

A black and white close-up portrait of George Jackson, looking slightly to the left. The image is the background for the book cover.

Soledad Brother

Part Two

*George
Jackson*

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SOLEDAD
BROTHER

Part Two

GEORGE JACKSON

TO THE MAN-CHILD, TALL, EVIL, GRACEFUL, BRIGHT-
EYED, BLACK MAN-CHILD — JONATHAN PETER JACKSON
— WHO DIED ON AUGUST 7, 1970, COURAGE IN ONE
HAND, ASSAULT RIFLE IN THE OTHER; MY BROTHER,
COMRADE, FRIEND — THE TRUE REVOLUTIONARY, THE
BLACK COMMUNIST GUERRILLA IN THE HIGHEST STATE
OF DEVELOPMENT, HE DIED ON THE TRIGGER, SCOURGE
OF THE UNRIGHTEOUS, SOLDIER OF THE PEOPLE; TO
THIS TERRIBLE MAN-CHILD AND HIS WONDERFUL
MOTHER GEORGIA BEA, TO ANGELA Y. DAVIS, MY
TENDER EXPERIENCE, I DEDICATE THIS COLLECTION
OF LETTERS; TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR ENEMIES
I DEDICATE MY LIFE.

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Letters: 1964 — 1968

MARCH, 1968 28

Dear Robert,

I stay very busy these days. I have accepted a job on the tier (our floor) passing out food and cleaning up. Good for my record and keeps me active. What do you think of Jomo? He was on his job during those years. He ranks among the top three or four guerrilla tacticians in the world. I speak of this new face that war has taken on, the war of the poor man. He was in the vanguard of the Afro-Asian liberation effort once. It is regrettable, however, that today we have to report that he no longer cooperates with the general movement to which he owes his success. He has gone on record as saying he wants no part of any more revolutions. What can we think of a man who withdraws before the battle is fully won? This man has abandoned his old comrades and left the less fortunate to fend for themselves. The peoples of southern Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America could use his cooperation, his support, just as he once was in need of support. Faint hearts never win decisive battles. Take care of yourself.

Lester

APRIL, 1968 11

Dear Robert,

M.L.K. organized his thoughts much in the same manner as you have organized yours. If you really knew and fully understood his platform you would never have expressed such sentiments as you did in your last letter. I am sure you are acquainted with the fact that he was opposed to violence and war; he was indeed a devout pacifist. It is very odd, almost unbelievable, that so violent and tumultuous a setting as this can still produce such men. He was out of place, out of season, too naive, too innocent, too cultured, too civil for these times. That is why his end was so predictable. Violence in its various forms he opposed, but this does not mean that he was passive. He knew that nature allows no such imbalances to exist for long. He was perceptive enough to see that the men of color across the world were on the march and their example

would soon influence those in the U.S. to also stand up and stop trembling. So he attempted to direct the emotions and the movement in general along lines that he thought best suited to our unique situation: nonviolent civil disobedience, political and economic in character. I was beginning to warm somewhat to him because of his new ideas concerning U.S. foreign wars against colored peoples. I am certain that he was sincere in his stated purpose to “feed the hungry, clothe the naked, comfort those in prisons, and trying to love somebody.” I really never disliked him as a man. As a man I accorded him the respect that his sincerity deserved.

It is just as a leader of black thought that I disagreed with him. The concept of nonviolence is a false ideal. It presupposes the existence of compassion and a sense of justice on the part of one’s adversary. When this adversary has everything to lose and nothing to gain by exercising justice and compassion, his reaction can only be negative.

The symbol of the male here in North America has always been the gun, the knife, the club. Violence is extolled at every exchange: the TV, the motion pictures, the best-seller lists. The newspapers that sell best are those that carry the boldest, bloodiest headlines and most sports coverage. To die for king and country is to die a hero.

The Kings, Wilkinsons, and Youngs exhort us in King’s words to “put away your knives, put away your arms and clothe yourselves in the breastplate of righteousness” and “turn the other cheek to prove our capacity to endure, to love.” Well, that is good for them perhaps but I most certainly need both sides of my head.

George

APRIL, 1968 22

Dear Robert,

It was good seeing you, a bit exasperating, but still good to see you.

Reexamine this point: if a government truly reflected the wishes of the people, if it truly represented a fair cross section of the populace, it would follow that if the means of production and distribution were placed in the hands of the government they would be controlled by the people. The central point is that the government must be truly representative. All important positions must be elective, and a man’s

position within the governing body must be solely dependent upon meritorious conduct of the state's business.

Nationalization is the only answer to the problems of the modern industrial state.

Take care of yourself.

George

APRIL, 1968 26

Dear Mother,

I was looking for you last weekend; Robert had said he was going to bring you. I hope you are well. Robert indicates that you two very seldom see anything in the same light anymore. He also indicates that he doesn't understand why.

He comes here thinking to give me solace and purpose (purpose I have, solace I don't require), but appears to be more upset with the state of his domestic affairs than I am with my problems here. This is not to say that I do not enjoy his visits — it is good to have a little relief from this cell — but it seems to me that Robert may be coming apart and I hate to witness it. He has attempted a breakout recently from long years of repression and backwardness, but the combination of noncooperation from you and his daughters, and the plain fact that he doesn't understand the changes that are taking place around him, has placed a strain on his nervous equipment that may soon prove to be too much for him.

He doesn't have much confidence in himself or in us as a people yet. His whole mentality, all of his attitudes are built around the transparent little platitudes and trite clichés that one reads and hears on the mass news media and other thought-control facilities. He stated in the presence of some of his black coworkers that "he was glad that troublemaker King got killed." He almost had to fight the guys. Now what black would say something like that? It sounds like something that one of the white knights of the KKK would say. Years ago Robert would have said nothing and had no opinion whatever to offer. But now that he has broken out and is trying to get into the mainstream with an opinion, he is all mixed up. I can understand that after such an experience on the job with his peers he would certainly not want to

get bullied by his women when he got home. I didn't agree with any of King's tactics but he certainly caused no one any trouble, other than a few whites perhaps, and I don't think I mind that too much. Robert will change, adapt, in time, if we help him along, and are subtle with our criticism and advice and respect his wish to be the dominant male. He has that coming: it's hard working for those folks. I heard about your work on the kitchen. That's heavy work. Take care that you don't strain or break yourself. Why isn't Jon doing that for you?

Take care of yourself.
George

APRIL, 1968 30

Dear Robert,
Everything is normal here, so far. The transfer is off. I'll be here for a while yet. They wanted to send me to Soledad Adjustment Center but I asked them not to. There are more aimless adolescent types there than here. I wouldn't mind going to California Men's Colony, or someplace like that, but I have never been offered anything that would be an improvement over this place. Well, anything would be an improvement but not enough to matter.

All reading material is coming right on time except Ramparts and Avant Garde. No Ramparts for April yet. I believe the government may have smashed them.

May end up on that little boat after all. I feel myself becoming impatient with people in general.

Take care of yourself.
George

MAY, 1968 4

Dear Mother,
You are correct in all that you say about the problem of men and responsibility, and about the hangers-on, and the foot draggers, the failures and the failing, the myopic tendencies to squander time and energy in counterproductive efforts. At times I become so depressed seeing it that I feel justified deciding to release myself from my

responsibility and just take off (when I get home) with you people in tow to some other part of the world where blacks have already come into their own, with an ocean or two between us and this place.

But this feeling never lasts long, mainly because I understand why many of us react as we do, and I said react. Our responses to the social stimuli (and in our case in this country, they assert themselves as a challenge) must necessarily be negative when we consider that blacks in the U.S. have been subjected to the most thorough brainwashing of any people in history. Isolated as we were, or are, from our land, our roots and our institutions, no group of men have been so thoroughly terrorized, dehumanized, and divested of those things that from birth make men strong.

Regarding this domestic issue, I must be the first to admit that I see that the black family unit is in ruins. It is our first and basic weakness. This fact may contribute much to our difficulty in uniting as a people. But for every effect there is a cause. If we are to understand and heal these effects we must understand the causes. To say that the black family unit is slowly eroding because of pressures from without (poverty and social injustice), and from within (negative response to crisis situation) is to completely mistake the depth of the issue. There are three historical factors that have produced the present state of chaos on the family level of our black society. First, the family unit was destroyed during chattel slavery. Men had the sense of family responsibility trained out of them. Second, our culture institutions, and customs, upon which unity depends and without which cohesiveness can never exist, were destroyed and never replaced. The best we could do was ape the ofay, and cling to a kind of subculture that manifests itself today in the hideous notion that if we educate ourselves properly, think the right thoughts, read the right books, say the right things, and do exactly that which is expected of us — we can then be as good as white people. Third, our change in status from an article of movable property to untrained misfits on the labor market was not as most think a change to freedom from slavery but merely to a different kind of slavery.

Take care of yourself.
George

MAY, 1968 15

Dear Robert,

It is good that you can afford a new car. Since you have taken up the responsibility of managing the household expenditures, I see you have a little more to spend on what yankees call “discretionary spending,” money above what is needed to provide the basic survival materials.

I am doing well and wish the same for you.

You sound like a high-school civics textbook with that thing about free speech and free press. You couldn't believe stuff like that. “Freedom of the press is for those who own one.” Even they are kept in line by economic pressure from above. Very little of the repression is done overtly, my friend. You cannot see a tree's roots all the time, but because one cannot see them does not mean that they do not exist. The tree couldn't stand without them. Take care of yourself.

George

MAY, 1968 16

Dear Robert,

The silent treatment is counterproductive. Guile, craft, and gentle persuasion are what's happening. When guile fails, then force must be used. Guile only fails when the person one is dealing with is smarter. Men must either be cajoled or crushed depending on the circumstances. But with women I can't see any reason why craft shouldn't always suffice.

These institutional committees are strictly local and inconsequential. They have no fixed number of seats, no fixed personnel. They are governed by caprice, all decisions are arbitrary. I have never received the benefit of the doubt. I never get a break as you well know from the fact of these 8 years. But don't let me start complaining. As a defense I never expect anything, never form attachments for material things, and refuse to be punished or allow my thoughts to be disorganized by anything that happens to me here. So you can uncross your fingers and put your fears for me on that score to rest. Nothing can upset the logical processes of my mind, no amount of hunger, neglect, cold, pain, discomfort, or terrorism.

Well, take care of yourself.

George

JUNE, 1968 6

Dear Robert,

It was good to see you folks. I hope you got back safely. You know they cut our visiting time short . . . I snapped to it when I got back to my cellblock and noted how early it was. It was not crowded in there either, from what I can recall.

It seems at first sight that Georgia has adjusted her attitudes to conform somewhat more closely with reality; that is wonderful. It is surely past time for all of us to stand up and stop trembling, grab the bull by the horns, and ride him till his neck snaps. The events of the last two days have left me in a most exuberant frame of mind. I haven't felt so good since the first of the year, and the time of the Tet offensive.

Jon is an admirable man-child. You sired a man without question. I just know that you are training him to be a benefit and a credit to his kind, and to act out his historical, obligatory duty. I know you are teaching him to love just us, and protecting him from this alien ideology. I am certain that you are doing this since you remember clearly the failure of your father, and his father, and so on as far back as it goes. Take care of yourself.

George

JUNE, 1968 14

Dear Mother,

Try to remember how you felt at the most depressing moment of your life, the moment of your deepest dejection. You no doubt have had many. That is how I feel all the time, no matter what my level of consciousness may be, asleep, awake, in between. The thing is there and it keeps me moving, pins my eye to the ball, up tight twenty-four hours a day. Our general situation and mine at present especially the inadequate response, the absence of genuine remedial thought and action, these are why I am as I am.

I had a letter from Robert this morning professing a heartfelt sorrow at the passing of one of our strongest enemies, a slick-tongued, opportunistic, demagogic falsifier. What a prodigal waste of affection! Especially when we consider that Robert felt only relief at the time of the last political kill (M.L. King). I can't reach Robert, he has a

natural slave mentality like so many other black men of his generation. I understand why the mindless pursue the favor and affection of an insensitive and implacable opponent, but I cannot understand why they insist on planting those ideals in the minds of their sons. They go through life discovering that this enemy cannot be appeased, that he is relentless, calloused beyond repair, dedicated to personal financial success, heedless to its cost in human suffering. Yet when the son comes along, instead of acting upon these discoveries in a positive way, they lie, pretend, defend their inaction and collaboration, head down, shoulders bent, nose stained brown. I tolerate Robert because he stuck with us or you pretty faithfully (no small qualifier when one looks around at other families in the black community), but he has to go through many a change before I can really accept him. It may be too late for us to establish a relationship conducive to the remedying of our physical and material problems. I hope not. As I have stated before you can help us both. Just as those regressive ideals were sneaked into his consciousness so we can sneak some progressive ones in. Propaganda works both ways, but one must be subtle. He is sensitive about being bossed (by blacks anyway).

I have wanted to write this letter for two weeks now, but I have been preoccupied. I wanted to enlarge upon some of the things we discussed when you were here. First, all men want to own things, to possess material goods to make themselves comfortable today, and to secure themselves against the unpredictable tomorrows. This is self-preservation, a natural thing found in all animals. It is only latent in some men but it is still there all the same. When this instinct works on a man without his full understanding, he does radical things. Now read carefully, Georgia. When the peasant revolts, the student demonstrates, the slum dweller riots, the robber robs, he is reacting to a feeling of insecurity, an atavistic throwback to the territorial imperative, a reaction to the fact that he has lost control of the circumstances surrounding his life. Whether he knows it or not, it is all the same. This system, its economics, its politics, was formed around an age that is past. It was inadequate even then. Men can no longer stake out land or section off a part of the earth and say to themselves, "I will use this as a guarantee," mainly because of the monopolistic stranglehold of those who have already established themselves and who pretend to know what is best for the rest of the world. Wealth is land. By having only labor without land and its potential products, we lose independence. We must sell our labor. Then because of today's specialization and complicated

division of labor, it follows that the only way man's natural urges and the modern industrial society can be brought into agreement is by all people possessing everything in common through a representative government. Only in this way can all men satisfy the ungovernable urge to secure things and control their existence.

George

JUNE, 1968 29

Dear Georgia,

I'll be out of here soon, perhaps in eight or nine months. I'll have eighteen months clean when I go to the board in December. You know that I have my time in. That's what they want, time and clean conduct. It is always a job getting along with our friends and relatives. Establishing lasting and mutually rewarding relationships always calls for delicacy, sensitivity, and, mainly, suppression of the ego. One simply cannot say the first thing that comes to mind with no regard for the next person's ego problem. If I constantly say or do things that make the next person feel as if I am challenging his person, his capacity to reason, his standing as an individual, how can I ever hope to relate to him.

People the world over are not the same but those that we meet here in the U.S. are generally of a single type. By and large they are all fools, intellectual nonpersons, emotional half-wits. Status symbols, supervisory positions, and petty power motivate their every act. Personal, individual, financial success at any price is their social ethic, the only real standard upon which their conduct is built.

For us blacks in particular this is a nightmare proposition. When this standard, this criterion for the measurement of individual merit and worth in this society is applied to us, measured against our standing or holdings, we cannot help but come out with a very low opinion of ourselves. From the womb to the tomb this plays in our minds. We are not worth more than the amount of capital we can raise. That is why you see blacks pretending to be doing all right. That is why a black man will buy a new car (status symbol) before he will buy food for his child or clothes for his wife.

And again with blacks this whole thing goes even deeper. No man or group of men have been more denuded of their self-respect, none in

history have been more terrorized, suppressed, repressed, and denied male expression than the U.S. black. This is what you are up against in relating to Robert. As I said before, he is going through a breakout. He is trying to get back. He wants to express himself after years of being a vegetable. As with most of the men of our community, he is just starting to feel his strength now. But soon this will build into a rage, "and when I rage I rage unbounding." Don't interfere with that thing. You should have never objected to the social club! You caused him to transfer just a bit more of the subconscious disregard he has for our enemies onto you.

Jon's real problems can be solved only through community action: a massive, total, mutual effort. We are not surviving and cannot survive as individuals or as family units; we must get together. And then too, what can Robert give Jon in his present state of mental development? He can only benefit from contact with people he might learn from. He must first learn what to give and how to give it to Jon before he can help him. Just spending some time with him is nothing. I don't think you handled that right, you should have offered to help his organization, perhaps even participate to some extent. Don't be backward.

George

AUGUST, 1968 9

Dear Mother,

It was good for me to see you again. I also have your letter here before me. I commented to Robert last week that you seem to have gone through many changes these last few years. That's what life is all about, growth and change. You will at least listen. Few people are so endowed.

