

# THE BLACK PANTHER PARTY AND HUGO PINELL

There was a time in the prison systems throughout the United States, when the prisoners themselves were divided, not only white against Black, but Latinos against Blacks. This (the result of racism in every area of U.S. society) was particularly apparent in the California prisons. Blacks and Latinos fought, stabbed, and killed each other in the yards, cell blocks and dining halls of every prison camp from Tehachapi to Tracy. This is always the case when the racist, white prison guard, under administration orders, pits one man struggling to survive against another. It is the easiest way for the prison to assure almost absolute control over its inmate population. After all, only an idiot would believe he could control 100 men with one man, unless the one hundred were divided. Quite often men are paid to start fights between two men. At one time it was almost a sport, to watch inmates fight inmates. People inside even engaged in betting money on the winner. The administration is pleased.

California, particularly, has been known for its medieval and inhuman treatment of those behind its maximum prison walls. Soledad Correctional Training Facility is one of the main prisons known for such treatment. Men entered Soledad prison only to be thoroughly broken, or killed. Along with the minimum prison community (where we live), the brothers and sisters across the country, inside the maximum prisons, began to awaken to the fact of their oppression. They began to realize as Comrade George Jackson would say, that they were all a part of the prisoner class. They began to realize that there was no way to survive that special brand of fascism particular to California prison camps, except by beginning to work and struggle together. Divisions, such as this one, like family feuds, often take time to resolve. The common goal of liberation and the desire for freedom helps to make the division itself disappear, and the reason for its existence become clearer and clearer. The prisoner class, especially in California, began to understand the age-old fascist principle: If you can divide, you can conquer.

There are two men who were chiefly responsible for bringing this idea to the forefront. They helped other comrade inmates to transform the ideas of self-hatred and division into unity



COMRADE HUGO PINELL

and love common to all people fighting to survive and retain dignity. These two Brothers not only set this example in words, but in practice. Comrade George Jackson and Comrade Hugo Pinell, one Black and one Latino, were the living examples of the unity that can and must exist among the prisoner class. These two men were well-



When Comrades George and Hugo started walking and talking together, the brothers in the prisoner class began to get the message too well.

known to other inmates as strong defenders of their people. Everyone knew of their love for the people; a love that astounded especially the prison officials of the State. It astounded them so thoroughly that these pigs had

to try and portray them as animals, perverts, madmen and criminals, in order to justify their plans to eventually get rid of such men. For when Comrades George and Hugo walked and talked together, the prisoners began to get the message too well.

In a well-planned move, the State of California and the U.S. government carried out the vicious assassination of Comrade George Jackson (a member of the Black Panther Party), on August 21, 1971. Their plans to slaughter Hugo Pinell are now in full swing.

Hugo was born to a poor family in Nicaragua, a country (in Latin America) in which 60% of the people are unable to read or write. His mother left there, when he was a small boy, to come to the United States to make a better life for her family. She found her new home in San Francisco only slightly better. She found her son, Hugo, bitter from the things he saw; and she saw him against all of it. His sense of justice and respect for humankind would not allow him to accept the racism and the corruption of North America, particularly, the United States.

In 1965 Hugo was convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment, on phoney and deliberately-trumped-up charges, which he could neither defend nor appeal. He was charged with kidnapping, robbery and rape, typical charges for poor, young men in the United States. Like most young brothers, Hugo had no knowledge of law. A public defender suggested to his family that he could get less time if he pleaded guilty to one of the three. The public defender "suggested" he "take the rape charge". He was poor. He had no lawyer. He was sent to Soledad "Correctional" Facility where he has been able to barely survive the past six years. Once a man declares that he will retain his dignity, that he will not forfeit his manhood, then he has, in essence, declared war against the prison. He has declared war upon the guards, who operate on the smallest amount of intelligence and human understanding, and upon the prison and state officials, whose every move is planned and calculated to help in this government's last feeble attempts to quell the desire of the people to see power returned into the hands of the

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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CONTINUED FROM LAST PAGE

people. Hugo, from the very beginning of his imprisonment, made that declaration. They all knew it. He was a man determined to live out his life servant of the people.

