

Provisional Program of Struggle for the Political Rights of Imprisoned Workers

WHOSE FAULT IS IT
IF OPPRESSION CONTINUES?
OURS!

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IF OPPRESSION IS NOT SMASHED?
OURS AS WELL!²

Prisons, the military, and the police are the basic tools of the imperialist state. They are the basic tools of the state with which the bourgeoisie asserts, protects, and achieves its ruling class power—and they always have been. Without its monopoly of violence, its armed structures—the cops, the prisons, the army—the ruling class is nothing. Its historical role was played out long ago. We represent the step that will bring down this house of cards and the facade that is holding the system together. They can no longer make us—we socialists, communists, workers chained to the assembly line, offices, schools, universities—believe that the time is not ripe for the struggle until victory, the struggle to free the proletariat from exploitation, oppression, alienation, and from material and psychological deprivation—the struggle until victory and liberation from imperialism and capitalism.

The problem in the metropole is that, although the system is politically and economically ripe for abolition, the revolutionary strength of the people remains weak. There is more resignation, lethargy, depression, agony, more illness and suicide, more people who are ready to lie down and die—because one can no longer live with this system—than there are people who are ready to stand up and fight. Although imperialism is only a paper tiger, many only see that at this moment it remains a man-eating monster, and they say, “We’ll never get what we want.” However, that is incorrect—it is nondialectical thinking. The darker the night that we believe we have sunk into, the closer the morning is.

² This is a quote of Bertolt Brecht, the communist playwright.

Nowhere is it clearer than in prison, in the very way it operates, that the pig system and its very structure—forced labor, pressure to perform, alienation—is at an end. In 1865, Marx wrote,

The blunt force of the economic conditions assures the rule of capitalism over the working class. As well as economic means, unlimited violence will admittedly always be applied, but only exceptionally. For the normal unfolding of events, the workers need only remain subject to the ‘the natural laws of production.’

Today, the system can no longer rely on the “blunt force of these conditions.” And in prison, they can no longer simply rely on “unlimited violence.” To enforce the loyalty of the people, to maintain it, to discourage them from struggling against the system, the pigs coerce them with prison, tricks, and manipulation. With sales pitches and psychological warfare, they make the prisoners go along with it: they win their collaboration, their cooperation in their own destruction through psychiatry, through brainwashing, which results in the destruction of their consciousness. They do this because they can no longer see any other way to get the unrest in the prisons back under control.

The system can no longer survive without its weapons, its riot squads, its bunkers and alarms, its punishments—without its material tools. The militarization of the state and the psychological aspects of its functioning are two aspects of the same pervasive reality. The cops use the media to develop their psychological warfare on the outside. This is accompanied on the inside by the development of managerial methods based on new, widespread security measures; the construction of dead wings, grates on the cell windows, isolation units and special wings in every prison, guards in watchtowers armed with semiautomatic handguns, close circuit cameras and monitors.

The costs that imperialism obliges its ruling class to bear: a military alliance that encompasses the world, the extension of police power in each individual state, the psychological programs, the bullshit reforms in the prisons, the attempts to extend strategic aspects of the deterrent and destructive capacity of its prisons, the fortified villages in Third World countries where anti-imperialist wars of liberation are being waged. These costs express the need to develop the pig system’s strength. All of these measures also show their fear, their hollowness, their corruption, their stagnation, the very fact that they have nothing more to offer—beyond violence, fascism, oppression, manipulation—that they have no future besides barbarism. They have nothing left to offer except

destruction, fragmentation, pathology, counterinsurgency—and for billions of people in the countries of the Third World: hunger, hardship, illness, illiteracy, and death.

WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?

Numerically and intellectually, the people are superior to the fascists. What cripples us is the fact that all the resistance in the prisons that has occurred so far has occurred in isolation. There was no communication, no plan, no cooperation, and those on the outside who were prepared to support us in our struggle against the imperialist structures were also muddling along with no idea of how to proceed.

Many also failed to understand the political prisoners' struggle against isolation, that is to say, the struggle of those prisoners taken in the armed struggle against the imperialist state—the corporations, the cops, the military, the justice system, the prison system—and the prisoners who have begun to struggle collectively against prison conditions. Isolation is the weapon the system uses to finish off the so-called disruptive elements—i.e., the rebels—to physically and psychologically destroy them, thereby removing the “political” from the flow of things—to nip every expression of autonomous organization in the bud, to liquidate from the outset the struggle for prisoners' collective power and for their basic political and human rights, to use isolation against spokesmen, cadre, and those who have something organizational and political to offer and who have already decided to use all of their power in the service of the people's liberation, the anti-imperialist struggle, and the initiation of a revolutionary prisoners' movement.

