascist Target -- The American Penal System.



Prisoners Win Victory in Mail Censorship Suit

In early February, Federal District Judge Fred Nichols (the same judge who presided over the Wounded Knee trials in Minneapolis) handed down a partial decree in the law suit now pending in his court. Prisoners in South Dakota feel this is one of the most liberal censorship decisions to come out of any court since 1966. Following are some of the judge's decisions. They are being printed because it is important for people to know that fights like this are not always in vain; there are victories that can be won.

Judge Nichol's decision ordered that the South Dakota State Penitentiary:

1. Shall not censor any legal mail either incoming or outgoing. Such legal mail shall be opened only in the presence of the recipient.
2. Regular outgoing correspondence may no longer be censored, but incoming mail may be opened for inspection for contraband and money; however, this shall only be done in the presence of an inmate observer. All outgoing mail shall be sealed by the inmate prior to mailing.
3. Inmate observers shall be assigned for a period of one month; at the end of such time, he shall certify on an approved form his role and the processes observed.
4. Reading materials, consisting of newspapers, magazines, and new and used books, may only be withheld if they pose a clear and present danger to the security of the institution. Packages containing these materials may be opened only in the presence of the recipient.
5. All correspondence lists shall be abolished; however, if a person lodges a complaint with the Warden of the institution, stating that he/she does not want to receive mail from a particular inmate, then and only then can a list be established.
6. If a hearing is desired regarding rejection of a publication or portion thereof, a request for a hearing may be submitted to the Deputy Warden.



Bibliography

Below is a bibliography of publications, most of which are free to prisoners. If you have additions to this list which you feel are important, let us know because we will be up-dating this list in the future. We have received some suggestions from prisoners, but we couldn't include everything. Also, we are checking out some publications before recommending them to people.

GENERAL NEWSPAPERS:

Winter Soldier, the monthly newspaper of Vietnam Veterans Against the War/Winter Soldier Organization. The paper is sent free to prisoners. To get on our mailing list, write to VVAW/WSO, 827 W. Newport, Chicago, Illinois 60657.

Revolution, the monthly newspaper of the Revolutionary Union, a national communist organization. Newspaper is free to prisoners. Write to RU, P.O. Box 3486, Merchandise Mart, Chicago, Illinois 60654.

The Call, the monthly national newspaper of the October League (Marxist-Leninist). As far as we know, it is sent free to prisoners. Write The Call, P.O. Box 2278, Bell Gardens, California 90201.

The Guardian, a weekly independent radical newsweekly which covers news of the various struggles going on in this country and around the world. The cost is \$1 per year for prisoners. Write to Guardian, 33 W. 17th St., New York, NY 10011.

African World, the national newspaper of the Congress of African Peoples. We aren't sure if there is a price, but write to African World, PO Box 2413, Washington, DC 20013

Nebraska Dispatch, a community newspaper which also covers struggles going on in this country and around the world. Write Nebraska Dispatch, PO Box 81036, Lincoln, Nebraska 68501.

Michigan Free Press, a community newspaper which also covers struggles going on in this country and around the world. Often reports on prison struggles. Write to Michigan Free Press, 204 S. 4th Ave, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108.

Akwesasne Notes, a bi-monthly national Native American paper which is free to prisoners. Write to Akwesasne Notes, Mohawk Nation, via Roosevelttown, NY 13683.

New York City Star, also covers local and national problems and struggles. It is free to prisoners. Write to New York City Star, 149 Hester St., New York, NY 10002.

PUBLICATIONS FOR PRISONERS:

The Midnight Special, is the prison publication of the National Lawyers Guild. Write Midnight Special, c/o NLG, 23 Cornelia St., New York, NY 10014.

NEPA News, is the newspaper of the New England Prisoners Association. Write to NEPA, Franconia College, Franconia, New Hampshire 03580.

Free World Times, is a bi-monthly national prisoners paper. It costs \$3/year. Write to them at 314 Social Science Tower, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455.

Scar(d) Times, is the publication of a group in Maine. The paper is free to prisoners. Write to Scar(d) Times at 374 Fore St., Portland, Maine 04111.

Sunfighter, is a paper published by the Washington State Prisoners Labor Union. It is free to prisoners. Write to Sunfighter, PO Box 22199, Seattle, WA 98122.