In March of 1968, the campaign against Hugo was stepped up. Comrade Hugo was charged with assaulting a guard, after he was transferred to San Quentin's Adjustment Center, from Soledad (where he has spent most of the previous three years.). In December, 1969, he was returned to Soledad. Later, he was transferred to Folsom, while he appeared as a witness in a trial. They charged him again. There he was charged with assault upon a white prisoner. He was again returned to Soledad (in June of that year). By 1970, he had a reputation, the one they usually create. He was considered a dangerous "criminal". On December 14, 1970, he was harassed, this time being charged with assault upon a guard at Soledad. While he was standing trial for those very charges, he was accused of stabbing to death another guard, a known racist, Robert McCarthy. This supposedly took place in the super maximum security "adjustment" center at Soledad. He faces the death penalty. All of these incidents of harassment, all of the ways in which they tried to break his will failed. He was, therefore, transferred again to San Quentin, in the fall of this year and there he and George Jackson, along with Fleeta Drungo, John Clutchette, Ruchell Magee, and 21 other

men entombed in the adjustment center, became closer comrades, dedicated to the birth of the new man, whose face is beginning to appear behind every prison wall, in every cell block, in the prison camps across this country.

Comrade Hugo's life in the adjustment center at San Quentin differed only slightly from that at Soledad and Folsom. One thing was common to all of them, the adjustment centers were for men who resisted the prison conception for fascist authority. All of them were revolutionary men, whose very existence emphasized the necessity to struggle for freedom from all forms of oppression.

They were not allowed out of the adjustment center for any reason other than visits with their families, lawyers and very few friends. They were not allowed to communicate with other prisoners. Hugo, like most of the others, even greeted all of this with relative calm. He said that no matter what they did to him or any of them, that the desire to be free, would live on in the minds of all prisoners everywhere, on the inside or the outside of the prison walls.

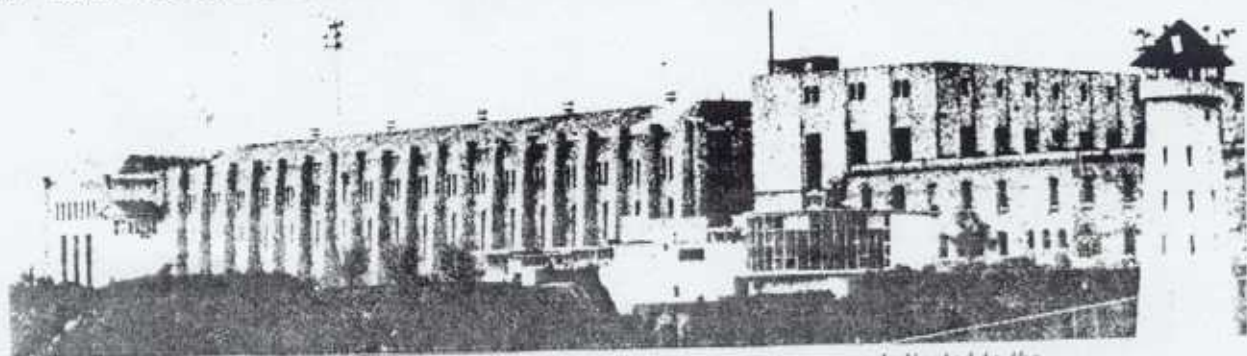
On August 21st, when Comrade George Jackson was brutally murdered, all of the men on the adjustment center tier were threatened, beaten, shot at or burned and held incommunicado. However, six of them were chosen for special harassment. They are men who are becoming known in every community across the country for their implacable will and strength, even after the murder of our beloved Comrade and Field Marshal of the Black Panther Party, George Jackson. They are known as the Adjustment Center Six. Hugo Pinell is one, Johnny Spain, Luis Talamantez, David Johnson, Willie Tate and Fleeta Drungo are the others. They are charged with the murders of three San Quentin guards and two white inmate trustees. Their trial is but another attempt to totally destroy these six men's ability to survive. The State will not succeed. They are, in fact, strengthened by each move the State makes, for it is a move towards its own eventual destruction.