I feel much better as the result of your visit. Please try to come more often, or at least when Robert comes. I understand that you people have never had any exposure to these things that interest me and I know that everyone cannot be alike, but I also know that if we are to relate to each other, work together, build together on the basic things we must agree. I agree with many of the things you say. I concur with any rational and constructive judgment or assessment you may make, as long as it is intended to forward "our thing."

No transfer for me; they turned it down. No relief in my ordeal, 24 hours a day in this cell. I've been in here for over 18 months now; in prison 8 years next month. I've forgotten what it was that earned me this.

George

AUGUST, 1968 17

Dear Mother,

It can all be reduced to the simple fact that we want you to be yourself, secure within your reality. Why should my woman have to follow someone else's criterion of right and wrong, beauty and ugliness? Please believe me, Mama, the truly ugly thing is the pretending, faking it, imitating — monkey see, monkey do — adoration of the repulsive.

On close examination, what you are saying is that black women standing naked and natural are ugly or less than beautiful. From this nakedness and natural posture the only way for her to remotely resemble anything beautiful is to bleach and straighten her hair, and hang her limbs with clothing designed in Paris, London, the U.S., and other parts of the barbarian world. For you there is only this one standard of beauty, the Western standard. I revolt against this absurdity. I understand that this is all you have ever known, I allow for this, but you must be able to see by now that this model of perfection you have subscribed to in the past is no longer the fad. Black is back. I'm going to fulfill my role as the man, even if it kills me. I will provide the material goods and protect my family with every ounce of energy and resource that I can call up. The woman's role though will go unfulfilled because you folks don't seem to be able to change, or reestablish the values and cultural entities of our antecedents.

Reality is the key. In order for you to be intelligent, as you state it, you must like Western music, clothes, food, architecture, Western education, religious superstition, pseudo-philosophy, and Western ideals. St. Augustine!! What kind of example is that? The reality is that we are a caste at the bottom of a class society, the only group that has built-in factors (physical characteristics) that prohibit any form of socioeconomic mobility. We are the totally disenfranchised, the whipping boy, the scapegoat, the floor mat of the nation. I am not so foolish that I cannot detect the fact that I am hated, especially when it

is obvious. At least the obvious does not escape me.

To clarify, however, let me state that some blacks are liked. I see that every day, but I am not of this kith. They hate me. I don't find this at all uncomfortable because I have some prerogatives. I would be doing something wrong if they liked me. Do you understand? I don't want anyone to accept me. As an individual, I don't worry about my future. I know my ideals will prevail, so I don't worry about that. They can't harm me, because the reality is that I have nothing to lose but my chains! It is clear that they are not going to give me a chance. You were right, that is exactly what they fear. Just because I want to be my black self, mentally healthy, and because I look anyone who addresses me in the eye, they feel that I may start a riot anytime. I've stopped more trouble here than any other black in the system.

George

DECEMBER, 1968 3

Dear Mother,

I'm supposed to be going to Soledad again anytime now. It is a much better place than this. Remember when you came to see me while I was there before; we sat around a table in easy chairs by ourselves.

How have you been? Healthy and wise, I hope.

No noticeable change here, except for the prospect of my transfer and a cold that has me doubled over all day coughing.

Penelope asked me to send her my package approval form so she could take care of me. I sent it and told her that she must send the stuff right away so that I will get it on the very first day packages are allowed, to avoid any possible mix-up due to the transfer. Remember in 1962 when I transferred here in December? There was such a mix-up that I got nothing you sent.

I can't say just what the problem is. We all seem to be in the grip of some terrible quandary. Our enemies have so confused us that we seem to have been rendered incapable of the smallest responsibility. I see this same irresponsibility in every exchange with my kinsmen here, irresponsibility, or mediocrity at best, disloyalty, self-hatred,

cowardice, competition between themselves, resentment of any who may have excelled in anything, heads bowed, knees bent to some man or some stupid idea of a god. I've stopped saying anything at all. I haven't uttered a word in two months, refuse to even acknowledge a greeting with anything larger or longer than a raising of the head. One step forward and three backward. Where are we going?

George

DECEMBER, 1968 22

Dear Mother,

I probably won't leave here until next month. They are sending me to the board here. It meets the thirtieth and thirty-first of December and the third of January.

I'm doing all right, and have some very efficient earplugs to help me preserve my sanity. Have you any theories why blacks talk so much and so loud? A Chinaman told me once that blacks were the oldest and finest people on earth "but one thing wrong, talkie-talkie-talkie. . . ."

Wish the best for you, the best of everything this year. May be in a position to help work something out before this one's gone.

Take care.

George

APRIL, 1969 14

Dear Jon,

Black culture is a monumental subject that covers countless years. The first man and consequently the first culture was black. You can't expect much coverage of so large a subject in nine thousand words. I will however write an essay that starts with the beginnings and touches on all that is important, with a brief resumé on the black subculture of the present-day United States.

You can make your own bench cheap. Buy or find or take from someone a 6' x 15" board, rather thick and heavy, say 2" at least. Tack on some old surplus army blankets and that's it. You then simply lay your board on top of three wooden horses, old wooden milk crates, or any strong

or reinforced wood boxes, or stretch it between two chairs. Leave it unattached, however, because that way you can use it for incline presses by leaning it against the wall, or letting it rest one end on the ground, one on your box or chair.

I'll get started on the other thing now. Why did Georgia take your books? Sounds pretty bad for her. I gather she wasn't serious about the things she said when she was here last.

George

JUNE, 1969 12

Dear Mother,

Final results: Denied, one year, go back to board next June 1970.

George

JUNE, 1969 28

Dear Jon,

It's good in many ways that you will now be able to drive. Perhaps you'll be able to get up here to see me more often.

I am well, and working hard; four hours a day on exercises.

Mix your theoretical reading with some practical technology. That aspect of chemistry that will be useful to us. Perhaps electronics as well.

Be careful and learn fast, how to handle the automobile. Robert is most impressed if you remain calm. If you don't let him think you are excitable under the strain of heavy traffic you will be able to convince him that you are ready to go out on your own sooner. Driving that '69 should be easy.

Take it easy.

George

AUGUST, 1969 17

Dear Jon,

The usual here. Each day comes and goes like the one before. This little joke isn't funny any longer.

I add five words to my vocabulary each day, five new ones, right after breakfast each morning when I have forty-five minutes to kill. It's not enough time for anything else and since I don't want to waste any time, I work on words. It is by words that we convey our thoughts, and bend people to our will.

If you must have a job, though I can't see why you want to work for someone if you don't absolutely have to, try this. Go to some business concern where the guy who runs it doesn't employ too many people and watches all of them closely. Then just start working for nothing. Don't say anything to anyone but the boss. Tell him what your name is and that you need a job. Then start working in spite of his reply. Of course you work hard. Do you get it? In two days, three at the most, you'll have bent him to your will. You may have to work for nothing the first day or two. In fact, it is best to refuse the first day's offering if he breaks that soon. You have to be sure, sure of yourself I mean. In order to pressure a man you must be a better man than he. You can't let embarrassment or shyness stand in your way. These two things must be thoroughly and completely removed from your character. Loading trucks in a junkyard where the work is hard, garages, warehouses, etc. — these are places to consider. Don't try anything that requires skilled labor. You'll mess up someone's stock.

How are your eyes? Have you had them checked? We all have bad eyes. . . mine seem to be getting worse. I hope not. I can see very well at a distance, but cannot focus well on close objects without the glasses.

Find out for me if Georgia sent the shoes and other stuff. If she did I didn't get them for some reason and will investigate. Give her my love. Send me a sexy picture of the lady that you met like I told you last week. Let her oldest kid take the picture with you and her in it. I want visual proof that you did take care of business. When I was sixteen I had one that was twenty-eight and a mother four times. I was good to her; no beatings like her other men had done. I wouldn't accept any money from her or eat her kid's food. I took her to places where she could show me off, most of the time to places that cost nothing. I had

money but I looked so young that I couldn't get into places that adults went into.

Take care of yourself.
George

SEPTEMBER, 1969 9

Dear Jon,

Doing no good here. It is looking no better, but at least I have developed no new problems. What do you think of your old man? Were you listening when he told me that the guys (those guys) on his job call him everything under the sun! He pretends that he is proud of his self-control. I believe he actually has twisted his thinking to consider himself a better man, "Now that he can take it." A lot of us colored folk are like that, in fact he is the majority. That is why we are the floor mat of the world, because we can take it.

Robert is a good brother on an individual, personal, brother-to-brother basis, but you must reject his philosophy: the credo of the slave, the self-destructive, self-perpetuating doctrine of the menial, the woodcutter, the water-boy, the groom, the employee, the flunky's flunky, the abased. However, the rejection should be a silent one. There is no chance of changing Robert, so he must be accepted as is, and protected as much as is possible. There are those among us, we must admit, who cannot take any sizable amount of freedom. They are in the majority! You cannot relate to them with ideals. They have fallen beyond caring about ideals. The only thing that will make them move is a push, no explanation, just a shove. You are concerned about working, having money, living better, etc. I have given you several leads but it seems that none fit your character and disposition. I hope that you at least tried. That last thing I mentioned to you last Monday may be just the ticket. See a brother named E. He can help you get that kind of work. You have your driver's license now, so there should be no problems. But if there are you should be old enough and prepared to handle them now. If I am wrong then you will never be ready.

Well take care of yourself, and write me like I asked you to.

George

SEPTEMBER, 1969 15

Dear Jon,
Got your letter today.

On the job thing, it is up to you. I think you made a wise choice, however, if you can stick with it. There will be plenty of lures at the school, soft, warm, smooth lures. When do you start back, and what year are you in? This should be your last year, isn't it? I'm just drifting now, doing a lot of reading, waiting for my shoulder to get together. It is a little better. Things are awful tight here, everyone tense, I'm just watching them and waiting.

Take care.
George

SEPTEMBER, 1969 25

Dear Jon,
Robert told me that you were driving the new automobile to school. If that's right, you're not doing too bad. Do you use it at school and drive home too? But he also mentioned that if you didn't show improvements in things of a scholastic nature, he would be very disappointed. I am thinking that he feels a lot for you. He really does, I know. He simply doesn't know how to relate to you.

When I was young, I felt that Robert didn't care for me very much because he wouldn't take me anywhere or even talk to me in anything less than a shout. Mama used to talk him into beating me up just for leaving the house to play ball or talk with my peers. I mean real beating, belts, table legs, fists, etc. But what I didn't notice was that he was feeding me and that whenever I got into a bind with the local representatives of the oppressors (police), he would always be there to help me. Always, no matter what I had done or how much he hated what I'd done.

Life has been one long string of disappointments for Robert. It wouldn't be good to just take lightly his wishes to see you become more aggressive in your development. It isn't necessary to disappoint him. You can satisfy him, help yourself, and serve the cause of black self-determination by picking yourself up and taking Chairman Mao's Great Leap Forward.

I hope you are involved in the academic program at your school, but knowing what I know about this country's schooling methods, they are not really directing you to any specialized line of study. They have not tried to ascertain what fits your character and disposition and to direct you accordingly. So you must do this yourself. Decide now what you would like to specialize in, one thing that you will drive at. Do you get it? Decide now. There are several things that we as a group, a revolutionary group, need badly: chemists, electronic engineers, surgeons, etc. Choose one and give it special attention at a certain time each day. Establish a certain time to give over to your specialty and let Robert know indirectly what you are doing. Then it only remains for you to get your A's on the little simple unnecessary subjects that the school requires. This is no real problem. It can be accomplished with just a little attention and study. But you must now start on your specialty, the thing that you plan to carry through this war of life. You must specialize in something. Just let it be something that will help the war effort.

George

OCTOBER, 1969 17

Dear Mother,

I hope that all is normal there with you. Jon told me about the h — — deal. I didn't know it was that bad. How will we ever make it back from here? We all seem to have fallen from glory in the uttermost way. I'm sure we will simply have to redouble our efforts to forgive, understand, to rebuild the bridges between us; we must attempt to comprehend fully just how these bridges came to be destroyed. There is no other recourse. We must, of ourselves, by ourselves, recognize the roots of our illness, and do all that we can to extricate ourselves from this mess.

Tell Penny that I love her no matter what. We'll agree on the essentials anyway. Tell her that I may not be able to write for a while. Explain this to Robert too. A little trouble here for me, and this may be the last envelope and the last time that I'll be able to borrow a pencil, for a while anyway. But I'll attempt to stay in touch. I've done nothing. It may work out all right but then I have no way of knowing for sure. They sweep in and sweep me away to a little closed cell in a closed wing of the prison without any explanation. I don't have any of my personal property.

Forget the phonograph and records. I won't be allowed to have them. I didn't really want them anyway. I'm going to send the typewriter home first chance I get also.

What's happening now is what I tried to explain to you several months ago. They know that in a year, the year between board appearances, anything can be made to happen. But at least I am alone in here. I don't have to be bothered with anyone, and someone who knew me before somewhere else has sent me something to read. I have books and toilet paper, I'll be all right.

I'll write again when I can. Relay to Penny that no effort toward self-determination is futile: it is one of the things that men just cannot do without. Without it life loses its value.

Love,
George

NOVEMBER, 1969 7

Dear Jon,
I know what happened concerning your letter. It was too thick. You sent too much. That is all right, however. I get what I want one way or the other and do what I want in the end. The fools are awfully presumptuous to think they can dictate my every action.

That is good about the chemistry. I can't report too much progress. I'm holding on, however.

How are the honeymooners getting along these days? You know that they are much too old to relate the way they do.

Take care.

George

NOVEMBER, 1969 13

Dear Jon,
I'm sending you these two package slips because you can explain to the folks there and see that it is taken care of better than anyone else.

First I want them sent the very first day of December. They are special Christmas packages, the only kind I can receive, and I don't want to wait for them until Christmas. You understand. So that means that you must explain to them to get the stuff together now and put it into two packages and use the reverse side of the slip as an address form. It should be glued to the outside of the package and addressed to me here, as soon as December 1 gets here.

The important items are: cigarettes — I want three cartons in each box; four pounds of nuts in each box, walnuts and Brazil nuts only; the full quota of cigars — 150 in each box; and finally the salami — two pounds, one in each box. It must be the type that will keep without refrigeration for a while, the rest of that stuff is unimportant. Impress upon them now not to delay past December 1. It should be mailed; you understand, I hope.

Give everyone my regards, take care.

George

NOVEMBER, 1969 27

Dear Jon,
I'm doing all right here, I guess, hanging on.

Heard you were going to medical school. What happened to the chemistry? They called me up to classification last week. Said they were considering sending me back to San Quentin. They are supposed to need the space here for something, and I wasn't doing well enough. They said if I improved a great deal, it is possible that in four or five years I might be considered for Chino — the prison for honor inmates.

Let me know now and then how you are. Take care.

George

DECEMBER, 1969 5

Dear Mother,
The packages came in all right. They were opened in my presence so there was no chance for foul play. Thanks, you're a good girl, couldn't

possibly get along without you folks. I hope I can justify your faith in me in some big way before long. Jon is a wonderful man-child, you should be quite content with him. The apathy is not permanent. I love him, love him, love him. He is a great deal ahead of the average black his age, a lot smarter than I was. I hope he can avoid the many traps they have set up for him.

Send me some photos of everyone — you know, when you get together over the holidays.

Take care.

Love,
George

DECEMBER, 1969 21

Dear Jon,

Marcia is a sweet sensitive sister. I want you to see her and represent me in my absence. You know what that means: show no weakness of any kind, present the strong, unapproachable, serious, intelligent, big-brother side of your character, the new black man, in his highest revolutionary form.

You know, look out for her. Try to stabilize her. She is confused. She is the sister of one of my best friends. So bust your heart for her. If she has personal enemies, smash them. Call her in the evening and read to her from Mao or Fanon.

George

DECEMBER, 1969 21

Dear Jon,

Just got your letter. Good to hear from you, and hope you are still alive. For the 357th time let me advise you to take all threats seriously. If you would firmly grasp the depth of the sickness caused in some men's minds by this environment, I would never have to relate this to you but once. When a sucker gets so foolish as to warn you in advance that he is going to kill you, the next sound he utters should come through swollen lips.

Two people I want you to see for me. It is important. See Guy and find out if he got a regular institution correspondence form to fill out and return with the letter I sent him. I have reason to believe that these people did not send him the form so that he can become a regular on my mailing list. Also dress yourself up and see Marcia, one evening or weekend. She works in the daytime. Also ask her if she got the form to fill out and return when she got my letter. Ask her if she returned it yet, and explain that we will not be allowed to exchange letters if she has not returned the form. I think these people neglected to even send one, since they want to keep me isolated. Tell Marcia that I got her letter of December 15 and I will try to answer. If she doesn't hear from me, it will be due to the hang-up in getting those forms out of here to her and back from her. Tell her that Tony is doing well. You can phone first to tell her you are coming or make an appointment, but I'd rather you see her in person to relate the messages. Do this right away and let me know what's happening.

