

United States right now. They don't have to be. The key to their liberation is resistance.

That resistance can be inspired by the zines you send to prisoners.

The next revolution begins with you.

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INTRODUCTION

Death 2 Authority is an historical lesson in solidarity-in-practice. It demonstrates that we often underestimate our power to create social and political change, whatever our circumstances.

DEATH 2 AUTHORITY

"...They could lock up my body but not my spirit; that was with the people. The spirit of revolution will continue to grow within the prisons. I look forward to a time when all inmates will offer greater resistance by refusing to work as I did. Such a simple move would bring the machinery of the penal system to a halt..."

--Huey Newton, Revolutionary Suicide

It started simple enough. A couple guys in A-block wanted to form a reading and discussion group. They sat down in the day-room with four others and wrote letters for free literature to books-to-prisoners groups, including a couple of ABCs. With the materials they received, they began a discussion. The first book: ABCs of Anarchism by Alexander Berkman. The second book was George Jackson's Blood in My Eye.

In order to deal with snooping staff and snitches, participants in the discussion group brought bibles to the meetings and, whenever anyone approached, they pretended to have a bible study. In reality, they discussed whether government was their enemy; and what they could do about that enemy.

They began writing projects and sent the finished project to free-world Anarchists who printed off copies of their work. They called themselves The Conditions Factory, based on a quote by George Jackson ("Where the conditions for revolution are not present, they must be manufactured..."). They manufactured the conditions for revolution-- in The Conditions Factory. As they studied more and more, some of the participants became proclaimed Anarchists. They saw that no one could be free so long as the State existed. But how could a handful of prisoners in Toledo do anything to resist the State?

The study group began to address that question. They

brain-stormed. They wrote up their own resistance manual.

The manual covered a wide range of topics. It began with organizing, how to hold meetings. Then they discussed methods of resistance they could undertake against the prison. Sabotage included cutting phone cords with toenail clippers, stealing paperwork from staff, jamming locks with paperclips or staples. Theft of resources included stealing food from the chowhall, throwing away cups and spoons, and punching holes in the milk bags to let milk run down the drain to force the enemy to purchase more resources.

Third, they developed a strategy for what to do when going to the hole. They felt it was best to prepare for getting caught so that, if and when it happened, it would not be such a shocking ordeal. They brain-stormed ways in which resisters in population could support comrades in the hole. They exchanged pre-written letters to supporters and friends so that, if anyone was caught, he would know that friends and family would soon receive letters and know how to make phone calls and support him through his ordeal. They made arrangements to get envelopes and paper and coded messages to prisoners in the hole.

Once the manual was finished, each of them read it. It was time to get started.

"One thing we had to face is, in prison, there's a great deal of skepticism that any kind of resistance can happen, and even if it happens, it won't change anything," one guerrilla observed. "So what we were doing, whether we knew it or not, was really groundbreaking. We didn't see it that way, but it was."

The Conditions Factory decided to create a separate, underground organization: Death 2 Authority (D2A).

"It was significant that the name was Death 2 Authority rather than Death 2 the Authorities," said a guerrilla. "It wasn't a matter of death to a warden or to an administrator, but death to the institution of authority. You can't just get rid of a person in authority, you have to get rid of authority period."

In order to confuse the enemy as to their numbers, they designated themselves as Column 4. "Columns one through three didn't exist, but prison administrators had no way to know that," one guerrilla explained.

what?

"Imagine if we had D2A guerrillas at each of the medium prisons where everything is wide open. We'd hold the government hostage. What could they do? Put us in prison?" He laughed. "Thing is, it all went down so fast and the thing took off on us, we couldn't catch up with the action. We needed to have a newsletter in advance of things. We really did."

Another guerrilla pondered what would have happened if D2A had been able to share their experience with established prison gangs. If the gangs had unified against the common enemy of the prison system, that kind of solidarity among prisoners could not be defeated.