Shortly after the murder of Comrade George, Hugo (who had his teeth knocked out and received various injuries from the beatings he was given consistently after August 21) was transferred back to Soledad's Adjustment Center. He remains there, awaiting trial both in Salinas, California (for the murder of McCarthy in the spring of this year) and Marin County (for murder and the various conspiracy and assault charges, stemming from the police murder of Comrade George on August 21st.).

Their few court appearances have been consistent with the State's hatred of the prisoner class in particular. They arrived handcuffed, shackled and chained, from the waist to ankle. They have not been allowed attorneys of their choices. They have been told they must accept court appointed defense, public defenders (who defend the interests of the ruling class). All of them have developed an even clearer understanding of the necessity for complete change in the United States government and liberation of the communities of the people of the world. They are examples set for our future.

Often a man can feel love for the people, can struggle wholeheartedly for the end to oppression and still feel the need to do more, to make the total commitment to building that new world. Hugo Pinell has for some time been a member of the Black Panther Party, because of his unflinching devotion to humankind, our principles, his comrades and the achievement of revolutionary intercommunalism. For various reasons, this has not been known. Comrade Hugo is steadfast in his belief that the people will win. He is proof of the people's determination and will, an example to all that the ideas of serving the people will live on, regardless of conditions. We take this opportunity, then, to announce formally to the people, and anyone concerned, that Comrade Hugo Pinell is a member in good standing of the Black Panther Party.

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE  
VENCEREMOS (We Will Win)!



The men entombed in the adjustment center are even more dedicated to the birth of the new man.



Hugo Pinell at Old Folsom State Prison in 1982 behind the glass

# Write letters to help release Hugo Pinell from prison

Quote from Hugo: *"...I'm gonna keep my mind on helping others and doing what means progress and unification of people and ideas so that our cause is constantly and always represented..."*

Hugo Pinell is the last of the San Quentin Six still locked up in prison, he is in his 39th year and is one of the longest held political prisoners. He goes before the Board of Prison Terms in Crescent City, CA on 24th May 2004. Hugo needs your letters of support.

According to Hugo's attorney, the letters need to be in the hands of the Board of Prison Terms no later than May 14th 2004.

Please visit Hugo's web site:  
<http://www.hugopinell.org>  
for information on Hugo to assist you in writing your letter and instructions of where to mail your letter.

If you have any questions, please contact:  
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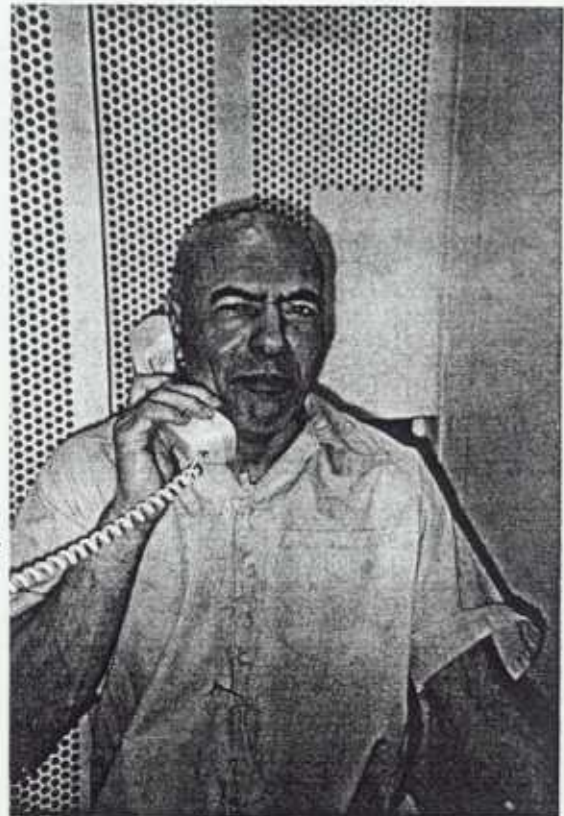
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Hugo Pinell at Pelican Bay State Prison in 2001 behind the glass and inside the visiting cell