I don't know what to tell you about that school thing. I know it is boring, listening to those idiots and falsifiers seven or eight hours a day, but it's best to stay with it until you are ready to revolt. Just don't mistake any of the lies for the truth. Robert will lie to you if he thinks it will help you to survive. He has been surviving on one for half a century.

Take care.
George

DECEMBER, 1969 25

Dear Mother,

I'm well, warm, fed, get plenty of rest, plenty of exercise. I really can't complain, especially since I don't expect any more.

Everyone got packages from home and we shared everything. It was just like down on the commune. I have gained ten pounds at least.

Hope you are feeling better, and I hope also that this next year will bring you some solace. I wish you the best, Mama. Take care of yourself.

George

DECEMBER, 1969 28

Dear Jon,

Received your letter. You said nothing about Marcia. See if you can do anything for her — when I was your age, boy, I had a couple of women her age, and with two and three children each. But you treat her good. You're supposed to be representing me, meaning that you are to be strong, intellectual, watchful, serious, unapproachable.

I like her and she is the sister of one of my best friends. I'm supposed to be getting out anytime now, she thinks.

I wanted her to see you, the man-child, so that she would have a better idea of what the "man" is like.

Forget that Westernized backward stuff about god. I curse god, the whole idea of a benevolent supreme being is the product of a tortured, demented mind. It is a labored, mindless attempt to explain away ignorance, a tool to keep people of low mentality and no means of production in line. How could there be a benevolent superman controlling a world like this. He would have to be malevolent, not benevolent. Look around you, evil rules supreme. God would be my enemy. The theory of a good, just god is a false idea, a thing for imbeciles and old women and, of course, Negroes. It's a relic of the past when men made words and mindless defenses for such things as sea serpents, magic, and flat earths.

Strength comes from knowledge, knowing who you are, where you want to go, what you want, knowing and accepting that you are alone on this spinning, tumbling world. No one can crawl into your mind and help you out. I'm your brother and I'm with you, come what may, and against anything or anybody in the universe that is against you. You'll meet women and they will say they are with you, but you'll still be alone, with your pain, discomfort, illness, elation, courage, pride, death. You don't want anyone to crawl into your head with you, do you? If there were a god or anyone else reading some of my thoughts I would be uncomfortable in the extreme.

Strength is being able to control yourself and your total environment — yourself first, however.

Take care of yourself.

George

FEBRUARY, 1970 13

Mrs. Fay Stender
Attorney at Law

Dear Mrs. Stender,

This is to confirm your letter of February 11. I had just heard of Judge Wollenberg's move. The next time you come to see me, push the idea of removing my restraints. It will be interesting to note their reaction. You know those things are placed upon me whenever I leave my cell area. He reaches through the bars to place them upon me. The animal farm effect is complete.

Sunday, the day after tomorrow, I am supposed to be released from isolation. No one is supposed to do more than twenty-nine days down here. I'll then be able to read my newspapers and weekly periodicals, smoke, and sleep in a bed. However I will remain separated from the general population (in jail, within the jail), probably on maximum security. This does not bother me any longer. Of the ten years I have done, seven of them have been in close confinement; I read, exercise, and write. Sometimes I'll daydream.

I said that it doesn't bother me any longer — but what I meant is that since I am in jail, which part of the jail I'm in doesn't matter. Your wishes of cheer and hope are well received. Hope and I are old friends. Thanks, and let me know if you can do anything with the novel idea.

Sincerely,
George L. Jackson

FEBRUARY, 1970 26

Dear Fay,

You are aware that I want to read the transcript of grand-jury testimony. All three of us would like to go over it. Since we are living so close together down here, one copy would be enough for all three of us. I had a chance to read only parts of it on the twenty-fourth.

Do you have any trouble reading my writing? It is the best I can do. If you are having trouble, however, I'll print. I'm warm, I never have liked to eat too much, so all is well with me here. I won't complain. I've never had much of a problem with the purely physical things, the

weaknesses of the flesh. I get fat on what the average individual would starve on. Clothing? I prefer something dry and clean if it is readily available. I feel guilty when I sleep more than three hours a day. Where I am presently the night-light in front of my cell allows me to read or write as late as I wish.

The cruelest aspect in the loss of one's freedom of movement is of course the necessity to repress the sex urge, but after ten years I have even learned to control my response to that stimulus (one thousand fingertip push-ups a day). I probably have the world's record on push-ups completed. So, if they would reach me now, across my many barricades, it must be with a bullet and it must be final.

The lash affects me for sure. If it failed to affect me at all I would be guilty of using the tortured logic of my father's twisted mind, i.e., that this is the best of all possible worlds, or that this is the only country that provides flush toilets for all. It affects me, but not my physical parts. It shocks me somewhere behind the eyes, strains my instinct to survive. . . I know you are a busy woman and it probably isn't proper for me to steal your attention with my ramblings. Take care, You have my regard.

Sincerely,
George L. Jackson

MARCH, 1970 2

Dear Fay,
We received a copy of the transcript today through the mail. It was John Clutchette who actually received it.

I also had a letter from my father. It was a long letter, considering that he normally writes only a few lines. It seems that he is now prepared to accept the validity of the many charges I have long made against certain forms of organization and specifically certain elements within the forms. I suspect that Georgia may have had something to do with it. Just to make me feel better. Either way, it denotes the effects that trauma has on people, especially people who are affected by little else. I am convinced that black people can never be influenced by ideology alone. The men have been too conditioned against it by violence and they are afraid. The women think of themselves as too practical, they

can be moved by one thing only: “Money honey.” However, I love them all just the same. I reason that with a continuous stream of shocks and the promise of spoils they can eventually be induced to reach beyond their immediate surroundings. A guard said something nasty to one of my sisters last Tuesday, this may have been the catalyst with my father. He’s a stranger to me, almost.

I just got the letter and the book you want me to read. I see that you posted it on the twenty-sixth. Thanks, I’ll get right on it.

You have my regard, please give my further regards to our friends.

Sincerely,
George L. Jackson

MARCH, 1970 5

Dear Friend, Fay,

I have started this three times. This first is in the way of an apology. For I feel one is due you. At the close of today’s proceedings, I left without as much as a look in your and John’s direction. I am afraid that you may mistake such behavior as the unfeeling and calloused disregard of the slave. I hope I have trained all of the slave out of me. Neither would I have you feel for even a second that I could make any (any at all) mental associations between you and your people, and those who stand in my way, simply because of the external resemblance or let me say any external resemblance. I never have, even in the really bad moments, lost the ability to evaluate people one at a time and never will. The only way I can explain the little thing that occurred this evening is with an explanation of that pain or shock that strikes me at times just behind the eyes. I don’t understand it entirely myself. From early this morning I carry the metal around. That vehicle they transport us in and in which we ate lunch (hands to side) is very cramped, and then and most important the attitude of the pig in the jury room when he came to take me back. I believe it first started bothering me then, the thing in my head, Campbell¹ again, ruling on . . . You see, someone failed before me, trembled and failed, my father, his father, leaving Campbell in a position to rule me out. I have very bad moments when I think of that,

1 The first judge assigned to the case. He later withdrew after the defense accused him of blatant expressions of racial prejudice.

and of course it follows that I must think of my own failings — can you understand that being a helpless type affects me deeply. You are a very intelligent, sensitive, and wonderful person and the image you form, wedged between me and who knows what fate, elates me in one sense and infuriates me in another. Why should I have to relate and exchange from such a position of weakness. It comes down on me at times. I am tortured by the vision of someone like myself standing at the bars of his cell two hundred years from now cursing me — dereliction!! So let me apologize for today, because it bothers me. Let me take this occasion to apologize in advance for the seemingly crude responses you may detect from time to time. My sensibilities may be somewhat damaged. You can help me with this over the years to come. The tape² left me feeling better than I have felt for ten, perhaps fifteen years.

I got the transcript and your letter upon my return this evening. When will I see you again?

George

MARCH, 1970 9

Dear Fay,

Just heard something of Campbell's imminent retirement. It could occur at any time. Did you, by the way, take note of his statement in court the other day to the effect that he "was also once an attorney and had defended — unpopular — causes." His words exactly!

I don't know if it means anything or not but the court reporter stated on his page that he recorded 1-48 pages of testimony, and we have only 1-46 pages.

I guess you have learned by now that my mother loves to talk. She also at times will say what she is thinking without considering the effect it may have on the listener. She gets so carried away at times that I have been led to suspect that she may be affected with — well she may be a mild hysteric, not the sexual type but the simple nervous type. She is, however, a sweet woman with plenty of guts. We have always related well.

2 A personal message from Huey P. Newton.

I am still among the living, so I guess I'm doing all right. The dentist denied me medical attention for the tenth time today, this morning that is. We may have to discipline him soon. He apparently hasn't heard of my small but mighty mouthpiece.

Please take care of yourself, you have my regard.

George

P.S. I would like to know in advance when I will see you again.

MARCH, 1970 12

Dear Fay,

I received the copies of the motions, I think day before yesterday, the tenth. I have been slow to confirm. Sorry, it may seem strange but I find my time (twenty-one hours awake) inadequate to meet all the needs. My metabolism is such that I need four hours of exercise to feel normal (relaxed). This may just be the result of years of being in places like this, repressing things. You know we aren't even allowed to get angry. They took away my showering action (the half hour on the tier we were getting each day) on Monday as a result of that contact with the dentist. No problem, however. There is a sink in my cell.

Then I have my vocational work to do. I'll get lost in that for hours sometimes. Old slave trying to deal with his environment. In this connection you may have to help me as you said you did with my friend. They are purposely making it difficult for me to get what I require. We can discuss it when I see you. Georgia was up to see me yesterday. The three mothers and one aunt all came together on the bus. I have your letter of the tenth here before me now, thanks. You have my sincere regard.

George

MARCH, 1970 22

My Friend,

The thought just occurred to me that you could challenge that guy B — on his theory or statements concerning the possibilities of his secret

witnesses being done in, if he allows discovery.³ You see every time a rat does get put away, the prison authorities always release a different reason for the attack, never that he was an informer. Their purpose for always withholding the truth is that they don't want to discourage other potential rats and the truth would aid the convict in the psychological war — con against cop. For it is their purpose to always keep us divided and fearful of trusting the next con. You are aware that it's always the goal of oppressive authority (those who govern without the consent of the governed) to keep their wards divided. They can maintain their control in no other way.

Divide and rule in its simplest form is standard police procedure. They must always display their rats, boast of knowing all that goes on among us. When it's more than one person on some crime, they will be split up and each told that the other has confessed and implicated him, etc. You know the line. Inside the joint it is the same only much more intense. A sense of terror, betrayal and insecurity prevails at all times. It flows outward from the captain's office — divide and rule, divide and rule. An Italian in the Syndicate at one time killed a Mexican in Folsom because the Mex suddenly started telling everyone not to trust someone, who was supposed to be a rat. The pigs wanted to put him out of business (importing dope into the joint) and wanted to get the Mex killed. So they called the Mex into their office and showed him some phony papers indicating that the guy was a rat. The Mex went for it and got killed. The guy was out of business in 4A for four years (4A is Folsom's adjustment center).

Terrible conflict going on all the time. At issue is who will run the joint, cops or cons. So it is never released that a police informer was killed for his mistake. I'm thinking that B. will be at a loss to cite some cases in support of his fears that his witnesses will be harmed. We could state that he is playing on some concept of prison conditions that existed in 1920 but that do not exist today.

Monday, March 23, 1970

I'm looking forward to a good Friday. Never had one. I don't think Los Angeles is a good place for the trial. Fifteen floors above the ground.

³ At the prosecution's request, the judge initially denied the defense the right of discovery on the grounds that it would jeopardize the lives of the inmate witnesses.

One million pigs!!

I was pushing you, rushing you, encircling you — recall — it occasioned the remark from you that “I don’t know you that well.” Look, I do plead guilty but with this explanation, that I hope you’ll accept the past months as, say, the equivalent of five or more years’ acquaintance. I encircle the people that I dig, there are only two types of people inhabiting my closet, friends and foes, the ones I accept, the ones I reject. I accepted you from the onset, and in spite of the bitter experience of these years I still find it easy to trust people. I sensed from the start that we were of kindred spirits. I rejected others as you recall, because there was no kinship of spirit there. To me length of acquaintance matters very little. I’ve been living in the trenches where it’s understood that it’s us against them, hide and seek. They’re always it and getting caught means getting dusted. There never are many of us, so when I’ve met one in the past it’s been my method to encircle and push. But “push” isn’t a good term. It implies that I’ve put someone in front of me and there can never be any room in front of me. Let me say encircle and pull.

You can never fully understand. It is an existential impossibility for you to know how it’s been with me. My character and disposition are such that my response to a crisis situation always leads to a situation more desperate than the one which provoked it. But that’s the way I like it, and believe me, Fay, I probably wouldn’t be alive now if it weren’t my habit to overreact, and look forward for the trouble that I know is coming.

It probably didn’t have to be this way for me. Other blacks have faced the same situations and have not been hurt too badly. I couldn’t take it. I’ll never be able to take it, a knife in the back, the nightstick, the gas chamber, death over a slow fire notwithstanding.

And things just keep escalating from one desperate situation to a situation more desperate, and I seize the bull by the horns. I’ll ride him till his neck breaks or until he pins me to the wall — conflict, struggle, and preparation for more struggle. You can’t understand how it is to have to watch everyone who gets within arm’s reach, or when under the gun to have to stay close to something to crawl under. When you came to see me in February my heart was cold as Antarctica.

Tuesday, March 24, 1970 (early morning)

I'm convinced that it is the psychopathic personality that searches out a uniform. There's little doubt of what's going on in that man's head who will voluntarily don any uniform.

Did you know that in these prisons there is a very fierce competition between the pig who wears a uniform and the pig who works in civilian dress? The uniformed pigs call themselves the Custody Department, while the others go under the heading of Care and Treatment. It is the function of the uniform to hold a man here. This means they do the key work, the searching, beating, killing. The individual with the tie and white shirt (really just another type of uniform) determines what we'll eat, what bullshit academic and make-work programs we'll have. He presides over the silly group therapy games that always end in fights or snitch contests. Oh, and he also makes out board reports.

These two types of cops have been vying for control of the joints ever since the counselor breed came on the grounds. It was intended of course that these two groups of cops work together against the con, the rationale being, the more cons broken, the fewer will have to be killed, consequently less bad publicity for Department of Corrections political appointees and the political machine that appointed them.

We killed that off by playing them against one another. If a uniform denied some small request, we would take it to the counselor. If he granted it, well you can take it from there, but we would purposely ask the uniform (and in a way that made it certain he would refuse) for things we were sure the counselor would approve. Everyone connected with the power complex has made the outcome reasonably predictable, chaos. You have a picture of them trying to divide us, manage us, denude us of individuality. When this maneuver fails, they arrange for one unmanageable to murder another unmanageable. At the same time they can't agree among themselves on anything. Cretins with guns. You couldn't count the personality conflicts between cop + cop, cop + con, con + con (usually fomented by some cop or some unnecessarily harsh living condition). You couldn't count these conflicts with an IBM. And I mean the ones that transpire openly in, say, one hour's time.

To be certain that you dig what I'm saying, I'll here admit that most of the people who come through these places are genuinely sick in one way or the other, monsters, totally disorganized, twisted, disgusting epitomes of the parent monster. Those who aren't so upon their

arrival will surely be so when they leave. No one escapes unscathed. An individual leaves his individuality and any pride he may have had behind these walls. When you first enter Chino you're required to write a confession that will be placed right in the front of your jacket⁴ under your picture and number. Failure to write this confession means you go to the board. It means that you haven't taken the first step toward rehabilitation. All this is carefully explained to you in Chino. "No confession, no parole." No one walks into the board room with his head up. This just isn't done! Guys lie to each other, but if a man gets a parole from these prisons, Fay, it means that he crawled into that room. Plus it means that he adopted the philosophical attitude toward shit in the face several times since his last board. Of the billions of conflicts and negative exchanges that take place in a year, the pigs choose which ones to pass over. The guy who earns a parole surrendered some face in the course of his stay here prior to board. He walked away from some situation to save his body — at the cost of some part of his face (read mind, or pride, or principle). No black will leave this place if he has any violence in his past, until they see that thing in his eyes. And you can't fake it — resignation, defeat — it must be stamped clearly across the face.

