

Are Societal Demands On Prisons Spawning Political Revolutionaries?

by Polly Howells

New York, N.Y. (CPS) — Prisons have always spawned revolutionaries. And this past year one of the most vital of America's revolutionary movements is growing within the country's prison walls.

It has been said that all prisoners are by definition "political." That is, the prisoner is accused or convicted of a crime against society, and is declared "outside the law," an "outlaw." And the law is designed to maintain a very specific economic and social equilibrium.

But today this conception of all prisoners as "political" is becoming less and less metaphorical. More prisoners are beginning to see the societal forces that led them to become "Outlaws." George Jackson writes in one of his prison letters: "Most of today's convicts have come to understand that they are the most abused victims of an unrighteous order."

Prisoners are beginning to see jail as a microcosm of the society they are fighting, and actively identify themselves as enemies of the established order. Ken Cender, indicted in last fall's prison uprisings in New York City, writes: "When someone has been refused his birthright to live a full life socially and economically, and is deprived of the money, power, and influence to achieve justice, he has indeed become a political prisoner of this society."

Last summer and fall there were a series of uprisings in New York City prisons which gained wide sympathy. The rebellions occurred in detention facilities where men and women were imprisoned up to year or more for lack of \$500 or \$1,000 bail, while awaiting trial.

Many people are familiar with the facts of the New York prison rebellions — along with the beatings and the further indictments of participants who demanded rights of food and health care in the detention centers. Prisoners who were heard by the outside world were later punished, even though elected officials agreed their were just. The prisoners do not miss the injustice in this.

A letter signed by the "Queens Eight," the eight men indicted as "leaders" of the Long Island City rebellion, was sent to Victor Martinez shortly after he too was indicted. It says: "You are guilty of opening the door so that people can see what goes on behind these walls. For this they ask that you be imprisoned for life. Neither you nor us sparked the flames of rebellion that spread throughout the entire city. For we know that injustice and the disregard for human lives are the true cause of the blaze. But someone must pay, someone must be made example of. We, Victor, have been elected. Elected to be made weapons of fear to still our brothers when they need to cry out from being brutalized, maimed, and murdered."

Folsom Prison Blues

A major prison uprising this fall occurred at Folsom Prison in California. Inmates there declared a strike, refusing to leave their cells and work in the prison factories for the wages they receive (six cents an hour making such items as automobile license plates). They de-

manded that prison negotiators be allowed to meet with officials to settle on a series of 31 demands. The negotiators were to be Huey P. Newton, Charles Garry and Sal Candelaria of the Chicago Brown Berets. Unlike the rebellions in New York, the negotiators were not inmates. Presumably this choice was so inmate "leaders" could not be picked off later by beatings and indictments as happened in New York.

The strike was broken after three weeks, when guards with clubs entered each man's cell and physically forced him to go to work. The strike was broken by direct, brutal repression, without the hypocritical promises of reform and "no reprisals" that characterized the New York response.

Racial Unity

White men and women experience in prison the degradation that non-white people experience every day in the streets outside the prisons. White people as well as black people in these institutions are recognizing how racism is used to divide and weaken all men and women, white and black.

George Jackson speaks of this in a recent interview with Liberation News Service: "The prisons are only a microcosm of this whole society, whose purpose is to control — to divide and rule by fear and terror. It doesn't take much to set it up: racism is planted in the minds of 90 percent of the population. Racism is the backbone of both domains — the society and the prison."

John Cluchette, of the Soledad Brothers, elaborated: "Most people become political in prison; in general, the whites are driven to the radical right and blacks are driven to the black right . . . But recently there's been a shift from the black right to the internationalist left — in the past few years since they've been busting Panthers."

The Berkley TRIBE asked Tony Martinez, one of the Los Siete brothers, about these changes: "Guys that have done a lot of time, ten, fifteen, twenty years, they talk about the changes, political changes, that have been made in the prisons, like before how black guys would be fighting against the white guys or the Chicanos. Now slowly but surely everybody's been getting together in a political war, which is amazing."

Mental Murder

Witnesses to the Folsom strike felt the only thing that kept the strike going for three weeks despite efforts to crush it was the interracial unity. One inmate wrote his lawyers afterwards: "It is almost unbelievable the rapport between the different ethnic or racial groups that exists here. The change in thought processes that necessarily preceded this rapport is equally unbelievable when viewed in the context of the racial and clique animosities that were existent just a year ago."

The rebellions in New York City took place in detention facilities, which are over 90% black and brown, since men and women are held in these jails only if they cannot afford bail. For these inmates, as Mary Kaufman, director of the

Mass Defense Office of the New York City chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, said in an interview, ". . . prison is only an extension of the ghetto, the highest form of the brutalization and dehumanization that begins in the ghetto. The fight inside these prisons is the same as the fight against racism and poverty in the ghettos."

Ken Cender describes what being in prison can do to people: "In all these years under this system (Cender has been in jail off and on for 18 years, since he was 12 years old), I've come to know brutality comparable with that of which the Jews suffered under Hitlerism. I have seen men, myself included, come into this system for petty offenses and go out professional thieves. It's here that they are educated for crime. It is here that they lost their status as human beings, and go out with pure vindictive hate in their hearts, and a perennial resentment for authority. Rehabilitation within this system has no meaning whatsoever. I've come to learn how men are murdered psychologically. And that's where he'll be treated so bad that he eventually weakens and ends up hanging from the bars of his cell. They call it suicide."

Today more and more prisoners are turning their anger on the state in a conscious, deliberate, controlled way. If things continue this way, the person who becomes a "professional thief" in prison will soon be outnumbered by the person who becomes a revolutionary in prison. The revolutionary has no better chance of getting out of jail than the professional thief" but he or she will resist the "psychological murder" Cender speaks of.

