



Marilyn Buck, #00482-285
Linda Evans, #19973-054
Dylcia Pagan, #88971-024
Aida (McCray) Robinson
#03323-097
(Lucy) Ida Luz Rodriguez
#88973-024
Carmen Valentin, #88974-024
Laura Whitehorn, #22432-037
Donna Willmott, #38772-079
5701 8th Street
Camp Parks
Dublin, CA 94568

Kathy Boudin, #84-G-171
Judy Clark, #83-G-313
Bedford Hills
Box 1000
Bedford Hills, NY 10507
Norma Jean Croy, #W14293
P.O. Box 1508
Chowchilla, CA 93610
Ana Lucia Gelabert, #384484
9055 Spur 591
Neal unit
Amarillo, TX 79107
Alicia Rodriguez, #N07157
Box 5007
Dwight, IL 60420

Political Prisoners Need Your Support

Merle Austin Africa, # 006306
Janet Holloway Africa, #006308
Janine Phillips Africa, #006309
Debbi Sims Africa, #006307
451 Fullerton Avenue
Cambridge Springs, PA 16403-1230
Silvia Baraldini, #05125-054
Susan Rosenberg, #03684-016
Alejandrina Torres, # 92152-024
Pembroke Station
Danbury, CT 06811

Worldwide, few governments recognize any of these women as political prisoners. The situation in the US is particular because US-held political prisoners have the longest sentences of any political prisoners in this hemisphere—longer than most political prisoners anywhere! Most are serving more than 50 years for crimes in which no one was hurt.

These women are the sisters of the Irish women who were locked down in the infamous Armagh or imprisoned in El Salvador. They are the sisters of women like Adora Fe Devera, held for many years in underground prisons in the Philippines, or recently released prisoner, Imgard Mueller, of Germany. Their fight is that of the Palestinians held in Israeli jails or locked down in the dungeons of Korea.



Norma Jean Croy

**The legacy of women's determination
inspires and compels us to realize our
aspirations ... We cannot demand
rights for which we are not willing to
struggle.**

Like their international sisters, these women are committed political activists who continue to work from within the prison walls. Their spirits remain strong and unbroken despite continued sexual harassment, abuse and medical neglect.



From left to right, Alejandrina Torres, Carmen Valentin and Dylcia Pagan

The United States has the fastest growing prison population in the Western World. One and a half million people are in prison with an additional 3,500,000 under the control of the criminal justice system.

Women comprise the fastest growing population of people going to prison. The number of women prisoners has doubled during the last ten years. Eighty percent of incarcerated women are mothers — devastating to the social fabric of the United States.

Alejandrina Torres, in prison since 1983, is one of the 15 Puerto Rican POWs. She is serving the equivalent of life in prison for "seditious conspiracy" to end US colonial domination of Puerto Rico. She was an activist and a community leader in Chicago. Alejandrina was a founding member and teacher at the Puerto Rican High School, one of the founders of the Betances Clinic and secretary of the First Congregational Church of Chicago.

Susan Rosenberg, a white North American anti-imperialist, is serving 58 years for possession of weapons and explosives; the longest sentence ever received for a possession offense. She has been a political activist all her adult life, committed to solidarity with the Puerto Rican Independence Movement and the Black Liberation Struggle. A doctor of acupuncture, prior to her incarceration she worked

at a community health center in Harlem, New York, using acupuncture to fight the drug plague. She is a published poet, writer and an AIDS activist in prison.

We cannot forget these sisters. We cannot let the US government continue to lock them away, far from their communities.

In 1979, after an international campaign, President Jimmy Carter granted amnesty to four long-held Puerto Rican nationalist prisoners—among them, Lolita Lebron. All over the world governments have released political prisoners after many years. It is time for the US to do the same.



From left to right, Marilyn Buck, Laura Whitehorn, Susan Rosenberg and Silvia Baraldini

Please add your voice to those demanding freedom and justice in the United States.



For more information, contact:

Out of Control, 3543 18th Street, #30, San Francisco, CA 94110, USA or **Women Against Imperialism**, 3543 18th Street, #14, San Francisco, CA 94110, USA; **Interfaith Prisoners of Conscience Project**, c/o ETI PO Box 9334, Berkeley, CA 94709, USA

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Twenty-five percent of US political prisoners are women. They're Puerto Rican *independistas* like Dylcia Pagan and Carmen Valentin, who received 55 and 98 years for "seditious conspiracy." Or Norma Jean Croy, a Native American woman, who remains in prison after 17 years for a crime she didn't commit. And they're white North American anti-imperialists, Marilyn Buck, serving 80 years, for political actions with the Black Liberation Army, including the escape of Assata Shakur, or Linda Evans, serving 40 years for illegal purchase of weapons and "conspiracy to influence, change and protest policies and practices of the US government ..."

Armed resistance in the Americas is not new, but part of a history which these political prisoners and POWs personify. In fact, under international law, as well as the US constitution, people have a right and an obligation to resist the illegal policies and practices of their government.

There are over 150 political prisoners and prisoners of war (POWs) held in US prisons. The United States government vehemently denies the existence of political prisoners and insists these women and men are criminals. The strategy of the US is to criminalize these political activists—to disguise their political identities behind the rhetoric of "terrorism" and criminal activity. They have been convicted of and imprisoned for activities which are political in nature. Their activities include fighting for human rights and self-determination, Black liberation, sovereignty for Native American people, opposing US intervention and for Puerto Rican independence.



Linda Evans

WOMEN POLITICAL PRISONERS in the UNITED STATES