I've seen it, eyes in black heads, on the yard in San Quentin, Tracy, here. When I hit the yard in December '62 the brothers were lining up in the rain, outside the protection of the shed that covers half of the upper yard. The Mexicans and whites had occupied all the lines under the shed. They would save long stretches of space for friends who never showed. So I had a picture on my first day there of the old slave, wet and trembling while these other people relaxed with plenty of room under the shed. The brothers were mainly concerned with avoiding any trouble, since the pig invariably will shoot at the black face in a black and white altercation. Then it seems that blacks are much more concerned with establishing records that will lead to parole than whites or browns. I can't understand this, since they have so much less to go home to.

Earlier that same year, right here in Soledad, a white (nameless and faceless now) stabbed a brother with my surname because another brother called Butch beat him in one of those childish hand-to-hand disputes in the third-tier shower (the place for settling all disputes).

⁴ Convict's record folder, log of all observations made by prison authorities.

The white inmate ran to his cell and asked for police protection. Two hundred blacks went after him with the intention of taking him from the police. Before it was over there were only four of us against all the police in the county. A — —. A. was there with me then, and two others, all the others — well, it started with a trembling of the lips, then a flaring of the nose, then that thing in the eyes. . . .

They sent us to San Quentin lockup for a month. Then J.C. and I were sent to Tracy, being the youngest of the four. In Tracy I did six months in adjustment center and was released to J Unit, the unit for unmanageables. Actually they put me in this unit so that I would be close to some old enemies. A Mexican got killed in Soledad the year before. J.C. was picked up for it but later released. No one was ever convicted. In an honest case of mistaken identity, the Mexicans were supposed to be out to get me for it.

I don't know where you got the tale of me attempting to integrate a movie area. It is a bit off, but it could have come from the events of that week I spent in J Unit. The blacks had to sit in the rear of the TV room on hard, armless, backless benches while the Mexicans and whites sat up front on cushioned chairs and benches with backrests!!! Now check this, if one of those punks was in his cell or the shower, no one could sit in his seat and certainly no black dared sit there, I'm serious!!! All of this taking place in front of a uniform and a large, bold-print sign in English and Spanish that read "No Saving of Seats Allowed"!!!

The first three nights I went in to catch the news I stood in the front, looking down the room at the old slave for some sign of support. Old slave ignored me, eyes darting. He wants to go home, so do I, but I don't want to leave anything behind. Since my father didn't bequeath me much to begin with, any further losses leave me with nothing. I sat right in the front the fourth night but I couldn't watch TV. I had to watch my back. The cop walked up and looked at me like I had lost my mind. The cons tolerated me (215 pounds and apparently a lunatic) for three days. On the fourth (or seventh day out) night of sitting, they attacked me. They locked me up afterward, and sent me back to San Quentin to stay. The 115⁵ was so clearly racist that I think they removed it in San Quentin. If you ever get the chance, see what reason they have in my jacket for the 1962 transfer to San Quentin from Tracy.

5 Bad conduct report form.

So most of these inmates are sick, my friend, but who created the monster in them? They all stand right now as products of their environment. But in my humble opinion the inmates of these places are not quite as — well they aren't nearly as psychologically disturbed as the guy who calls himself a guard. They really could change roles without noticeable alteration in the qualitative factor of administrations. Any alteration would be positive.

United States prisons are the last refuge of the brainless. If the inmates are failures, at least they were reaching — most in very small ways, but some reach is certainly preferable to no reach at all. The cop, as I've stated before, is a guy who can do no other type of work, who can feed himself only by feeding upon this garbage dump.

What am I doing here, Fay? I fell into this garbage can in a narcotic stupor and they just closed the lid for good. Someone is going to be hurt, my friend, when it's over someone's going to be hurting, bad, and it won't be us. It won't be you. Be assured that your safety will always enter any defense move I make, your safety first, always. I was supposed to be gone from this place years ago, free, wrecking worlds, destroying the unrighteous, dying on my feet.

Pigs come here to feed on the garbage heap for two reasons really, the first half because they can do no other work, frustrated men soon to develop sadistic mannerisms; and the second half, sadists out front, suffering under the restraints placed upon them by an equally sadistic-vindictive society. The sadist knows that to practice his religion upon the society at large will bring down upon his head their sadistic reaction. Killing is great fun, but not at the risk of getting killed (note how they squeak and pull out their hair over losing even one).

But the restraints come off when they walk through the compound gates. Their whole posture goes through a total metamorphosis. Inflict pain, satisfy the power complex, and get a check.

How can the sick administer to the sick.

In the well-ordered society prisons would not exist as such. If a man is ill he should be placed in a hospital, staffed by the very best of technicians. Men would never be separated from women. These places would be surfeited with equipment and meaningful programs, even if it meant diverting funds from another, or even from all other sectors of

the economy. It's socially self-destructive to create a monster and loose him upon the world.

But we can't cure with diagnoses, Comrade Stender — and I dig speaking with you like this. You can only listen, no back talk.

Breakfast is here. Power to the People.

Tuesday, March 24, 1970 (evening)

This monster — the monster they've engendered in me will return to torment its maker, from the grave, the pit, the profoundest pit. Hurl me into the next existence, the descent into hell won't turn me. I'll crawl back to dog his trail forever. They won't defeat my revenge, never, never. I'm part of a righteous people who anger slowly, but rage undammed. We'll gather at his door in such a number that the rumbling of our feet will make the earth tremble. I'm going to charge them for this, twenty-eight years without gratification. I'm going to charge them reparations in blood. I'm going to charge them like a maddened, wounded, rogue male elephant, ears flared, trunk raised, trumpet blaring. I'll do my dance in his chest, and the only thing he'll ever see in my eyes is a dagger to pierce his cruel heart. This is one nigger who is positively displeased. I'll never forgive, I'll never forget, and if I'm guilty of anything at all it's of not leaning on them hard enough. War without terms.

Wednesday, March 25, 1970 (early morning)

I just reread the above paragraph, foul mood last night. It's not light out yet, so I guess I can say tonight, but I've been asleep. There's a Hawaiian on the tier who wants a transfer to Vacaville. He is playing crazy. His dementia takes the form of "nigger baiting," especially when the bull is on the tier (who by the way enjoys the shit out of it) — none of the brothers say a word, however. This little boy blows the whole line. The other little boys laugh, the pig grins. I don't get too upset at the little boy. He is a minnow — the upsetting point is that this Hawaiian has very large purple lips, skin tones darker than mine, and a very large wide nose. His hair is very nearly like my sisters'. This clown is talking about killing all the niggers. The pitiful jackass would die right beside me. I think what may be most bitter in a thing like that is the knowledge that my enemies have turned the entire world against me. The shibboleths that defame me are now universal. Anyone who learns them is in (or out — depending).

How do you deal with the perverted, disease-bearing, voracious bastard who wants to cast his image over all things, eat from every plate at every table, police the world with racist shibboleths and a dying doctrine of marketplaces peopled by monopolies, top-heavy bureaus, and scum-swilling pigs to gun down any who would object?

The concept of nonviolent protest, whatever political forms it may take, presumes two things about the imperialist establishment that are so obviously historically unrealistic, so logically unsound, that the espousal of any purely nonviolent anti-establishment moan reduces one automatically to the absurd, and any strong espousal of the purely nonviolent anti-establishment policy reduces one automatically to a corpse.

The first presumption is mercy. It presumes the possible existence of mercy on the part of a breed whose heart is as cold as the snows. It presumes existence of a restraint mechanism that in other breeds and other animals precludes the harming of one's kind unless placed under the most extreme compulsions of self-preservation. But history shows no justification for so wild a presupposition. I refer you to Leopold II's Congo, the Indian wars of the last century, the Union of South Africa, Sharpville, the Philippines at the turn of the century. I refer you to Germany during the depression and war years. I refer you to Vietnam! Just a cursory reading of history and just a glance about me now would show — that I could expect more mercy from a pack of Bengal tigers. Any claims that nonviolent, purely nonviolent political agitation has served to force back the legions of capitalist expansion are false. The theory of nonviolence is a false ideal. The Hindus failed because of this moral aspect in their characters precluding any large-scale organized violence. The forms of slavery merely changed for them. Of what value is quasi-political control if the capitalists are allowed to hold on to the people's whole means of subsistence?! And in the case of India and foreign capitalists, have any of the people's needs been met? Do they still have race riots, do they still sleep in the streets? These people were betrayed by false leaders with false ideals. Compare India with China. They were both supposedly liberated at the same time, India may have had a year or more of what is loosely termed "political self-determination". China's problems in the late forties were ten times more severe, but today there is no one hungry in China. For the first time its population is united and organized under a government as decentralized and representative as a huge modern

industrial based society can be. China, land of the coolie, slave labor, open-door policies, floor mat of the West — they're vying for first place in every important economic sector today. Remember the 1839 Opium War, the Boxer Rebellion. A trial of combat with China today would be Russian roulette with a fully loaded .45 automatic, self-destruction, suicide.

All of the third world political movements that are forcing the retreat of colonialism have learned to deal with the expeditionary armies of colonialism. There is no case of successful liberation without violence. How could you neutralize an army without violence?

The people of the U.S. are held in the throes of a form of colonialism. Control of their subsistence and nearly every aspect of the circumstances surrounding their existence has passed into the hands of a clearly distinct and alienated oligarchy. If today's young revolutionary vanguard are not merely entertaining themselves with a new kind of "chicken," a political form of bumper tag, if they seriously intend to step out front and take the monster to task, they should understand from the outset that the monster is merciless.

The second presumption contained in the concept of nonviolent political agitation is inherent in the statement of this policy, as it stands alone. The mere utterance of nonviolent policy statements implies that it is possible for one to take the opposite course and pursue violence. But in our case this has not been proved. In all cases, there is a contradiction and a dangerous presumption in the statement and pursuit of nonviolent political policy, especially when the opposition is not so committed. The danger derives from the very realistic fact that the statement and pursuit of nonviolent tactics will always be mistaken for weakness, as these tactics stand alone. The contradiction is then revealed, in that power is expected to surrender to weakness.

Pure nonviolence as a political ideal, then, is absurd: Politics is violence. It may serve our purpose to claim nonviolence, but we must never delude ourselves into thinking that we can seize power from a position of weakness, with half measures, polite programs, righteous indignation, loud entreaties. If this agitation that we like to term as nonviolent is to have any meaning at all we must force the fascist to taste the bitterness of our wrath. Nonviolence must constantly demonstrate the effects of its implied opposite. The dialectic between Narodnik and Nihilist should never break down. One should not exist

without the concomitant existence of the other. — Breakfast is here. —
Long live the guerrillas!

Wednesday, March 25, 1970 (late)

I suspect that the pigs have stopped the correspondence form that I sent to your friend.

The four or five people who attacked the pigs last week — recall they had weapons (?), took the keys — they're out of the hole (isolation) already, over here with us. I don't, however, suspect foul play too strongly. The Mexican was beaten pretty badly. Just lit the forty-first cigarette.

The punks throw stuff at us through the bars when they are let out for showers. I mean foul stuff too. We each get a half hour a day, six days of the week, to shower or exercise in the limited space in front of our cells. The walks are segregated. Blacks are never allowed to walk or shower or even to come out of the cells at all when the whites are out of their cells. The more perverse of "Hitler's Little Helpers" save their excretions to throw in our cells as they walk back and forth to their shower and exercise. The shit literally flies at us almost every day. The blacks don't even consider throwing excrement. We retaliate by shooting at them with little, crudely-made zip guns and powerful slingshots fashioned from the elastic on our shorts. If the pigs were interested in stopping this silly shit, they would integrate the shower walks. If they fear they would lose control that way, they could segregate the whole building. No whites or Mexicans on this floor at all.

To seize power for the people and relegate fascism to the history books the vanguard must change the basic patterns of thought. We are going to have to study the principles of people's movements. We are going to have to study them where they took place and interpret them to fit our situation here. We have yet to discover the meaning of people's war, people's army. The righteous people of the world who are struggling with the monster on the only terms that he can be fought must have many reservations concerning us, especially those of us who are black. What are the fierce and wonderful people of Vietnam thinking of us? Where is the real left wing? What has been done to us, that makes us fail to resist?

The successes of China, Cuba, Vietnam, and parts of Africa cannot

be attributed to any innate, singular quality in the characters of their people. Men are social creatures, herd animals. We follow leaders. The success or failure of mass movements depends on their leadership and the method of their leaders. We must take our lessons from these people, reorganize our values, decide whether it is our personal desire to live long or to chance living right.

People's war, class struggle, war of liberation means armed struggle. Men like Hoover, Reagan, Hunt, Agnew, Johnson, Helms, Westmoreland, Abrams, Campbell, Carswell are dangerous men who believe that they are the rightful Führers of all the world's people. They must be dealt with now. Can men like these be converted? Will they allow anyone to maneuver them out of their positions of power while they still live? Would Nixon accept a people's government, a people's economy? How can we deal with these men who have so much at stake, so much to defend. Honesty forces us to the conclusion that the only men who will successfully deal with the Hoovers, Helmses and Abramses will be armed men. It's obvious to me that nothing of any consequence can be achieved while these men rule. Class struggle means the suppression of the opposing class, and suppression of the Amerikan General Staff, and The Corporate Elite. The moment this three-headed monster detects the danger contained in our ideas and ideals, he will react violently against us. Just the whisper of revolt excites in him a swift and terrible reflex, so swift we won't even know how we died.

Thursday, March 26, 1970

So, my friend, the terms have been established. That is the only way I will accept any more time in this life. I don't want to live any other way. I want my food and drink from the people's stash. I want to hide, run, and look over my shoulder. The only woman that I could ever accept is one who would be willing to live out of a flight bag, sleep in a coal car, eat milkweed, bloodroot, wild greens, dandelions, a rabbit, a handful of rice. She would have to be willing to run and work all night and watch all day. She would bathe when we could, change clothes when we could. She would own nothing, not solely because she loved me, but because she loved the principle, the revolution, the people.

I don't think this rotten society has produced any such wonderful creatures. There is a Cuban brother here on the tier. His folks left, but he supports the revolution. He can run some beautiful things about the people of Cuba when he'll talk and when I can understand him.

The thing that fixes me best is how the revolution is gauged to operate on the family plan — children with a role, women in the same roles as men, education standardized.

I remembered that those people had been some of the most corrupt in the Western world. Remember when the U.S. was in control, it was just like one of the Mexican border towns. The revolution brought all of those wonderful new people into existence. It will be the same here — right on — to the most beautiful conclusion. Power to the People.

If they try to read this it will explain my somewhat damaged condition in court tomorrow.

You are my favorite person, Fay Stender, take care of yourself.

George

MARCH, 1970 30

Dear Fay,

I'm well — no new problems. You can, however, when time allows, write Dr. Boone of the medical staff here and tell him to provide me with medication for my sinus condition so that we will not be forced into the imposition of going through the courts for it. Also let it be known that you are aware of the APC and brown-sugar-pill put-off. Do you understand? When I ask for medication, the MTA gives me an APC or two and some candy pills (brown). This doesn't help me. They have better stuff that is reserved for the other cons. They're about to stretch me to my limit with this racist stuff. I'm tired of hearing it, seeing it, and I'm tired of smelling it. I know they read these letters. That's good, because I want them to know that the first time they let one of these punks throw something on me we're going to all blow like a thermonuclear bomb. I'm just not going to understand!!

The blacks on this floor never engage in any form of name-calling, never defy the lockups, never ask the officials for anything other than the state issue. Very seldom do any of the brothers ask the officials to pass things down the tier. We do the passing. When we come out for showers, we never even talk to the other inmates or officials, but still we've been attacked in every way conceivable (considering that there are always a set of bars between us and them). It doesn't have to be this way. Since the officials are segregating anyway, they could do it in such

a way that there would never be any contact between blacks and whites. They could give us this side of the first floor and them the other side or the reverse. They could even give people a choice as to whether they want to be segregated. I'm putting you on notice, *Moody*,⁶ the first time I get shit thrown at me the whole country will know how it displeases me.

How ridiculous can animals get. The whites get angry with me for just existing. But they seem to get on well with the people who are holding them here, the people responsible for the living conditions that cause their frustration.

For the People's Lieben —
George

MARCH, 1970 31

Dear Fay,
I've finished the legal book you sent me.⁷ Do you want it back the next time I see you, or am I free to let a couple of other brothers read it?

It pertains to all of us, I believe. I read your section several times. Did you put it together by yourself? It's very heavy! I'm thinking that if the Court of Appeals passes favorably on it, and other attorneys incorporate it into their defenses, we could come up with a detaining or delaying tool at least. It's good! I'd stake my life on you any time.

We have a situation then where dull, heavy-handed, desperate types like myself run afoul of the law from time to time. Then we have the gracious, sensitive, brainy types, of whom you are the quintessence, to hold the legal pigs to the strictest interpretation of the Constitution possible. The cynic in me, although it allows for the short-term benefits, sees another situation building down the road, a situation where they will simply hold court at the scene, there in the street.