The struggle of the political prisoners being held in isolation—isolation from the outside and from others on the inside—is about the revolutionary prisoners' movement achieving the conditions necessary for survival. As long as the pigs can isolate every combatant, everyone who begins to organize resistance, who opens his yap—and not only them, but also all those who work for prisoners' autonomous organization—it will be difficult to develop continuity in the work for autonomous organization and collective counterpower in the prisons.

If the political prisoners take advantage of the publicity around their trials, that only means they are using the market value that exists in many comrades' bewildered minds as a weapon. In reality, you won't find us in the media that spews out headlines against us; instead, you'll find us downstairs in the prison, in the cell, in the special wings, in the bunkers, in isolation. And we're not struggling for privileges, but for

the IMPROVEMENT OF THE CONDITIONS OF STRUGGLE FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PRISONERS' MOVEMENT WITHIN THE PRISONS! Anything else amounts to standing things on their head, ass backwards, seeing things from the outside through the eyes of the pig media, and thereby overlooking the simple, real, undeniable facts. To again explain what we're struggling for, what we're struggling against, and why we struggle:

We are struggling for PRISONER AUTONOMY, for the elementary rights of imprisoned workers, and for the strengthening of prisoners' collective power. In this sense, the action program is more than the material contents of a prison survival program; it is also an instrument—one that allows everyone to understand what's going on, because the imperialist state will not be able to fulfill these simple demands, which according to their own dishonest propaganda they obviously must fulfill. In spite of the immense sums of tax money, which they extract from the people to funnel into their oppressive apparatus, our own need to struggle to get these points put on the agenda means nothing other than the struggle for social revolution, through which our needs will be placed on the agenda. And if the pigs give in on one or another point—all the better. Our hunger for freedom will only grow as a result. What we're struggling against is the imperialist system's prison system, against the psychiatric and psychological programs, against the way we are treated, against the brainwashing techniques which are sold as reform, against the complete disenfranchisement of prisoners in the metropole's prison camps, against all of the system's efforts to play prisoners off against each other, using increased repression or perks to drive a wedge between the different initiatives undertaken by imprisoned workers.

We are also struggling against the reformist organizations that attempt to skim the cream on the outside, while they try to establish themselves on the inside by hindering our capacity to struggle. They do this through paternalism, tactical maneuvers, splits, factional bickering, dogmatism, and pacifism—taking control of everyone who is struggling in the prisons, because they are colonialist pigs who hope to colonize every step towards a revolutionary prisoners' movement—for their own goals that have nothing to do with us. Through their appeals to the imperialist media and through their demands that one character mask replace another as Minister of Justice, these reformists make the class state socially acceptable, trustworthy, and once again credible in the eyes of the people—and they do this at a point in time when every

prisoner can now see that nothing is to be expected from this class, that we can only achieve what we want by our own means—in the struggle against the ruling class and class justice. These reformists propagate and practice class conciliation and collaboration with the imperialist state at a time when the imperialist state’s main problem is that its legitimacy is crumbling and its authority—its apparent role as a peacekeeping force between the classes, although it has always been an instrument of the ruling class against the people—is in tatters. It can only be maintained through the massive use of psychological warfare against the people. Instead of escalating the class struggle, instead of supporting the prison struggle against the structural apparatus and the justice system, instead of supporting the collective power of autonomously organized prisoners, they cobble together arguments for a more efficient reorganization of the repressive apparatus.

The most important point overall—the abolition of prisons—can’t be a demand. We’re the only ones who can achieve that. Only the revolution—e.g., the destruction of the capitalist state apparatus—can bring about the abolition of prisons. In other words, the liberation of imprisoned workers can only be won through the liberation of all workers. Whoever advances such a demand either hasn’t thought it through or else only wants to pull one over on us, giving the struggle a realistic scope by discrediting unrealistic demands.

We call on all prisoners to organize around this program of action both openly and conspiratorially. All those who have nothing left to lose but their chains—take up, organize and lead the struggle in the prisons.

We are struggling for:

1. freedom for prisoners to organize themselves.
2. wages established in law, the right to training and work, a workers’ association and the right to strike.
3. retirement benefits and health insurance.
4. health care provided in hospitals by doctors who are not prison employees; a free choice of doctors.
5. self-government with the right to fulfill any function.
6. unlimited right to visitors—without observation.
7. freedom to assemble unobserved.
8. abolition of the use of force, all special treatment, and isolation.
9. abolition of youth detention.

10. mixed institutions.
11. abolition of house arrest.
12. abolition of mail censorship.
13. abolition of forced medication.
14. free access to political information from all national and foreign publications and media available outside of prison.

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PRISONERS' MOVEMENT!
VICTORY TO THE PEOPLE'S WAR!

The RAF Prisoners
September 1974