

Prison Attacks Escalate on Remiro and Little

Fifth Estate Collective

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The State of California has recently stepped up its attacks on Russell (Little and Joseph Remiro (imprisoned for the 1973 SLA assassination of Oakland, Calif. school official Marcus Foster) who are currently serving life terms.

In recognition of his two years of non-violent behavior in the maximum security Adjustment Center at San Quentin prison, promises were made to Russ Little that he would be transferred to a less restricted unit in another prison. These promises were made by counselors at San Quentin as well as various administrators in the California Department of Corrections over a period of five months.

Instead, on July 12 he was forcibly moved to the most repressive unit (Death Row) in San Quentin, if not the entire prison system. This occurred simultaneously with the banishment of his two legal investigators from San Quentin, thus denying him access to legal representation.

This arbitrary, cruel and illegal treatment was justified on the grounds that his "crime partner," Joe Remiro, had been locked down in maximum security a month earlier at Folsom prison for allegedly planning an escape attempt. (See FE July 1977) Since the same legal investigators visit Joe, the San Quentin administration said there must have been a "conspiracy" involving the two of them and Russ as well as Joe.

Of course, none of them are being tried in the "official" courts because there is not even any evidence to link Joe to the alleged escape attempt (except for the word of a prison snitch named Bobby Davis) much less to implicate either of the legal workers or Russ. This same paranoid "reasoning" was used to justify moving William Harris, also associated with the SLA, to a more restricted floor within the Adjustment Center even though he does not visit either of the two legal investigators in question.

(Remiro and four other Folsom prisoners were recently "convicted" at a prison administrative hearing held in August and September on the sole evidence of the snitch and sentenced to long terms in solitary confinement-42 months for Remiro.)

This was the excuse San Quentin officials had been searching for to justify keeping Russ in the hole and separating him and Bill Harris while keeping them both under maximum security conditions. Their lawyer contacted the warden of Folsom prison, the prosecuting attorney (should the case ever go to court), and the director of the state prison system and they all said that neither of the legal investigators nor Bill Harris nor Russ were under investigation for involvement in the incident at Folsom prison. These same investigators have continued to visit with Joe at Folsom.

Although San-Quentin officials had originally said their information stemmed from the investigation being conducted by the Folsom staff, they have refused to move Russ or Bill back to their original housing units or to reinstate the privileges that they have lost.

This is the latest in a continuing effort on the part of prison officials to isolate and alienate Joe, Russ, and Bill from the general prison population. Officials have even gone so far as to tell other class war prisoners held in the same units as the two at San Quentin that they should "stay away from the SLA and their friends on the streets" if they ever want to get out of the maximum security holes.

After three months on Death Row the San Quentin staff has informed Russ that they will continue to hold him there while at San Quentin because he and Bill are escape risks and must be kept apart for institutional security. Bill remains in the Adjustment—Center—the other maximum security “hole” at San Quentin. They have recommended to the state director of prisons that Russ be transferred to the hole of another prison to completely isolate Joe, Bill and Russ by holding each of them in maximum security in three separate prisons.

The prison administrators also told Russ and Bill that neither of them would be allowed out of the hole while at San Quentin because of the probability of retaliation against them in response to a published statement about the incident at Folsom prison. In that article, state prison officials are quoted as telling members of the media that Joe Remiro and the other convicts accused of allegedly smuggling in a gun to Folsom Prison intended not only to kill a number of prison guards in an escape attempt but also to execute members of different prison gangs.

That was contained in the statement of the prison rat who gave the gun to Folsom guards before the alleged “plan” could be carried out. Publicizing (as well as inventing) that “theory” was an obvious attempt to create a dangerous situation for Joe, Bill and Russ—an attempt that state officials now assert was successful and will provide further justification for their isolation and repression.

There have been a number of stabbing deaths in the racial fighting among prisoners at San Quentin during the last few months, as well as one white prisoner shot and killed while allegedly stabbing a black convict.

California prison officials are notorious for intensifying racial antagonisms among prisoners and manipulating the resulting rage and violence of politically backward and reactionary convicts of all races against prisoners who they consider “troublemakers.” This manipulative technique has been developed and perfected over many years as the primary method for murdering revolutionary captives and eliminating their potential influence on the general prison population as well as the possibility of their eventual release—very few revolutionaries leave California prisons alive.

Since the present phase of political persecution is allegedly based on confidential sources, it is now necessary for Russ and Bill to file federal civil suits to try to force the prison administration to reveal the “evidence” linking each of them to the gun/escape plan at Folsom prison. Money is needed to help defray the living expenses of the lawyer and legal investigators working on the suits and can be sent to: Jack Little, p. o. box 4344, Sather Gate Station, Berkeley, Calif. 94704.

Ex-SLAers May Get New Trial

Joseph Remiro and Russell Little, convicted for the SLA assassination of an Oakland, Calif. school superintendent, will get a new trial if a recent California Supreme Court decision is upheld. Both are currently serving life terms in prison.

Their jury had been deadlocked for eleven days during their 1975 trial when the Judge finally read the so-called “blockbuster” legal instruction, telling those jurors who favor acquittal to reconsider their vote, if they are in the minority. Shortly after hearing the Judge’s order, the jurors broke their deadlock and convicted Remiro and Little of first degree murder.

But last month, the State Supreme Court—in an unrelated case—declared this “blockbuster instruction” illegal and ruled that anyone—including Remiro and Little—whose case is under appeal, would automatically get a new trial if they had been convicted following such instructions.

The State Attorney General has already started a political campaign to get a rehearing of the decision by publicizing the fact that the “SLA assassins” and other “sinister killers” will get costly retrials if the decision remains as it is now written.

The state is well aware that if Russ and Joe get acquitted in the retrial, they will be eligible for parole on March 1, 1979 because they will have beaten their original 7 charges and will only be in prison on the two assault convictions that stemmed from their attempted escape from jail on March 1, 1975.



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