Milestiba for the People —
George

6 One of the captains at Soledad.

7 Ann Fagan Ginger, *Minimizing Racism in Jury Trials: The Voir Dire Conducted by Charles R. Garry in People of California V. Huey P. Newton* (The National Lawyers Guild, 1969).

APRIL, 1970

Dear Fay,

I just got your letter with the writ article in it. You are positively my favorite person. We must take time to get acquainted. You have mentioned yourself and your other life only once. Please don't misunderstand, I simply wish to know you better. I haven't had much contact with anyone outside my family and the people who have come through these prisons in the last decade or so. And I dig people, righteous people. I always have found it hard to really hate anyone. I loved people. I understood from the beginning that the end purpose of life was simply to live, experience, contribute, connect, to gratify the body and mind. I began to hate when I discovered that the mystification was interjected intentionally. I can't say where it started. I can't trace it, but I believe it goes back to my earliest years, I mean the feeling that what everyone else around me accepted as right wasn't necessarily so. The family, the nuns, the pigs, I resisted them all. I know my mother likes to tell everyone that I was a good boy, but that isn't true, I've been a brigand all my life. It was these years in prison with the time and opportunity available to me for research and thought that motivated a desire to remold my character. I think that if I had been on the street from age eighteen to twenty-four, I would probably be a dope fiend or a small-stakes gambler, or a hump in the ground.

Power to the People,
George

APRIL, 1970 4

Dear Fay,

For very obvious reasons it pains me to dwell on the past. As an individual, and as the male of our order I have only the proud flesh⁸ of very recent years to hold up as proof that I did not die in the sickbed in which I lay for so long. I've taken my lesson from the past and attempted to close it off.

I've drunk deeply from the cisterns of gall, swam against the current in Blood Alley, Urban Fascist Amerika, experienced the nose rub in

⁸ Proud flesh is a medical term for the abnormal growth of flesh that sometimes forms around a healing wound.

shit, armed myself with a monumental hatred and tried to forget and pretend. A standard black male defense mechanism.

It hasn't worked. It may just be me, but I suspect that it's part of the pitiful black condition that the really bad moments record themselves so clearly and permanently in the mind, while the few brief flashes of gratification are lost immediately, nightmare overhanging darkly.

My recall is nearly perfect, time has faded nothing. I recall the very first kidnap. I've lived through the passage, died on the passage, lain in the unmarked, shallow graves of the millions who fertilized the Amerikan soil with their corpses; cotton and corn growing out of my chest, "unto the third and fourth generation," the tenth, the hundredth. My mind ranges back and forth through the uncounted generations, and I feel all that they ever felt, but double. I can't help it; there are too many things to remind me of the 23½ hours that I'm in this cell. Not ten minutes pass without a reminder. In between, I'm left to speculate on what form the reminder will take.

Down here we hear relaxed, matter-of-fact conversations centering around how best to kill all the nation's niggers and in what order. It's not the fact that they consider killing me that upsets. They've been "killing all the niggers" for nearly half a millennium now, but I am still alive. I might be the most resilient dead man in the universe. The upsetting thing is that they never take into consideration the fact that I am going to resist. No they honestly believe that shit. They do! That's what they think of us. That they have beaten and conditioned all the defense and attack reflexes from us. That the region of the mind that stores the principles upon which men base their rationale to resist is missing in us. Don't they talk of concentration camps?. Don't they state that it couldn't happen in the U.S. because the fascists here are nice fascists. Not because it's impossible to incarcerate 30 million resisters, but because they are humane imperialists, enlightened fascists.

Well, they've made a terrible mistake. I recall the day I was born, the first day of my generation. It was during the second (and most destructive) capitalist world war for colonial privilege, early on a rainy Wednesday morning, late September, Chicago. It happened to me in a little fold-into-the-wall bed, in a little half-flat on Racine and Lake. Dr. Rogers attended. The el train that rattled by within fifteen feet of our front windows (the only two windows) screamed in at me like the banshee, portentous of pain, death, threatening and imminent. The

first motion that my eyes focused on was this pink hand swinging in a wide arc in the general direction of my black ass. I stopped that hand, the left downward block, and countered the right needle finger to the eye. I was born with my defense reflexes well developed.

It's going to be "Kill me if you can," fool, not "Kill me if you please."

But let them make their plans on the supposition, "like slave, like son." I'm not going for it, though, and they've made my defense easier. A cop gives the keys to a group of right-wing cons. They're going to open our cells — one at a time — all over the building. They don't want to escape, or deal with the men who hold them here. They can solve their problems only if they kill all of us — think about that — these guys live a few cells from me. None of them have ever lived, most are state-raised in institutions like this one. They have nothing coming, nothing at all, they have nothing at stake in this order of things. In defending right-wing ideals and the status quo they're saying in effect that ninety-nine years and a dark day in prison is their idea of fun. Most are in and out, and mostly in, all of their life. The periods that they pass on the outside are considered runs. Simply stated, they consider the periods spent in the joint more natural, more in keeping with their tastes. Well, I understand their condition, and I know how they got that way. I could honestly sympathize with them if they were not so wrong, so stupid as to let the pigs use them. Sounds like Germany of the thirties and forties to me. It's the same on the outside there. I'll venture to say that there's not one piece of stock, not one bond owned by anyone in any of the families of the pigs who murdered Fred Hampton. They organize marches around the country, marches and demonstrations in support of total immediate destruction of Vietnam, and afterward no one is able to pick up the tab. The fascists, it seems, have a standard M.O. for dealing with the lower classes. Actually oppressive power throughout history has used it. They turn a man against himself — think of all the innocent things that make us feel good, but that make some of us also feel guilty. Think of how the people of the lower classes weight themselves against the men who rule. Consider the con going through the courts on a capital offense who supports capital punishment. I swear I heard something just like that today. Look how long Hershey ran Selective Service. Blacks embrace capitalism, the most unnatural and outstanding example of man against himself that history can offer. After the Civil War, the form of slavery changed from chattel to economic slavery, and we were thrown onto

the labor market to compete at a disadvantage with poor whites. Ever since that time, our principal enemy must be isolated and identified as capitalism. The slaver was and is the factory owner, the businessman of capitalist Amerika, the man responsible for employment, wages, prices, control of the nation's institutions and culture. It was the capitalist infrastructure of Europe and the U.S. which was responsible for the rape of Africa and Asia. Capitalism murdered those 30 million in the Congo. Believe me, the European and Anglo-American capitalist would never have wasted the ball and powder were it not for the profit principle. The men, all the men who went into Africa and Asia, the fleas who climbed on that elephant's back with rape on their minds, richly deserve all that they are called. Every one of them deserved to die for their crimes. So do the ones who are still in Vietnam, Angola, Union of South Africa (U.S.A.!!). But we must not allow the emotional aspects of these issues, the scum at the surface, to obstruct our view of the big picture, the whole rotten hunk. It was capitalism that armed the ships, free enterprise that launched them, private ownership of property that fed the troops. Imperialism took up where the slave trade left off. It wasn't until after the slave trade ended that Amerika, England, France, and the Netherlands invaded and settled in on Afro-Asian soil in earnest. As the European industrial revolution took hold, new economic attractions replaced the older ones; chattel slavery was replaced by neoslavery. Capitalism, "free" enterprise, private ownership of public property armed and launched the ships and fed the troops; it should be clear that it was the profit motive that kept them there.

It was the profit motive that built the tenement house and the city project. Profit and loss prevents repairs and maintenance. Free enterprise brought the monopolistic chain store into the neighborhood. The concept of private ownership of facilities that the people need to exist brought the legions of hip-shooting, brainless pigs down upon our heads, our homes, our streets. They're there to protect the entrepreneur!! His chain store, and his property that you are renting, his bank. If the entrepreneur decides that he no longer wants to sell you food, let's say, because the Yankee dollar that we value so dearly has suddenly lost its last thirty cents of purchasing power, private ownership means that the only way many of the people will eat is to break the law. Fat Rat Daley has ordered all looters shot.

Black capitalism, black against itself. The silliest contradiction in a long train of spineless, mindless contradictions. Another painless, ultimate

remedy: be a better fascist than the fascist. Bill Cosby, acting out the establishment agent — what message was this soul brother conveying to our children? I Spy was certainly programmed to a child's mentality. This running dog in the company of a fascist with a cause, a flunky's flunky, was transmitting the credo of the slave to our youth, the mod version of the old house nigger. We can never learn to trust as long as we have them. They are as much a part of the repression, more even than the real live, rat-informer-pig. Aren't they telling our kids that it is romantic to be a running dog? The kids are so hungry to see the black male do some shooting and throw some hands that they can't help themselves from identifying with the quislings. So first they turn us against ourselves, precluding all possibility of trust, then fascism takes any latent divisible forces and develops them into divisions in fact: racism, nationalism, religions.

You have Spic, Dago, Jew, Jap, Chink, Gook, Pineapple, and the omnibus nigger to represent the nations of Africa. The point being that it is easier to persuade that little man who joined the army to see the world and who has never murdered before to murder a Gook. Well, it's not quite like murdering a man. Polack, Frog, Kraut, etc.

The wheels just fell off altogether in the thirties. People in certain circles like to forget it, and any reference to the period draws from these circles such defensive epithets as "old-fashioned," "simple old-style socialism," and "out of date." But fashion doesn't concern me, I'm after the facts. The facts are that no one, absolutely no one in the Western world, and very few anywhere else (this includes even those who may have been born yesterday), is unaffected by those years when capitalism's roulette wheel locked in depression. It affected every nation-state on earth. Of course Russia had no stock market and consequently no business cycle, but it was affected by the war that grew out of the efforts to restart the machines and by the effect it had on other nations with which Russia has had to deal. Relativism enters. Since international capitalism was at the time in its outward peak of expansion, there were no African, Asian, or Latin lands organized along nation-state lines that were not adversely affected. Every society in the world that lived by a money economy was part of the depression. Although Russia had abandoned the forms and vacillations of capitalism, it too was damaged due to the principles of relativism.

If there is any question whether those years have any effect on, or relevance to now, just consider the effect on today's mentality. Had

the world's people been struck with hereditary cretinism all at once, instead of Adam Smith's "invisible hand," the analogy couldn't be more perfect. I mean cretinism in its literal, medical sense: a congenital deficiency in the secretions of the thyroid gland resulting in deformity and idiocy. Causation links that depression with World War II. The rise to power of Europe's Nazis can be attributed to the depression. The WASP fascists of Amerika secretly desired a war with Japan to stimulate demand and control unemployment. The syllogism is perfect.

So question and analyze the state of being of Europe's Jews who survive. Do the same with the people of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But we don't have to isolate groups. Causation and relativism link everyone inescapably with the past. None of the righteous people would even be alive had their parents died of the underconsumption of that period or the desperate fascist chicanery aimed at diverting the lower classes from the economic reality of class struggle. The Nazis actually succeeded in foisting upon the lower-class Germans and some of the other European national groups the notion that their economic plight was due not to bad economic principles but caused by the existence of Jews within the system and the shortage of markets (colonies). The obvious intent being to put lower-class, depressed German against lower-class Jew, instead of exploited lower-class German against privileged upper-class German.

The Amerikan fascist used a thousand similar devices, delaying maneuvers, to prevent the people from questioning the validity of the principles upon which capitalism is founded, to turn the people against themselves, people against people, people against other groups of people. Always they will promote competition (while they cooperate), division, mistrust, a sense of isolation. The antipodes of love. The M.O. of the fascist arrangement is always to protect the capitalist class by destroying the consciousness, the trust, the unity of the lower classes. My father is in his forties today; thirty-five years ago he was living through his most formative years. He was a child of the Great Depression. I want you to notice for later reference that I emphasize and differentiate Great Depression. There were many more international, national, and regional depressions during the period in history relevant to this comment.

There are millions of blacks of my father's generation now living. They are all products of a totally depressed environment. All of the males have lived all of their lives in a terrible quandary; none were

able to grasp that a morbid economic deprivation, an outrageous and enormous abrasion, formed the basis of their character. My father developed his character, convention, convictions, his traits, his life style, out of a situation that began with his mother running out. She left him and his oldest brother on the corner of one of the canyons in East St. Louis. They raised themselves, in the streets, then on a farm somewhere in Louisiana, then in CCC camps. This brother, my father, had no formal education at all. He taught himself the essentials later on. Alone, in the most hostile jungle on earth, ruled over by the king of beasts in the first throes of a bloody and protracted death. Alone, in the most savage moment of history, without arms, and burdened by a black face that he's been hiding ever since.

I love this brother, my father, and when I use the word "love" I am not making an attempt at rhetoric. I am attempting to express a refulgent, unrestrained emanation from the deepest, most durable region of my soul, an unshakable thing that I have never questioned. But no one can come through his ordeal without suffering the penalty of psychosis. It was the price of survival. I would venture that there are no healthy brothers of his generation, none at all.

The brother has reached the prime of his life without ever showing in my presence or anywhere, to my knowledge, an overt manifestation of real sensitivity, affection, or sentiment. He has lived his entire life in a state of shock. Nothing can touch him now, his calm is complete, his immunity to pain is total. When I can fix his eyes, which is not often since when they aren't closed they are shaded, I see staring back at me the expressionless mask of the zombie.

But he must have loved us, of this I am certain. Part of the credo of the neoslave, the latter-day slave, who is free to move from place to place if he can come by the means, is to shuffle away from any situation that becomes too difficult. He stayed with us, worked sixteen hours a day, after which he would eat, bathe and sleep — period. He never owned more than two pairs of shoes in his life and in the time I was living with him never more than one suit, never took a drink, never went to a nightclub, expressed no feelings about such things, and never once reminded any one of us, or so it seemed, never expected any notice of the fact that he was giving to us all of the life force and activity that the monster-machine had left to him. The part that the machine seized, that death of the spirit visited upon him by a world that he never influenced, was mourned by us, and most certainly by me, but no one

ever made a real effort to give him solace. How do you console a man who is unapproachable?

He came to visit me when I was in San Quentin. He was in his forties then too, an age in men when they have grown full. I had decided to reach for my father, to force him with my revolutionary dialectic to question some of the mental barricades he'd thrown up to protect his body from what to him was an undefinable and omnipresent enemy. An enemy that would starve his body, expose it to the elements, chain his body, jail it, club it, rip it, hang it, electrify it, and poison-gas it. I would have him understand that although he had saved his body he had done so at a terrible cost to his mind. I felt that if I could superimpose the explosive doctrine of self-determination through people's government and revolutionary culture upon what remained of his mind, draw him out into the real world, isolate and identify his real enemies, if I could hurl him through Fanon's revolutionary catharsis, I would be serving him, the people, the historical obligation.

San Quentin was in the riot season. It was early January 1967. The pigs had for the last three months been on a search-and-destroy foray into our cells. All times of the day or night our cells were being invaded by the goon squad: you wake up, take your licks, get skin-searched, and wait on the tier naked while they mangled your few personal effects. This treatment, fear therapy, was not accorded to all however. Some Chicanos behind dope, some whites behind extortionate activities were exempted. Mostly, it came down on us. Rehabilitational terror. Each new pig must go through a period of in-service training where he learns the Gestapo arts, the full range of anti-body tactics that he will be expected to use on the job. Part of this in-service training is a crash course in close-order combat where the pigs are taught how to use club and sap, and how to form and use the simpler karate hands, where to hit a man with these hands for the best (or worst) effect.

The new pigs usually have to serve a period on the goon squad before they fall into their regular role on the animal farm. They are always anxious to try their new skills — “to see if it really works” — we were always forced to do something to slow them down, to demonstrate that violence was a two-edged sword. This must be done at least once every year, or we would all be as punchy and fractured as a Thai Boxer before our time was up. The brothers wanted to protest. The usual protest was a strike, a work stoppage, closing the sweatshops where industrial products are worked up for two cents an hour. (Some

people get four cents after they've been on the job for six months.) The outside interests who made the profits didn't dig strikes. That meant the captain didn't like them either since it meant pressure on him from these free-enterprising political connections.

January in San Quentin is the worst way to be. It's cold when you don't have proper clothing, it's wet, dreary. The drab green, barred, buttressed walls that close in the upper yard are sixty to seventy feet high. They make you feel that your condition may be permanent.

On the occasion I wish to relate, my father had driven all night from Los Angeles alone; he had not slept more than a couple of hours in the last forty-eight. We shook hands and the dialectic began. He listened while I scorned the diabolical dog — capitalism. Didn't it raise pigs and murder Vietnamese? Didn't it glut some and starve most of us? Didn't it build housing projects that resemble prisons and luxury hotels and apartments that resemble the Hanging Gardens on the same street? Didn't it build a hospital and then a bomb? Didn't it erect a school and then open a whorehouse? Build an airplane to sell a tranquilizer tablet? For every church didn't it construct a prison? For each new medical discovery didn't it produce as a by-product ten new biological warfare agents? Didn't it aggrandize men like Hunt and Hughes and dwarf him?

