

Free John Sinclair

Fifth Estate Collective

“There is no LAW in Amerika today—only the honkie power structure and its victims. We are down to the nitty-gritty now, with our backs to the wall, and the population is quickly polarizing: oppressors and oppressed. The revolutionary youth of the weirdo country are an oppressed people—the victims of a calculated cultural repression movement instigated and carried out by the honkie power structure under Richard M. Nixon, Henry Ford II, Nelson Rockefeller, and other monied interests who are committed to maintaining the decadent status quo. They will kill us if they can, they will incarcerate their own children and have them beaten if they can get away with it, they would jail all of us if they could—all in the name of, freedom, democracy, and the unspeakable obscenity they call the American Way.”

— John Sinclair

John Sinclair, Minister of Information of the White Panther Party, revolutionary, poet, builder of a new conscious community, contributing editor for the *Fifth Estate* and *Ann Arbor Argus*, manager of the MC5, and coordinator of Trans-Love Energies, a group of four working communes living in and around the Ann Arbor Detroit area, is now being held political prisoner at the State Prison of Southern Michigan at Jackson. He was sentenced to nine and one half to ten years for alleged possession of two joints of marijuana.

In January of 1967, in a massive attack by the entire Narcotics Bureau of the Detroit Police Department, 56 people were arrested on marijuana charges, the arrests coming after four months of investigation and undercover work by two narcotics agents. Of the 56 people arrested and held overnight, all but fourteen were released without charges. All of the fourteen except John and Magdalene Sinclair. John's wife was arrested and shoved around, although she was visibly pregnant with their daughter Sunny at the time. The others took the easy way out pleading guilty to lesser charges and receiving probation from the courts. Magdalene's case was dismissed because of illegally obtained evidence. John fought the case with the help of some of the most beautiful and revolutionary attorneys in the country, who entered a masterful brief challenging the constitutionality of the current marijuana laws.

The White Panther Minister of Information went to trial on July 22, 1969. On July 25 he was convicted of possession of two marijuana cigarettes, after the jury deliberated only an hour and five minutes. Held in the Wayne County Jail without bond over the weekend, on Monday morning, July 28, he was sentenced by Judge Robert Colombo to A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN NINE AND ONE HALF NOR MORE THAN TEN YEARS in the State prison at Jackson, Michigan, Colombo then ordered that John be held without bail although his attorneys had immediately filed for appeal. The Michigan Court of Appeals has likewise denied appeal bond for John.

The nature of this case is like many others around the country. When a man works consistently for the people, with their interests at heart, when a man sees the contradictions in Amerika and moves to rectify them, when a man shows the people a workable alternative to the present madness, an applicable theory for the problems facing them, then such a man is a “menace” to the existing social order. But more important, when a man puts theory into practice then he is a revolutionary, building a revolutionary culture, and the leaders of this country cannot

afford change. They have a vested greedy interest in the status quo. That is why John Sinclair is in prison, because he advocated and struggled for change, he worked for a new and more humane social order. A revolutionary must be silenced by the power structure, because such a man lays the power structure bare, he lays the corrupt leaders open for all the people to see, and he shows the people the correct way to deal with their enemies and oppressors.

So agents of the oppressors, consisting in this case of several Detroit law enforcement agencies and courts acting in collusion, set out, with all the vengeance of the freshly exposed, to deal with John Sinclair. This audacious brother had stood up and spoken the truth in a loud voice and spoke up even louder every time they moved to silence him. Several key agents of the Detroit Narcotics Bureau, directed in part by a man who earlier had vowed to “drown” John Sinclair, worked full time in an effort to discover or create a pretext for incarcerating him. These narcotics agents, who are employed and paid by the people to control illegal traffic in debilitating drugs, consistently ignored heavy dope dealers and Mafia-supplied pushers operating in the area in order to lay the groundwork for the fabrication of a case against a man who, and they knew this all along, did not traffic in dope.

John trafficked in the truth—the truth about a conspiracy of police and government agencies, who in the guise of public servants, can snatch a man out of his home and put him in jail under the slightest of pretexts. Brother Sinclair spoke and wrote the truth about fascism in Amerika. Pointing out the contradictions in this hypocritical society, he correctly defined the despotic practitioners, their pawns, and the Neo-Nazi tactics of an anti-human, unjust, racist system.

Fascists find and put forth suitable pretexts for their crimes. The current marijuana laws act as just such a pretext, behind which the power structure attacks and eliminates people who move to expose them. A man need only be found, or said to be found, with a joint of the herb in his home, and he faces ten years in the penitentiary. A joint can be planted here and there, a lie told on the witness stand, and the man is dragged off to prison for the next decade of his life.

Cases like the one against John Sinclair will continue to be fabricated by oppressors of the people and usurpers of illegitimate power. Witness Lee Otis Johnson, the dedicated SNCC organizer in Texas, who is doing a 30 year sentence for allegedly giving some marijuana to a cop. Witness Jerry Rubin, who is facing the courts supposedly for possessing some weed. Witness Larry Belcher, a very dedicated writer and speaker for the legalization of marijuana who was busted and sentenced to 20 to 30 years in prison on marijuana charges. Witness the many members of the Black Panther Party who are dragged off the streets and thrown in jail on marijuana charges with no evidence of any kind to justify the arrests.

All these busts are political, based as they are on laws which lend themselves to the use of illegal and repressive tactics for their selective enforcement, laws that give corrupt persons and groups the opportunity to seize illegitimate power to suppress freedom of speech. John Sinclair opposed the suppression of freedom with all his energies, and the struggle to free him and all political prisoners needs the energies of all who would oppose the rise of fascism and the denial of freedom in Amerika.

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