"It will happen again," one guerrilla predicted. "It will happen. And when it does, the system won't be able to stand. It needs our cooperation. It requires us to hug our own chains. And just think, if we could do that here where there's a guard every few yards, imagine what this says about what can be done on the other side of the fence?"

"When we were resisting... we were the future. And we knew it."

* * *

AFTERWORD

The names of the writer and other prisoners involved in the production of this zine must remain anonymous for obvious reasons. For that matter, it would be wise not to name free-world supporters who inspired the events recounted here. Still, the efforts of free-world people to provide free reading materials and consciousness-raising tools to prisoners cannot be underestimated. Without free-world Anarchists engaging in action on a daily basis, Death 2 Authority would not have developed.

Without free-world Anarchists, there would be no means by which those victimized by the systems of justice and corrections could come to recognize their true value as human beings, come to grips with the reality of occupation and colonization they face, and take action in defense of their own human dignity.

There are 2.3 million men and women behind bars in the

the problem of D2A. They pressured snitches for information and eventually posted a kind of "Wanted" poster in the blocks seeking information about a "gang" called D2A. They then began random round-ups.

"The strategy was, toss some guys in the hole and pressure them for information. Sooner or later, you'll catch somebody who knows something and he'll give up a name. Then, you snag that guy and pressure him," explained a guerrilla. "The snitch that finally did us harm really didn't know anything at all. He just guessed at the identity of some of the guerrillas, and he guessed right. The enemy rounded up a couple of us. We didn't know why, so we sent coded messages back to them in the hole. We sent them envelopes and paper, and we continued guerrilla tactics. That way, the administration would see that the campaign was continuing and they may believe they caught the wrong guys.

"Some of the guys in the hole had done nothing at all. Nothing anyone could prove. So what the administration did, they dropped their status and sent them to medium prisons. From the hole. That's how they split us up."

Others returned to population with targets on their backs. No resistance could happen without them getting rounded back up and being subjected to mind-numbing deprivations.

"What we did, it wasn't a complete failure. It was a success, really. Our tactics worked. We proved that a small group of guerrillas with high levels of internal solidarity could mount an effective resistance that disrupted the operation of the prison. If small groups of guerrillas employed these tactics at every prison, the whole system would collapse. There were never more than ten or twelve of us at any time. But the administration thought we had these great numbers. After all, we had four columns," a guerrilla laughed.

Another guerrilla provided analysis: "Looking back, what we did wrong was, we didn't have an effective method of informing the population what was going on. If we had come up with an effective newsletter or something in advance, we may have inspired a full-blown revolution. Even if just twelve others took up resisting, that would double our numbers, you know? Then

"There was only six of us, and we never numbered more than ten, but the administration was convinced there was fifty or a hundred of us."

They began their actions in March 2008, sending a communique to the warden and to the major, telling them they would not get control of their prison back until D2A's demands were met. Some of the demands, like better food and larger portions, were demands the prison could -- and did -- meet. But others, such as increasing state pay, were policy decisions that had to be addressed by the department itself. "We knew that," said one guerrilla. "We did that on purpose. We knew Toledo couldn't meet demands without getting central office involved, and for that to happen, central office would have to know there was an underground guerrilla resistance happening at the prison. So, we figured the demand wouldn't be met and we could go right on resisting. That was really the plan all along anyhow."

The same day that the warden received the first D2A communique (no fingerprints, disguised handwriting), guerrillas jammed the locks of the commissary, the unit managers' offices, the case managers' offices, the education supervisor's office, and several locks in the kitchen. Potatoes were jammed into the chow-hall drains, causing the pan-room sink water to flood the entire kitchen and officers' dining hall. The symbol for D2A was scrawled on a wall in the hallway.

So as to not draw attention to the problem, administrators had the locksmith work on third shift, unjamming and replacing the locks. This prevented other prisoners from seeing just how disruptive lock-jamming really was.

"Their biggest fear was that other prisoners would join in," a guerrilla observed. "They wanted no attention drawn to what was going on."