He said, "Yes, but what can we do? There's too many of the bastards." His eyes shaded over and his mind went into a total regression, a relapse back through time, space, pain, neglect, a thousand dreams deferred, broken promises, forgotten ambitions, back through the hundreds of renewed hopes shattered to a time when he was young, roaming the Louisiana countryside for something to eat. He talked for ten minutes of things that were not in the present, people that I didn't know. "We'll have to take something back to Aunt Bell." He talked of places that we had never seen together. He called me by his brother's name twice. I was so shocked I could only sit and blink. This was the guy who took nothing seriously, the level-headed, practical Negro, the work-a-day, never-complain, cool, smooth colored gentleman. They have driven him to the abyss of madness; just behind the white veneer waits the awesome, vindictive black madness. There are a lot of blacks living in his generation, the one of the Great Depression, when it was no longer possible to maintain the black self by serving. Even that had dried up. Blacks were beaten and killed for jobs like porter, bellboy, stoker, pearl diver, and bootblack. My clenched fist goes up for them;

I forgive them, I understand, and if they will stop their collaboration with the fascist enemy, stop it now, and support our revolution with just a nod, we'll forget and forgive them for casting us naked into a grim and deleterious world.

The black colonies of Amerika have been locked in depression since the close of the Civil War. We have lived under regional depression since the end of chattel slavery. The beginning of the new slavery was marked by massive unemployment and underemployment. That remains with us still. The Civil War destroyed the landed aristocracy. The dictatorship of the agrarian class was displaced by the dictatorship of the manufacturing-capitalist class. The neoslaver destroyed the uneconomic plantation, and built upon its ruins a factory and a thousand subsidiaries to serve the factory setup. Since we had no skills, outside of the farming techniques that had proved uneconomic, the subsidiary service trades and menial occupations fell to us. It is still so today. We are a subsidiary subculture, a depressed area within the parent monstrosity. The other four stages of the capitalist business cycle are: recovery, expansion, inflation, and recession. Have we ever gone through a recovery or expansion stage? We are affected adversely by inflationary trends within the larger economy. Who suffers most when the prices of basic, necessary commodities go up? When the parent economy dips into inflation and recession we dip into sub-depression. When it goes into depression, we go into total desperation. The difference between what my father's generation went through during the Great Depression and what we are going through now is simply a matter of degree. We can sometimes find a service to perform across the tracks. They couldn't. We can go home to Mama for a meal when things get really tight. They couldn't. There's welfare and housework for Mama now. Then there was no such thing as welfare.

Depression is an economic condition. It is a part of the capitalist business cycle, a necessary concomitant of capitalism. Its colonies — secondary markets — will always be depressed areas, because the steadily decreasing labor force, decreasing and growing more skilled under the advances of automation, casts the unskilled colonial subject into economic roles that preclude economic mobility. Learning the new skills even if we were allowed wouldn't help. It wouldn't help the masses even if they learned them. It wouldn't help because there is a fixed ceiling on the labor force. This ceiling gets lower with every advance in the arts of production. Learning the newer skills would

merely put us into a competition with established labor that we could not win. One that we don't want. There are absolutely no vacuums for us to fill in the business world. We don't want to capitalize on people anyway. Capitalism is the enemy. It must be destroyed. There is no other recourse. The System is not workable in view of the modern industrial city-based society. Men are born disenfranchised. The contract between ruler and ruled perpetuates this disenfranchisement.

Men in positions of trust owe an equitable distribution of wealth and privilege to the men who have trusted them. Each individual born in these Amerikan cities should be born with those things that are necessary to survival. Meaningful social roles, education, medical care, food, shelter, and understanding should be guaranteed at birth. They have been part of all civilized human societies — until this one. Why else do men allow other men to govern? To what purpose is a Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, or of Housing and Urban Development, etc? Why do we give these men power over us. Why do we give them taxes? For nothing? So they can say that the world owes our children nothing? This world owes each of us a living the very day we are born. If not we can make no claims to civilization and we can stop recognizing the power of any administrator.

Evolution of the huge modern city-based society has made our dependence upon government complete. Individually, we cannot feed ourselves and our children. We cannot, by ourselves, train and educate them at home. We cannot organize our own work inside the city structure by ourselves. Consequently, we must allow men to specialize in coordinating these activities. We pay them, honor them, and surrender control of certain aspects of our lives to them so that they will in return take each new, helpless entry into the social group and work on him until he is no longer helpless, until he can start to support himself and make his contribution to the continuity of the society.

If a man is born into Amerikan society with nothing coming, if the capitalist creed that runs "The world doesn't owe you a living" is true, then the thing that my father's mother did is not outrageous at all. If it is true that government shouldn't organize then the fact that my father had no place to seek help until he could help himself has little consequence. But it would also mean that we are all in the grip of some monstrous contradiction. And that we have no more claim to civilization than a pack of baboons.

What is it then that really destroyed my father's comfort, that doomed his entire generation to a life without content? What is it that has been working against my generation from the day we were born through every day to this one?

Capitalism and capitalist man, wrecker of worlds, scourge of the people. It cannot address itself to our needs, it cannot and will not change itself to adapt to natural changes within the social structure.

To the black male the losses were most tragic of all. It will do us no good to linger over the fatalities, they're numberless and beyond our reach. But we who have survived must eventually look at ourselves and wonder why. The competition at the bottom of the social spectrum is for symbols, honors, and objects; black against itself, black against lower-class whites and browns, virulent, cutthroat, back-stabbing competition, the Amerikan way of life. But the fascists cooperate. The four estates of power form a morbid lone quadrangle. This competition has destroyed trust. Among the black males a premium has been placed on distrust. Every other black male is viewed as the competition; the wise and practical black is the one who cares nothing for any living ass, the cynic who has gotten over any principles he may have picked up by mistake. We can't express love on the supposition that the recipient will automatically use it against us as a weapon. We're going to have to start all over again. This next time around we'll let it all hang out, we'll stop betraying ourselves, and we'll add some trust and love.

I do not include those who support capitalism in any appreciable degree or who feel they have something to lose with its destruction. They are our irreconcilable enemy. We can never again trust people like Cosby, Gloves Davis,⁹ or the old Negro bus driver who testified in the Huey Newton trial. Any man who stands up to speak in defense of capitalism must be slapped down.

Right now our disease must be identified as capitalist man and his monstrous machine, a machine with the senseless and calloused ability to inflict these wounds programmed into its every cycle.

I was born with terminal cancer, a suppurating, malignant sore that attacked me in the region just behind the eyes and moves outward to destroy my peace.

⁹ The black Chicago policeman who was reported to have shot Fred Hampton.

It has robbed me of these twenty-eight years. It has robbed us all for nearly half a millennium. The greatest bandit of all time, we'll stop him now.

Recall the stories you've read about the other herd animals, the great Amerikan bison, the caribou or Amerikan reindeer.

The great Amerikan bison or buffalo — he's a herd animal, or social animal if you prefer, just like us in that. We're social animals, we need others of our general kind about us to feel secure. Few men would enjoy total isolation. To be alone constantly is torture to normal men. The buffalo, cattle, caribou, and some others are like folks in that they need company most of the time. They need to butt shoulders and butt butts. They like to rub noses. We shake hands, slap backs, and rub lips. Of all the world's people we blacks love the company of others most, we are the most socialistic. Social animals eat, sleep, and travel in company, they need this company to feel secure. This fact means that socialistic animals also need leaders. It follows logically that if the buffalo is going to eat, sleep, and travel in groups some coordinating factor is needed or some will be sleeping when others are traveling. Without the leader-follower complex, in a crisis the company would roar off in a hundred different directions. But the buffalo did evolve the leader-follower complex as did the other social animals; if the leader of a herd of caribou loses his footing and slips to his death from some high place, it is very likely that the whole herd will die behind. The leader-follower complex. The hunter understood this. Predatory man learned of the natural occurrence of leadership in all of the social animals; that each group will by nature produce a leader, and to these natural leaders fall the responsibility for coordination of the group's activity, organizing them for survival. The buffalo hunter knew that if he could isolate and identify the leader of the herd and kill him first, the rest of the herd would be helpless, at his mercy, to be killed off as he saw fit.

We blacks have the same problem the buffalo had; we have the same weakness also, and predatory man understands this weakness well. Huey Newton, Ahmed Evans, Bobby Seale, and the hundreds of others will be murdered according to the fascist scheme.

A sort of schematic natural selection in reverse: Medgar Evers, Malcolm X, Bobby Hutton, Brother Booker, W. L. Noland, M. L. King, Featherstone, Mark Clark, and Fred Hampton — just a few who have already gone the way of the buffalo.

The effect these moves from the right have had on us is a classic textbook exercise in fascist political economy. At the instant a black head rises out of our crisis existence, it's lopped off and hung from the highest courthouse or newspaper firm. Our predetermined response is a schizophrenic indifference, withdrawal, and an appreciation of things that do not exist. "Oh happy days. Oh happy days. Oh happy days." Self-hypnotically induced hallucinations.

The potential black leadership looks at the pitiable condition of the black herd: the corruption, the preoccupation with irrelevance, the apparent ineptitude concerning matters of survival. He knows that were he to give the average brother an M-16, this brother wouldn't have anything but a club for a week. He weighs this thing that he sees in the herd against the possible risks he'll be taking at the hands of the fascist monster and he naturally decides to go for himself, feeling that he can't help us because we are beyond help, that he may as well get something out of existence. These are the "successful Negroes," the opposite of the "failures." You find them on the ball courts and fields, the stage, pretending and playing children's games. And looking for all the world just as pitiable as the so-called failures.

We were colonized by the white predatory fascist economy. It was from them that we evolved our freak subculture, and the attitudes that perpetuate our conditions. These attitudes cause us to give each other up to the Klan pigs. We even on occasion work gun in hand right with them. A black killed Fred Hampton; blacks working with the CIA killed Malcolm X; blacks are plentiful on the payroll of the many police forces that fascism must employ to protect itself from the people. These fascist subcultural attitudes have sent us to Europe, Asia (one-fourth of the fatalities in Vietnam are black fatalities), and even Africa (the Congo during the Simba attempt to establish people's government) to die for nothing. In the recent cases of Africa and Asia we have allowed the neoslaver to use us to help enslave people we love. We are so confused, so foolishly simple that we not only fail to distinguish what is generally right and what is wrong, but we also fail to appreciate what is good and not good for us in very personal matters concerning the black colony and its liberation. The ominous government economic agency whose only clear motive is to further enslave, number, and spy on us, the black agency subsidized by the government to infiltrate us and retard liberation, is accepted, and by some, even invited and welcomed, while the Black Panther is

avoided and hard-pressed to find protection among the people. The Black Panther is our brother and son, the one who wasn't afraid. He wasn't so lazy as the rest, or so narrow and restricted in his vision. If we allow the fascist machine to destroy these brothers, our dream of eventual self-determination and control over the factors surrounding our survival is going to die with them, and the generations to come will curse and condemn us for irresponsible cowardice. I have a young courageous brother whom I love more than I love myself, but I have given him up to the revolution. I accept the possibility of his eventual death as I accept the possibility of my own. Some moment of weakness, a slip, a mistake, since we are the men who can make none, will bring the blow that kills. I accept this as a necessary part of our life. I don't want to raise any more black slaves. We have a determined enemy who will accept us only on a master-slave basis. When I revolt, slavery dies with me. I refuse to pass it down again. The terms of my existence are founded on that.

Black Mama, you're going to have to stop making cowards: "Be a good boy"; "You're going to worry me to death, boy"; "Don't trust those niggers"; "Stop letting those bad niggers lead you around, boy"; "Make you a dollar, boy." Black Mama, your overriding concern with the survival of our sons is mistaken if it is survival at the cost of their manhood.

The young Panther party member, our vanguard, must be embraced, protected, allowed to develop. We must learn from him and teach him; he'll be full grown soon, a son and brother of whom we can be proud. If he sags we'll brace him up, when he takes a step we'll step with him, our dialectic, our communion in perfect harmony, and there'll never, never be another Fred Hampton affair.

Power to the people.
George

APRIL, 1970 17

Dear Fay,
Slavery is an economic condition. Today's neoslavery must be defined in terms of economics. The chattel is a property, one man exercising the property rights of his established economic order, the other man as that property. The owner can move that property or hold it in one

square yard of the earth's surface; he can let it breed other slaves, or make it breed other slaves; he can sell it, beat it, work it, maim it, fuck it, kill it. But if he wants to keep it and enjoy all of the benefits that property of this kind can render, he must feed it sometimes, he must clothe it against the elements, he must provide a modicum of shelter. Chattel slavery is an economic condition which manifests itself in the total loss or absence of self-determination.

The new slavery, the modern variety of chattel slavery updated to disguise itself, places the victim in a factory or in the case of most blacks in support roles inside and around the factory system (service trades), working for a wage. However, if work cannot be found in or around the factory complex, today's neoslavery does not allow even for a modicum of food and shelter. You are free — to starve. The sense and meaning of slavery comes through as a result of our ties to the wage. You must have it, without it you would starve or expose yourself to the elements. One's entire day centers around the acquisition of the wage. The control of your eight or ten hours on the job is determined by others. You are left with fourteen to sixteen hours. But since you don't live at the factory you have to subtract at least another hour for transportation. Then you are left with thirteen to fifteen hours to yourself. If you can afford three meals you are left with ten to twelve hours. Rest is also a factor in efficiency so we have to take eight hours away for sleeping, leaving two to four hours. But — one must bathe, comb, clean teeth, shave, dress — there is no point in protracting this. I think it should be generally accepted that if a man (or woman) works for a wage at a job that he doesn't enjoy, and I am convinced that no one could enjoy any type of assembly-line work, or plumbing or hod carrying, or any job in the service trades, then he qualifies for this definition of neoslave. The man who owns the factory or shop or business runs your life; you are dependent on this owner. He organizes your work, the work upon which your whole life source and style depends. He indirectly determines your whole day, in organizing you for work. If you don't make any more in wages than you need to live, you are a neoslave. You qualify if you cannot afford to leave California for New York. If you cannot visit Zanzibar, Havana, Peking, or even Paris when you get the urge, you are a slave. If you're held in one spot on this earth because of your economic status, it is just the same as being held in one spot because you are the owner's property. Here in the black colony the pigs still beat and maim us. They murder us and call it justifiable homicide. A brother who had a smoking pipe in his belt

was shot in the back of the head. Neoslavery is an economic condition, a small knot of men exercising the property rights of their established economic order, organizing and controlling the life style of the slave as if he were in fact property. Succinctly: an economic condition which manifests itself in the total loss or absence of self-determination. Only after this is understood and accepted can we go on to the dialectic that will help us in a remedy.

A diagnosis of our discomfort is necessary before the surgery; it's always necessary to justify the letting of blood. And we don't want the knife to damage any related parts that could be spared for later use.

The pig is an instrument of neoslavery, to be hated and avoided; he is pushed to the front by the men who exercise the unnatural right over property. You've heard the patronizing shit about the thin blue line that protects property and the owners of property. The pigs are not protecting you, your home, and its contents. Recall they never found the TV set you lost in that burglary. They're protecting the unnatural right of a few men to own the means of all of our subsistence. The pig is protecting the right of a few private individuals to own public property!! The pig is merely the gun, the tool, a mentally inanimate utensil. It is necessary to destroy the gun, but destroying the gun and sparing the hand that holds it will forever relegate us to a defensive action, hold our revolution in the doldrums, ultimately defeat us. The animal that holds the gun, that has loosed the pig of war on us, is a bitter-ender, an intractable, gluttonous vulture who must eat at our hearts to live. Midas-motivated, never satisfied, everything he touches will turn into shit! Slaying the shitty pig will have absolutely no healing effect at all, if we leave this vulture to touch someone else. Spare the hand that holds the gun and it will simply fashion another. The Viet soldier has attacked and destroyed the pigs and their guns, but this alone has not solved his problems. If the Cong could get to the factories and the people who own and organize them, the war would end in a few months. All wars would end. The pigs who have descended upon the Vietnamese colony are the same who have come down on us. They come in all colors, though they are mainly white. Culturally (or anti-culturally), they have the same background and the same mentality. They have the same intent: to preserve the economically depressed areas of the world as secondary markets and sources of cheap raw materials for the Amerikan fascist. The black colonies inside the Amerikan fascist state are secondary markets and sources of cheap raw

materials. In our case this cheap raw material is our bodies, giving all of the benefits that property of this kind can render. How much more in wages would they have to pay a white, unionized garbage collector? And black mama tricks for ten-and-two?

