

A Letter from Komboa

Lorenzo Komboa Ervin

1978

Staff Note: The following is a letter that was recently sent to the *Fifth Estate* by Lorenzo Komboa Ervin. For more information about Komboa, see "Komboa: Anti-Vietnam Warrior," FE #292, June 19, 1978.

Dear Comrades:

I am an Anarchist political prisoner confined in the infamous Control Unit Behavior Modification Program at the Marion Federal Penitentiary. Ten prisoners have died in the Control Unit In the past few years (3 deaths in 1977 alone!) and hundreds of others have been-driven to self-mutilation or insanity.

The Control Unit is nothing more than a torture and death camp. My second day in here the prison guards tried to set me up by trying to incite two White prisoners (who were armed with knives) to attack and kill or injure me. Luckily they would not swallow the racist bait and refused to do so. On another such occasion, a Nazi prisoner tried to shoot me with a zip gun. Again I was lucky and escaped injury, but how long can my luck hold out? Prison guards continually incite racial conflict among the prisoners.

I need to get out of the Control Unit immediately if I am to stay alive! I have demanded that the prison officials transfer me to another prison, but they have ignored my request, even laughed in my face!

I am asking my comrades in the Anarchist and Libertarian movement for help in saving my life. I need a transfer; it's a matter of life-and-death! A new federal prison has opened in my home state of Tennessee, which would allow me the protection of my family, friends, and attorney, as well as the opportunity to have visits with them. I get no visits from them now. My chances of making parole are also better in Memphis; I've suffered the inhumane abuse of prison for over 10 years now and should be released. However the prison officials are refusing to send me there, saying that I "don't qualify" since I'm a "troublemaker" and an Anarchist. This is mere personal and political persecution, and part of a plot to keep me in the Control Unit until I'm seriously injured or killed. Are the prison officials to succeed in this plot? You can stop them. I am asking that my friends and comrades in the Anarchist movement, as well as Libertarians and prisoner supporters, write or call the Bureau of Prisons and demand that they move me to Memphis where I will be closer to my family and out of danger.

Contact:

Roy E. Gerard, Assistant Director, Federal Bureau of Prisons, 320 1st Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20534,
(202) 739-2226

(A telephone call is more effective.)

The above-named man is in charge of the Control Unit and is also responsible for any transfers to any prison in the Federal Prison System: Put pressure on him!

Please print this letter in Libertarian/Anarchist news journals, and make copies and send it to others.

You can write me at the address below. I'd love to hear from you.

In Anarchist Solidarity,

Lorenzo Komboa Ervin

No. 18759-175

P.O. Box 1000
Marion, Illinois 62959

fifth Estate

Lorenzo Komboa Ervin
A Letter from Komboa
1978

<https://www.fiftheestate.org/archive/293-294-august-21-1978/a-letter-from-komboa>
Fifth Estate #293-294, August 21, 1978

[fiftheestate.anarchistlibraries.net](https://www.fiftheestate.org)