Immediately, the administration reacted. They lined corrections officers in the hallway to shake down prisoners to and from chow, even making them remove their shoes. "They were looking for staples and chunks of paperclips, the stuff we used to jam the locks," explained one guerrilla. "But what we did, we hid the staples in our mouths and re-doubled our lock-jamming right under their noses." When D2A sabotaged the drink dispensers, causing water to pour out onto the floor of

the chow hall, maintenance put a lock on the handle. That same day, D2A jammed the lock, making it impossible to fill the dispenser. When they cut off the lock to fill it, D2A sabotaged it again, causing water to spill everywhere.

Guerrillas cut the mouse off of three staff computers and placed them in a manila envelope addressed to the warden with a note inside. It said, "Three blind mice... Three blind mice... --D2A." They used prayer-oil bottles filled with salt water to fry several other computers. They jammed all the locks that had been replaced, then jammed them again.

"Even though there were very few of us, we were in all three blocks, so we had access to all the offices. With just six people, you could jam every lock down every single hallway. The commissary was always starting late because their door was jammed. That made the commissary lady, a real tyrant, have to work late past her shift," said one guerrilla. "Also, we started using the black gunk from the windows and doors and putting it on the staples we jammed into locks. That way, when staff put their key in, that black gunk would lodge the staple in there and make a real mess. They had to replace all the locks. That had to be expensive."

Very shortly, the food greatly improved and the food portions increased. "Really, we only wanted what we were entitled to," a guerrilla said. "They had been skimping on us for a long time, robbing us of our food. We weren't getting portions as required by policy. Then we came along, and we started getting fed right."

Then, a posting was placed on the bulletin boards in the housing units: The director of the department had changed policy regarding state pay. Rather than allowing for collection of court costs to reduce prisoners to only \$10 per month, prisoners could retain \$15. For the majority of prisoners, this constituted a pay raise.

"It seems like too much of a coincidence to think that this policy change occurring during the D2A campaign had nothing to do with our demands," a guerrilla commented. "They would never admit it, but that was a response to what we were doing. Guaranteed."

The problem that D2A encountered was one of propaganda. They had difficulty circulating a newsletter

because the librarian would snoop through materials to get copied. They had no way to mass-produce a newsletter through copying.

"That's where we hadn't planned enough," a guerrilla admitted. "We thought everybody would see what was happening but the administration worked hard to keep it under wraps. We had to develop a way to get the message out: 'This is what we're doing and this is why.' We had to inspire other prisoners to join, which was the prison administration's greatest fear."

One Friday evening, guerrillas jammed the usual locks of the offices and commissary, and then jammed the locks of all the staff bathrooms. They also coordinated jamming locks to the supply and dry-goods rooms in the kitchen. Staff had to share the bathroom in the captain's office all weekend. Breakfast was delayed on Saturday morning until the locksmith could get into the freezers and the dry goods.

"We had big plans," a guerrilla confided. "We sent kites to staff, warning them that D2A guerrillas would be putting broken glass found on the yard into the staff's food in the officers' dining hall. As a result, no staff were eating the cheap food on the State's dime. They were all packing a lunch, and that created a bottle-neck at shift change because all of their incoming lunches had to be searched like all other property. Guards had to show up ten or twenty minutes earlier and wait in line.

"That was justice, I think. Here these assholes were assaulting us and lying on us and breaking our property on a daily basis, and we were fixing their food. Fixing their food! They should feel afraid. Finally, they did."

A guerrilla sabotaged a machine at Ohio Penal Industries, shutting down production for a week until the machine could be repaired. "The fact is," said one guerrilla, "that O.P.I. factories generate millions of dollars for the prison system and if prisoners could sabotage them or simply refuse to work them, the entire prison system would crash. They wouldn't have the money to run it. Prisoners would go home and the State would have to come up with something better to address the problem of crime once and for all."

Administrators held several staff meetings to discuss