Right behind the expeditionary forces (the pigs) come the missionaries, and the colonial effect is complete. The missionaries, with the benefits of christendom, school us on the value of symbolism, dead presidents, and the rediscount rate. The black colony lost its conscience to these missionaries. Their schools, their churches, their newspapers and other periodicals destroyed the black conscience and made it almost impossible for us to determine our own best interest.

The cultural links to the established capitalist society have been a lot closer than we like to admit. In the area of culture (I am using this word in the narrow sense out of necessity), we are bonded to the fascist society by chains that have strangled our intellect, scrambled our wits, and sent us stumbling backward in a wild, disorganized retreat from reality. We don't want their culture. We don't want a piece of that pie. It's rotten, putrid, repulsive to all the senses. Why are we rushing to board a sinking ship? When we join hands with the established fascist scum in any way, it gives the people of the world, the righteous people of the Congo, Tanzania, Sudan, of Cuba, China, Vietnam, etc., the legitimate right to hate us too.

The Swedish people and their government hate the Amerikan fascist (as almost every civilized state must). They show their loathing every chance they get. The Amerikan government dresses some black clown in a stovepipe hat and sends him over as an ambassador. This black cat isn't representing the black colony. He's representing the pigs. The Swedes throw bricks at him and call for the "nigger" to go home.

Chances are that the old slave they sent to Sweden never spent a night in the ghetto but still he represents the black oppressed. So when the slave turns up in his tails and stovepipe lid, a distorted imitation of the genuine fool (tomfool?), the hatred felt so deeply for the Amerikan fascist state by the Swedes is transferred onto us!

The government buys and trains these running dogs very carefully, and sends them scrambling, tails and all, outward to represent the establishment. Whole kennels are sent to the African nations on the ambassadorial level (and lower, of course) on the supposition that

the people of these nations will be able to relate better to a black face. The leaders of these nations, if they can be counted among the righteous, are never impressed, but this sort of thing affects the African masses deeply. Several years ago, in one of the central African states, a gathering of the people marched against the local representatives of the Amerikan government, the USIA, over an issue that won't come to mind now (there have been so many) — but they were resentful enough to carry their protest demonstration to violent extremes. They threw bricks and fire and called for the slavers' blood. They tore down the Yankee rag and danced on it, spit on it, and were about to burn it. They would have burned it and gone on to sack and burn the fascist propaganda center, but the running dog, the tomfool, stopped them, harangued them in the voice of the ventriloquist, and ran Old Glory back to its familiar station — obstructing the sun. They should have hung that nigger from the flagpole by the fat part of his neck, for that black ventriloquist threw up one more barrier to the communion that we must establish with the other oppressed peoples of the world.

They send us to school to learn how to be so disgusting. We send our children to places of learning operated by men who hate us and hate the truth. It is clear that no school would be better. Burn it; all the fascist literature, burn that too. Then equip yourself with the Little Red Book. There is no other way to regain our senses. We must destroy Johnson Publications and the little black tabloids that mimic the fascist press even to their denunciations of black extremists. Burn them or take them over as people's collectives, and give the colonies a dynamite case of self-determination, anti-colonialism, and Mao think!!!!

I attended my last year of high school at Bayview High - that's in San Quentin where I did seven years of the last ten that I have spent in jail. The schools in the joint are no different than those out there in the colony at large, with the exception that they are not coeducational. We use the same fascist textbooks that contain the same undercurrent of racism and overtones of nationalism. The missionaries themselves are the same. At the time, my eventual release on parole was conditional to my finishing high school, and of course being a good boy, never showing any anger, or displeasure, or individuality. I was trying to fake it. I would never have been in the mission school otherwise. I was working in the daytime and attended school evenings.

The biology wasn't too bad. The instructor seldom ventured an opinion outside the subjects related to science, but he was exceptional.

I attribute this to the fact that he was somewhat younger than the other pundits. Each of them had a fixed opinion on every material and metaphysical feature of the universe. Colonel Davis in history was outstanding for two very typical characteristics of his profession, temperament and foolishness. True to his persuasion, this jackass was so patriotic and Republican that he actually proposed we begin and end each class with a pledge of allegiance to the flag from a kneeling position. He was tall and square and gray-blond, a veteran of several declared and undeclared Yankee wars. If you passed the flag without a genuflection you had this fool to fight. I sat through his shit for a month; Amerika the beautiful, the righteous, the only nation on earth where everyone can afford a flush toilet and a traffic ticket. All Russians were fat Tartars, the Japanese were copyists, Arabs couldn't fight and neither could the French. All Africans were primitives who didn't know when they were well off. Vietnamese were just niggers with slant eyes (there were four blacks in the class). The Chinese were so stupid that they couldn't feed themselves. Inevitably they would have to return to the good old days and ways of the rickshaw, pigtail, the coolie, opium dens, and cathouses. I took this shit with a stony calm for one month. I tried to get out of the class five or six times, but you have to have a clear life-and-death situation to get out of anything once you get in. This is in keeping with the overall prison conspiracy, i.e., you have no will, you have no choice or control, so be wise — surrender. There's this sign hanging everywhere your eyes may happen to rest, begging: "O lord, help me to accept those things I cannot change." A life-death situation is necessary to get out; that's just what I had but I couldn't admit to it — looks bad on the parole board report. I tried to keep a head between myself and this representative of the great silent majority, failing this I would fix my eyes on one of the six flags in the room (one in each corner, two on the desk) and try to endure. Me and this cat fell all the way out in the end. I never planned it that way, in fact my plan was to hide my "face" and hang on. The session we had was completely spontaneous, it started in the opening minutes of our two-hour class. This silent majority had just completed a hymn to the great Amerikan corporate monster with the line "Now haven't we all the right to be proud?" I said, "No." The guy glanced at me, blinked, looked away, and kept right on with his eulogy. My answer didn't register with him; he heard me but he was positive that he heard me wrong. In the cloister of this man's mind, my displeasure, my dissatisfaction was just too impossible to be true. The good colonel had been explaining that corporate capitalism, the end result of a long evolutionary chain

of other economic arrangements, was as perfect and flawless a system as man can ever hope to achieve. It was the only economic order that allowed for man's natural inclinations. The barbarous nations of Asia and Africa who had abandoned it for planned economics would ultimately fail since the incentive motive inherent within the capitalist ideal was missing. Without the profit-and-loss incentive, production will remain low and eventually fail. I stood up, sat on the back of my desk, put one foot on the seat, and told this cat that he had just told "another" lie. I don't know why I was doing this. I even felt a thrill of sympathy for the fool at first. His mouth dropped open like a shark's, his ears and forehead and nose showed that he was as red-blooded an Amerikan as anyone could ever become. In an unconscious impulse his hands locked themselves around the base of the two flagpoles on his desk, as if to protect the little pieces of colored rag from the impudent and unpatriotic nigger who did-just-blaspheme!

"What'd you say, boy?" I said, "You've been lying for a month now about 'work ethics' and 'voting processes' and 'economic incentives,' you've been lying all your life really, and now I want to question some of this stuff. Can you stand it?"

I didn't wait for an answer, but continued, "I've worked in factories here in this country, on assembly lines, doing production work. I've made some study of mass production procedures in heavy and light industry, and I've looked into political economy in general, and I'm certain that in everything you've said in here for the last month there was a conscious intent to misrepresent the truth, to present only those parts of the truth that supported your contentions or to omit it altogether. This thing about incentive, if it's a factor in production, in order for it to influence the volume of production, or the quality, it's pretty clear that this incentive must find some way of communicating itself down to the worker. I can understand an owner or executive having the desire to make money — profit — but since ambition is a very personal thing, how does it affect the attitude and productivity of the worker? His wage will be the same if he works hard, not so hard, or not hard at all, and it is ultimately on how hard the worker works that volume and quality depends."

He leaned back in his chair, ran his hands through his hair, palpitated about the nose and upper lip, looked at his flag, and then at me, and answered, "Yes, well, in our factory setups we have quotas to meet and foremen and efficiency experts to see that they are met."

“You did say quotas? That sounds like something from one of Fidel’s public addresses — you know, sugar quotas — the difference of course being that Fidel is depending on a cooperation that springs from a sense of participation, and perhaps the knowledge that the volume and quality of production determines their general well-being, rather than the personal fortunes of an owner or small group of owners. In the factories that I worked in and have observed the principal interest of most of the workers was coffee and lunch breaks or quitting time; we watched the clock, watched out for the foreman and other spies, and made as many trips to the toilet as we could possibly expect to get away with. Although the profit motive may excite owner and supervisor to invest and organize for production, the index of productivity is determined by the attitudes of the worker in a plant that is not totally automated and even then it would depend on the workers in the machine, tool, and maintenance sectors to a great extent. This being the case, it is the diametrical opposite of your contention that is true. There is less real incentive. Based on the impulse to gain benefits, inherent within the modern form of capitalism, it’s clear to me that the worker who felt that the machine, the factory, all factories were in part his own would be very much concerned about productivity and quality of product, much more concerned than one who has no more at stake than an inadequate wage.”

“But you missed the meaning of my statement.” This is him talking now. “The spur of profit and the fear of loss are the motivations that have made the capitalist system of production efficient. It automatically checks the marginal facilities and factors of production. It is responsive to demand and supply, i.e., the demands of the consumers and the availability of materials, and this responsiveness is automatic, built in, an inherent part of the system.”

I replied that “the same can be said for any system of political economy. With planned, people’s economics, however, the automatic feature is dropped and demand is not stimulated artificially in the Madison Avenue sense. It’s fatuous and misleading to claim profit-and-loss motivation a feature of capitalism only. It is a feature of all economies in all time past and present. The only difference is that with capitalism the spur is driven into the flanks of the people by a relatively few individuals who by chance or bent of ferocity have been able to make fraudulent claims on the rights to profit, the rights to benefit from wealth created by labor first, applied to materials from man’s (plural

possessive) source of life support — nature. In the People's Republics of Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe this right to profit — to benefit from their labor and their land — is being returned to the people. The people are spurred by the profit motive collectively; a situation far more conducive to productivity since ultimately productivity depends on the attitude of the individual worker. Proportionally China has achieved more economically in twenty years than the U.S. has in two hundred. They had the advantage of being able to avoid the terrible mistakes made by the U.S. and Western Europe in those two hundred years, but a comparison between today's China and let's say today's India and Indonesia, where they have developed nothing economically, will point up clearly which system is best oriented to meet the needs of the people. The leadership in India stayed with capitalism (private enterprise) when China turned to revolutionary people's socialism with communism projected for the future. I am certain that everyone in this room has the intelligence to understand that India's rice riots and street sleepers are not indications that China has taken the wrong road."

"But they're starving in China," he said with great vehemence, on his feet with his hair streaming over his forehead, fists balled, chest out, shoulders thrown back. "No one starves in China, that's your ignorance speaking now. You were probably just lying before, but it is possible that you are ignorant enough to think that people starve in China still, because they were starving in such great numbers when you were there in the forties serving the fascist military-industrial establishment. You people's ignorance on these matters has prompted the Chinese and other third world nations to the observation that you all live behind a veritable curtain of ignorance. There are more people starving in the U.S., in the Black Belt of southeastern U.S. in all the large cities, in the Appalachian Mountains and grape fields of California than in any other country on earth with the possible exception of India. China sends grain to other countries on a long-term, interest-free-loan basis. Vietnam, Egypt, Pakistan, and some others are eating Chinese surplus food supplies right now."

"Nigger they just bought a hundred thousand tons of wheat from Canada last month." "You did say they 'bought' it, it means that they must be doing pretty well; the principle of economic advantage means that the people in their respective areas, nations if you prefer, with their respective differences in climate and topography should

produce that thing which is easy and natural for them to produce. With proper organization they will be able to produce a surplus of this thing that they produce well. It is this surplus that the well-ordered society (of today at least) uses to exchange for the things that they cannot produce economically. China bought that wheat from Canada with other food products and raw materials that Canada needed. That deal last month was simply good economics on China's part. Canada buys beef from Argentina. Does that mean that Canada is about to collapse economically? Nothing stays the same, not even for an instant. If a thing isn't growing, it's decaying. People's government has been on the march since the close of World War II everywhere, building, developing, challenging, and defeating the capitalist-based systems that function on servitude of the people. The inevitable failure will be with capitalism, the guns of Vietnam will sound the death knell of capitalism. We know how to fight you now; capitalism is dying right here tonight, look at yourself, you're defeated." He was advancing on me in his Marquis of Queensberry boxing stance. I got out of the class that night, I haven't been able to get out of the joint, however.

We don't want people like Davis teaching the children, he has himself been educated into inanity. His favorite platitude was that Americans "enjoy hard work, desire gainful employment, and have the natural inclination to be thrifty and save." This is a shot against the automated welfare state. He believes that Americans would rather work with their hands than use a machine that could do the same work better and faster. Sounds pretty silly to me. I certainly don't like to work. No one could honestly enjoy the monotony of an assembly line. And the garbage collecting, the street sweeping, the window washing. I'm all for the machines taking over in every sector of the economy where they can be applied. I wouldn't have the least difficulty in finding something to do with my time. As long as my check comes by mail, as long as I didn't have to stand in some line somewhere to pick it up, I would never have a complaint. To eat bread "in the sweat of thy face" was intended as a curse. The conservatives (of their privilege) would have us now believe that work is great fun. The capitalist Eden fits my description of hell.

To destroy it will require cooperation and communion between our related parts; communion between colony and colony, nation and nation. The common bond will be the desire to humble the oppressor, the need to destroy capitalist man and his terrible, ugly machine. If there were any differences or grievances between us in the black

colonies and the peoples of other colonies across the country, around the world, we should be willing to forget them in the desperate need for coordination against Amerikan fascism.

International coordination is the key to defeating this thing that must expand to live. Our inability to work with other peoples, other slaves who have the same master, is a consequence of the inferiority complex we have been conditioned into. We're afraid that in the process the Chinese will trick us, or the white folks who support socialism and liberation of all the Amerikan colonies really just want to use us, trick us. "We can't trust them, they'll trick us." Well, if we're tricks we can expect to get tricked and we should rightly be afraid. This paranoia is a carry-over from the days when a white face in a black crowd meant that the white brain was controlling things. It is a carry-over from the days when some of us felt that nothing could function properly without the presence of a white brain, when we were sufficiently convinced of our own inferiority to allow them to take us over. Now as things stand in the new light of different days, with our revolution in the doldrums, our struggles counterpoised by vicious political kills and avalanches of propaganda, terror, and tokenism, we must overcome the paranoia. It is based on lack of confidence in our ability to control situations. Yet no one can take us over or betray our interests if we are vigilant and aggressively intelligent. We must accept the spirit of the true internationalism called for by Comrade Che Guevara. It is not a matter of trusting anyone, though I personally find that I can still trust certain general types of people since I am of that people. I am also assured of my ability to detect in advance any atavistic changes that portend betrayal. It isn't just a matter of trusting the goodwill of other slaves and other colonies and other peoples, it is simply a matter of common need. We need allies, we have a powerful enemy who cannot be defeated without an allied effort! The enemy at present is the capitalist system and its supporters. Our prime interest is to destroy them. Anyone else with this same interest must be embraced, we must work with, beside, through, over, under anyone, regardless of their external physical features, whose aim is the same as ours in this. Capitalism must be destroyed, and after it is destroyed, if we find that we still have problems, we'll work them out. That, the nature of life, struggle, permanent revolution; that is the situation we were born into. There are other peoples on this earth. In denying their existence and turning inward in our misery and accepting any form of racism we are taking on the characteristic of our enemy. We are resigning ourselves

to defeat. For in forming a conspiracy aimed at the destruction of the system that holds us all in the throes of a desperate insecurity we must have coordinating elements connecting us and our moves to the moves of the other colonies, the African colonies, those in Asia and Latin Amerika, in Appalachia and the southwestern bean fields. If it is more expedient for a white revolutionary to neutralize a certain area, should I deny him the opportunity to contribute by withholding the protective influence of my cooperation?! If I did it would make me a fool and a myopic coward — a trick.

The revolutionary of Vietnam, this brother is so tried, so tested, so clearly antifascist, anti-Amerikan, that I must be suspicious of the sincerity of any black who claims anti-Amerikanism and antifascism but who cannot embrace the Cong. The Chinese have aided every anti-colonial movement that has occurred since they were successful in their own, particularly the ones in Africa. They have offered us in the Amerikan colonies any and all support that we require, from hand grenades to H-bombs. Some of us would deny these wonderful and righteous people. I accept their assistance in my struggle with our mutual enemy. I accept and appreciate any love that we can build out of our relation in crisis. I'll never, never allow my enemy to turn my mind or hand against them. The Yankee dog that proposes to me that I should join him in containing the freedom of a Vietnamese or a Chinese brother of the revolution is going to get spat on. I don't care how much he has to offer in the way of short-term material benefits. We must establish a true internationalism with other anticolonial peoples. Then we will be on the road of the true revolutionary. Only then can we expect to be able to seize the power that is rightfully ours, the power to control the circumstances of our day-to-day lives.