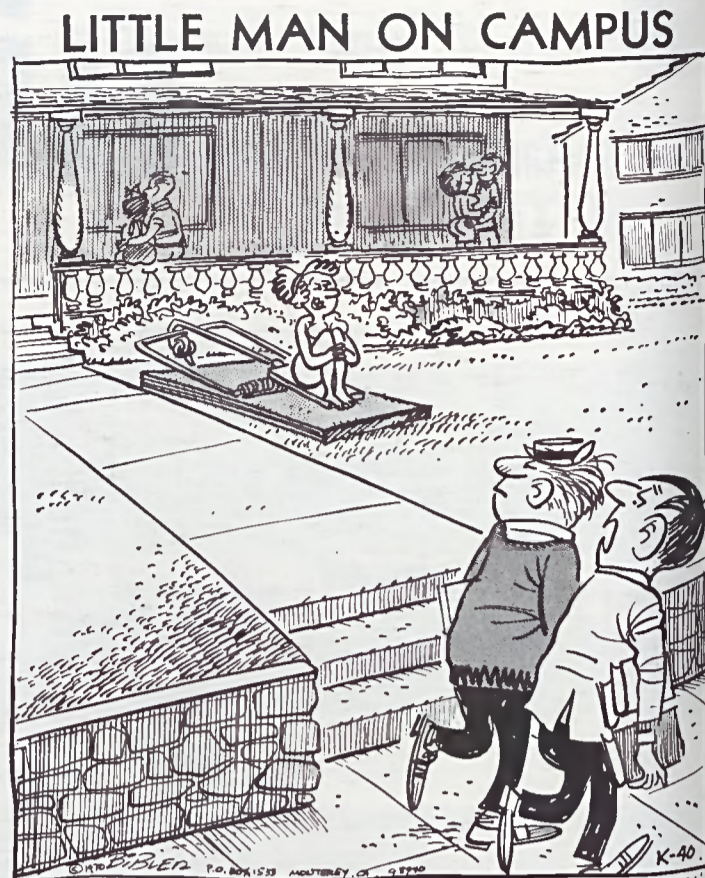
MHC Republicans At Conventions

Jeannie McDuffie and Keith Burns were delegates representing the MHC Republicans Club at the Spring Convention of the North Carolina Federation of College Republicans March 23 in Winston-Salem. All North Carolina colleges and universities that have Republican Clubs and that are a member of this Federation were represented by delegates. The main purpose of the Convention was to elect officers of the Federation for the coming year.

On Saturday morning a luncheon was held and Jim Gardner, the 1968 Republican gubernatorial candidate for North Carolina, was the speaker. After the luncheon the convention was held and the following officers were elected: Sam Currin of Wake Forest University, Chairman; Kathy Garrick of Wesleyan College, Co-chairwoman; Jim Godfrey of East Carolina University, Vice-chairman; Bill Chisolm of North Carolina State University, Secretary; and Rick Smith of Pembroke State University, Treasurer. Keith Burns was appointed to the Executive Committee.

After convention adjournment a picnic supper was given at the home of Jim Culbertson, North Carolina Young Republican National Committeeman.

Around 125 college students attended the convention. Mrs. Jean Briggs, advisor to the MHC Republican Club, accompanied the students from Mars Hill.



HILLTOP

by Laine Calloway

How are the sunburns? Don't you guys know that exams are coming? Study . . . yeah, sure.

Right now I'm going to give all you sunbathers a real lecture. The other day I went out behind the girls' dorms to Huffman Beach and the place looked like a trash dump. You know there is no excuse for littering.

Dispose of your garbage. You can't gripe about foul air and water if you pollute the land yourself. Wise up while you've got the chance.

The Library hereby declares hours:

Monday - Thursday	7:15 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Friday	7:45 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Saturday	10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Sunday	3:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.

Free flicks will be shown at the Mars Theatre Sunday through Thursday for summer school students. Come and enjoy the fringe benefits.

Stephanie Stimpert, junior from St. Petersburg, Fla., became the winner of the 1961 Chevrolet Biscayne raffled by the MHC Chapter of Alpha Phi Omega. The brothers wish to thank everyone who participated in this worthwhile project. Proceeds will be used for the club's service projects and internal needs.

One of Alpha Phi Omega's service projects this year was donating educational games for the special education classes at the Mars Hill Baptist Church. The fraternity is now buying park benches for the campus.

Officers of Alpha Phi Omega for 1971-72 are: Bill Early, President; George Plumly, Vice-President; Larry Pfaff, Secretary; Mike Stevens, Treasurer; Sherrill, Pledge Master; Randy Hedon, Sergeant at Arms; and Mike Parrot, Historian. New brothers are David Harrington, Buck Suttle, Gordon Stair, Gordon Davis, John Foster, David Rathmore, and Gerald Lonon.

Let me see, there was once a trite phrase people used to go around saying; let me ask you . . . what goes on? One thing for sure, Laurel, called Avis in Hilltop circles, comes out next week. Everyone, including the Hilltoppers, awaits the arrival of No. 2's rendition of a yearbook. We shall see what we shall see and then we shall do something about it.

This week's NoDoz Service Award goes to whomever picks up the trash from Huffman Beach.

the Mars Hill College

hilltop

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Published by students of Mars Hill College, P. O. Box 486-T, Mars Hill, N. C., 28754. Advertising rate is \$.75 per column inch. Telephone 689-1250. Subscription rate is \$2 per year. Published 15 times during the college year.



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