Fortune News, is published by the Fortune Society, a group of prisoners and ex-prisoners. It is free to prisoners. Write to Fortune News, 29 East 22nd St., New York, NY 10010.

WORKERS' NEWSPAPERS:

(The following papers, most of which are sent free to prisoners, are workers' newspapers; although they deal with national and international struggles, their primary focus is the struggles going on in the community where they are published).

The Bay Area Worker, PO Box 7154, Oakland, CA 94601

The Dayton Workers Voice, PO Box 707, Dayton, Ohio 45402

Milwaukee Worker, PO Box 3305, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53208

On the Line, PO Box 4449, Baltimore, Maryland 21223

Movin' On Up, PO Box 19304, Cincinnati, Ohio 45219

People's Voice, PO Box 158, Maywood, Illinois 60153 (Chicago area)

Southwest Worker, PO Box 18443, Denver, Colorado 80218

The Worker, 129 W. 22nd St., 9th Floor, New York, New York 10011

Northwest Worker, PO Box 24523, Seattle, Washington 98124

People Get Ready, PO Box 10520, Cleveland, Ohio 44110

Southern California Worker, PO Box 2005, Santa Monica, CA 90404

PRESSES AND BOOK STORES:

The People's Press, 968 Valencia St., San Francisco, California 94110 publishes a catalog of their pamphlets about various struggles going on around the world. Both the catalog and pamphlets are sent free to prisoners.

United Front Press, PO Box 40099, San Francisco, California 94140 publishes a catalog of their pamphlets about struggles going on in this country and internationally. The catalog is free to prisoners and there are discounts on literature.

The Red Book Store, 136 River St., Cambridge, Mass. 02139. Offers free books on peoples' struggles for prisoners.

Yenan Books, 2506 Haste, Berkeley, California 94704. Free books by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Mao for prisoners.

FREE BOOK PROGRAMS:

Elizabeth Auerbach, Auerbach Brigade, c/o International Publishers, 381 Park Ave. South, New York, New York 10016.

NACLA (North American Committee on Latin America), PO Box 226, Berkeley, California 94701

Black Scholar Prison Book Fund, 5710 Paradise Ave., Corte Madera, California 94925.

Pacific Studies Center, 1963 University Ave., East Palo Alto, CA 94303.

MERIP (Middle East Research and Information Project), PO Box 48, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138.

POEM • **Angry Warrior**

This poem is a living example of revolutionary culture growing from the peoples' struggles. It speaks to the pride of being Black, the fiery anger of being poor and the hatred for the class enemy -- and to the day when the "angry warriors" rise up to crush and defeat them. It was written by a high school student active in the struggle to "Free Antowyn Cauley-Fight Police Repression."

I am Black and I am poor;
Though proud of this dark skin,
It is even more my pride
That I was raised a peasant;
That I slept as a child,
Not in some common cradle,
But warmly near my mother's breast
When winter froze our rooms.
And I will not be found ashamed
That I went hungry half my life
Licking clean those cracking plates--
The times we could have dinner.
Nor do I shake recalling days
Of playing with roaches,
Of leaky roofs and peeling walls,
Of rats loose in my bed.
For my parents left to me
A legacy of courage,
That for my poverty
I was further on than they.
I would not live as they had done--
Share-cropping in the South,
When comin' to the "Golden North"
With dreams that turned to ashes.
And though my father died before
I even knew my name,
He knew he'd left behind a child
With hopes of being a man.
Now, older and outraged,
My birthright is my shield
Protecting me from the greed
That eats the souls of others.
I take only what I need;
Desiring nothing else.
For luxury is but a fat
The stupid would acquire.
I'm staying slender for the time

(And it will surely come)
When the power visits me
To wreak a mighty vengeance.
On that day from everywhere
The warriors will rise
And from ten billion places
We will shake this world in anger.
We will not be just Black or white
But the slaves of every color
Striking against the masters
That have held us all in chains.
Hardly this a clash of race
But a struggle of the classes
And many of my enemies
Will look as Black as I.
But surely shall I be there;
Praying on for the strength
To fight the money-lovers
Till the last of them lie broken.
Then, should I still be alive,
I will see my parents' graves
And tell them the best way I can
THAT OUR DEBTS AT LAST ARE SETTLED.