The fascist must expand to live. Consequently he has pushed his frontiers to the farthest lands and peoples. This is an aspect of his being, an ungovernable compulsion. This perverted mechanical monster suffers from a disease that forces him to build ugly things and destroy beauty wherever he finds it. I just read in a legal newspaper that 50 percent of all the people ever executed in this country by the state were black and 100 percent were lower-class poor. I'm going to bust my heart trying to stop these smug, degenerate, primitive, omnivorous, uncivil . . . and anyone who would aid me, I embrace you. We of the black Amerikan colony must finally take courage, control our fear, and adopt a realistic picture of this world and our place within it. We are

not fascist, or Americans. We are an oppressed, economically depressed colonial people. We were brought here, from Africa and other parts of the world of palm and sun, under duress, and have passed all our days here under duress. The people who run this country will never let us succeed to power. Everything in history that was of any value was taken by force. We must organize our thoughts, get behind the revolutionary vanguard, make the correct alliances this time. We must fall on our enemies, the enemies of all righteousness, with a ruthless relentless will to win! History sweeps on, we must not let it escape our influence this time!!!!

I am an extremist. I call for extreme measures to solve extreme problems. Where face and freedom are concerned I do not use or prescribe half measures. To me life without control over the determining factors is not worth the effort of drawing breath. Without self-determination I am extremely displeased.

International capitalism cannot be destroyed without the extremes of struggle. The entire colonial world is watching the blacks inside the U.S., wondering and waiting for us to come to our senses. Their problems and struggles with the Amerikan monster are much more difficult than they would be if we actively aided them. We are on the inside. We are the only ones (besides the very small white minority left) who can get at the monster's heart without subjecting the world to nuclear fire. We have a momentous historical role to act out if we will. The whole world for all time in the future will love us and remember us as the righteous people who made it possible for the world to live on. If we fail through fear and lack of aggressive imagination, then the slaves of the future will curse us, as we sometimes curse those of yesterday. I don't want to die and leave a few sad songs and a hump in the ground as my only monument. I want to leave a world that is liberated from trash, pollution, racism, poverty nation-states, nation-state wars and armies, from pomp, bigotry, parochialism, a thousand different brands of untruth, and licentious usurious economics.

We must build the true internationalism now. Getting to know people under crisis is the best way to learn them. Crisis situations show up their weakness and strength. They outline our humanity in vivid detail. If there is any basis for a belief in the universality of man then we will find it in this struggle against the enemy of all mankind.

George

MARCH, 1970 17

Dear Z.,

Very pleasant surprise for me seeing you again. Old friends are rare. Thank you for your concern and convey my further thanks to your mother. I know you both surrendered your holiday time to be present. The people are becoming very responsive, encouraging to say the least; we love you all.

You have certainly matured into a fine-looking young woman. I knew you would, you were a beautiful baby. Return this form and write me a letter (at the same time) and run it all down: school, politics, futurities. I want to know it all, all that you don't mind the officials knowing also, that is.

You may also have a half hour with me here, when you can get one. But that is all, and that only if you don't mind the civil service sitting in.

This is my tenth year of this, actually my twenty-eighth, but I was too numb to feel the first eighteen. All for the events of one riotous day, fifteen minutes to be exact. And now they would take all of the rest; you are aware that 4500¹⁰ means automatic death penalty. One intimation of displeasure and the anti-bodies rush to destroy you. Well I am positively displeased and since I am positively destined to remain so. Return this form with all dispatch, I would like very much to relate and exchange.

Someone may have to get hurt but Power to the People.

George

MARCH, 1970 27

Dear Z.,

I've been attempting to establish correspondence with you for several years now. However, being locked up in close confinement has kept me in a position in which I've not been able to ascertain your full address (I still don't have the Zip Code). Now I have been able to learn which

10 The number of the California statute which makes the death penalty mandatory for any inmate serving a life sentence who is convicted of assault on a noninmate.

one of your parents' names you use officially. The chaplain here was kind enough to help me. Did he talk to you yet? When he does, thank him, for he went to some lengths to help us.

I was very pleasantly surprised to hear from the chaplain that you live so close to the prison. The only exchange I've had with intelligent females or any female outside my family in all these years is limited to the brief self-conscious glances of the visiting room. My lawyer is the first woman I've talked to since my arrest!! That must be the record.

Distressing is only a mild way of putting the events of these last 106 (106 years). I haven't been able to adjust. They adjust, they keep telling me. I keep trying to tell them this just isn't the kind of thing I favor. I've been picked up and swept along by events long gone out of control. Perhaps in the next 106 I'll be able, with an assist from wonderful people like your mother and you, to win enough of the control factor to get out and make the existence of places like this unnecessary. I do have plenty of time. I'm in my cell 23½ hours a day. I try to employ all of it (except the three in which I sleep) in something related to antithesis, but there remain long periods of wasted time in this twenty-three-hour day, back to bed, one foot stacked lengthwise atop the other, gazing into the light. It would save my eyes and ease my mind a great deal to have long, informal, newsy, and perhaps endearing messages reaching me here, from time to time, from San Jose. If we can reach each other through all of this, fences, fear, concrete, steel, barbed wire, guns, then history will commend us for a great victory won. If so — it will be your generosity and my good fortune.

George

APRIL, 1970 3

Dear Z.,

I have your message here beside me now, it was delivered ten minutes ago. I do not think Nkrumah has failed either. As for me, I plan to save all of your correspondence so that when we are old people, and our enemies are no more, we can steep ourselves in it again, in an atmosphere where all the related parts are in harmony, and we can recall the fearful, traumatic, and desperate days at the barricade without rancor. Did you receive the message I sent you last Thursday? Let me know; we'll be forced to confirm each of our letters, you know. Did you mail this one

that I have now Thursday April 2 or March 27? If the former, it took only one day to reach me. I cannot read the postmark. It's too faint.

I dug the poem. I suspect that we are of kindred spirits, soldier; my mother and sisters say so, though they never really understood me. But I will forgive them, they will learn better. We will have much to discuss in the days ahead, if what I suspect is true; history sweeps on apace and we mustn't let it escape our influence this time. I have messages from Narodnik and Nihilist, they are man and woman, coefficients in the production of . . . one cannot exist without the other. Narodnik excites a defense reflex within the beast; the beast encircles, infiltrates, and will destroy Narodnik. Without Nihilist to enforce and protect, pure nonviolence is a false ideal, a contradiction.

Send me some photographs of you and your family. I liked the card. That is the sort of thing I need to take me out of this cell on occasion and remind me that the world could be beautiful. You take care of yourself, I need you; you have my sincere regard, soldier.

George

APRIL, 1970 11

Dear Z.,

I received your letter late this afternoon. I've picked it up twenty-five times since then, reading things into it, holding it to my nose, fixing myself on the picture I have of you in my mind.

I am very pleased to have someone so warm, and so soft, and so lovely come into my miserable life; I haven't met any selfless, intelligent (mentally liberated), and aggressive women before now, before you. I knew that you existed but I had never had the pleasure. I am uneasy thinking that you may be attracted to the tragedy of me. I hope not, because my response to you is perfectly personal, your eyes, your voice, your walk, hands, mouth. It just occurred to me that I've never noticed any of these things in Frances or Penny or Delora. I like you a lot. But I am in such a hurry!

My life is so disrupted, so precarious, my inclinations so oriented to struggle that anyone who would love me would have to be bold indeed — or out of their head. But if you're saying what I think you are saying, I like it. (If I have flattered myself please try to understand.) I like the

way you say it also; over the next few months we'll discuss the related problems. By the time I've solved these minor ones that temporarily limit my movements, we'll have also settled whether or not it is selfish for us to seek gratification by reaching and touching and holding; does the building of a bed precede the love act itself? Or can we "do it in the road" until the people's army has satisfied our territory problem? That is important to me, whether or not you are willing to "do it in the road." You dig, I'm more identifiable with Ernesto than with Fidel. When this is over I immediately go under.

I want to see you! I understand the problems involved, money and transportation, but use your imagination, soldier. Are you getting your social security; That should hold you until you find work. I hate to appear selfish, but you have destroyed my peace here. I have a lot to tell you and some questions. I'll love you till the wings fly off at least, perhaps beyond. My love could burn you, however, it runs hot and I have nearly half a millennium stored up. Mine is a perfect love, soft to the touch but so hot, hard, and dense at its center that its weight will soon offset this planet.

George

APRIL, 1970 16

Dear Z.,

Did you receive my love letter? I wrote it on the eleventh or twelfth. Jon likes you and your mother, but he does indeed like you. I wish very much that I could have been around him when he was growing up. He had a hard time identifying himself. He was forced to beat on some of the blacks because of the big green eyes (used to be blue!) and gold hair. He had to beat on the whites because he was a nigger. They used to write me about it, the others, but everyone in that house in Pasadena is so hare-brained. Well, he had to work out his problems on his own. That he turned out to be a beautiful black man-child is testimony of his own dogged strength. I love him more dearly than I love myself.

I've been thinking of you. Write me; I know how hard you are working and understand the limitations regarding time, but when you get a moment, between rounds, remember that I want to hear from you. Send the photographs I asked for too.

Power to the People. Love —
George

APRIL, 1970 18

Dear Z.,

I have your message of April 16 in here with me now. Arms, holds, and understanding — me and you. Your mother must be a wonderful person, or perhaps it was the revolution, or maybe some guy, whatever. This guy thanks the forces that be for forming you so that you favor me.

Communion can never be selfish. they are opposing terms, diametrical opposites, one the antithesis of the other, communion across the cultures, the nations, the planets, the universe — that's the name of our thing.

The question that I posed, as I think about it, was a ghost from the really dark days, when all of my smiles were merely gestures to put people at their ease. I was motivated then by disgust alone and anything that distracted me from a work-filled twenty-one-hour day was considered a hindrance, an obstacle, or an object of self-interest. I thought of individual relationship as a flight from the existential reality of individual responsibility to the whole, to the people. I considered it selfish to look for some individual to touch and hold and understand, because all of my time belonged to all of the people. That the deep, burning incessant thing centered in my guts was hatred alone, that people who (especially in the joint) looked for another individual to relate to, instead of the people's struggle — full time, was lonely, was weak. But I've gone through some changes since then, I saw and read about Angie Davis and some other females of our kind, and I realized that perhaps it was possible that this country has produced some females like those of Cuba or Vietnam.

When you reentered my little cloister last year I was more than ready for such an encounter. The look of love from a rebel breed — I like it. I'm weak.

George

APRIL, 1970 27

Dear Z.,

This is just a "thinking of you" note, because I was thinking of you. It occurred to me how keen you were ten years ago when I was out,

and we were both eighteen. I've envied you that intelligence over these years. Had I been fortunate enough to have had someone to relate to my need in that area, perhaps things would have been different. But far from me to complain. I probably wouldn't have listened anyway.

Don't compare yourself to me in such things as sleep and endurance. I don't sleep any more than I do because I can't really. I just don't like the idea of lying around unconscious for hours and then too my metabolism is pitched so high that I actually need activity to feel well. I do know what you meant about beauty, the pleasant features that remain to us in this life; I haven't seen many personally, but I know they exist, otherwise you wouldn't exist, F., your mother and the will to resist and win couldn't exist — evil can never take full control. But for me you are my first beautiful, really beautiful experience, honestly you are.

And you'll just have to relent — on the issue of photographs. Give F. some of the family, kids and all. I know where you're at, and I dig it, but consider where I'm at.

I love that guy T. Are there many like him and M. You know about M. Well, he was one out of a thousand (it took great courage). Are the ratios that bad everywhere? I'm sure you know what I want here. With people like these around, my job won't be half as hard as I've always anticipated. I must be about my work, comrade, and no more reference to my ability to accept love. Perhaps my sensibilities are somewhat dulled but not like that. I'll never fail you — it just won't happen.

Sincerely in Love and Revolution,
George

MAY, 1970 2

Dear Z,

Time seems to be passing much faster these last few months. Wonder where it's running to, what's building? Will I be able to control the outcome of whatever . . .

This is for certain, it's going to get worse. Things will become much more difficult before anything good can come of this. People like Nixon and the ventriloquists that make him speak hold forth by default. The good element has not contested them vigorously; for the

very same natural reason that allows flotsam to rise to the surface these people have come by the means and power to cause great discord and suffering. “They met little resistance on their way up.” “Good people don’t like to cut throats.” This unnatural arrangement that allows the sediment to remain on the top while the cream rests on the bottom can be righted in one way only. The VC have the idea. They understand a trial of combat, an ordeal by fire. You simply can’t reason with people like them, they have too much to lose by being reasonable. They make my head ache; I must get off the subject.

Your “Little Soulful Tune” did make me smile. I must confess that you have startled me on occasion, the kinship, your sensitivity, almost like we’ve lived all of it before. You know me too well. I suspect you’ve been peeping with those big delightfully sad eyes into my sad soul. Beautiful sister, desirable woman, quintessence of revolutionary woman, ne plus ultra of the new rebel breed, if I didn’t take you into my heart, and if I didn’t find myself loving you, and if this love wasn’t as easy and natural as breathing, there would be something very wrong with me. Things have fallen apart, haven’t they; that realization must come to all of us, it is a prerequisite to remedy. Send it to me a piece at a time in your letters, it’s best that way. Take care of yourself, this cat needs you.

Love,
George

MAY, 1970 8

Dear Joan,¹¹

You may never read this letter — my correspondence is being limited at present to those approved prior to my most recent troubles. However, this limiting policy is not legal, nor has it been clearly stated. So if this message reaches you, be informed that I have also sent with it a request to have you placed permanently on my visiting and mailing list. It is a formality that the state requires we go through in order to further assure its complete control over our lives here. But I don’t mind. Ever since the earliest days of my youth, you should recall, my foremost wish was to have a big brother.

These people are on my trail this time. Mama probably discussed with

11 A member of the Soledad Defense Committee.

you the other incidents that occurred while I was in San Quentin. What do you think? I try to be a good boy and help other boys to be good, and this sort of thing is my reward. I get accused of everything that cannot be positively established elsewhere, but I mustn't complain too much, it isn't allowed.

I know you have to work pretty hard and consequently haven't much time to yourself, but if you have any at all I could use it. You did such a wonderful job with your own children, I'm thinking that you could probably help my mama's children. Me in particular. But more seriously, old friend, Mama told me of your concern, thanks. We have plenty of support in this, your youngest daughter as you probably know came to a couple of the appearances. I tried to contact her or establish her as a regular correspondent but we got lost in a confusion of red tape. She is a lovely young woman. Give my regards.

When were you last in Chicago? I have heard that the place we stayed in and all the surrounding neighborhood has been completely rebuilt, city-owned projects. They should have done that fifty years ago. I still dream about that place sometimes. Big Brother chasing me in slow motion down alleys, over the roofs, busting their windows with my slingshot.

Send me lots of brightly colored postcards and some pictures of the family. And if you get a few minutes you can tell me of your impressions of this fierce world. Oh, if that girl is still at home, I want you to try and fatten her up — just a little.

George

1970

Angela,¹²

I am certain that they plan to hold me incommunicado. All of my letters except for a few to my immediate family have come back to me with silly comments on my choice of terms. The incoming mail is also sent back to the outside sender. The mail which I do receive is sometimes one or two weeks old. So, my sweet sister, when I reach you, it will be in this manner.

12 Angela Y. Davis

. . . I'm going to write on both sides of this paper, and when I make a mistake I'll just scratch over it and continue on. That is my style, completely informal. Was that your sister with you in court? If so, she favored you. Both very beautiful people. You should have introduced me.

They are going to take your job, I know they are — anything else would be expecting too much. They can't, however, stop you from teaching in public institutions, can they?

They hate us, don't they? I like it that way, that is the way it's supposed to be. If they didn't hate me I would be doing something very wrong, and then I would have to hate myself. I prefer it this way. I get little hate notes in the folds of my newspaper almost every day now. You know, the racist stuff, the traditional "Dear nigger" stuff, and how dead I am going to be one day. They think they're mad at me now, but it's nothing compared to how it will be when I really get mad myself. . . .

Pigs are punks, Angela. We've made a terrible mistake in overestimating these people. It reflects on us badly that we have allowed them to do the things they have done to us. Since they are idiots, what does that make us. I just read Bobby Seale's account of that scene in Chicago (Ramparts, June '70). It started in San Francisco with that "flight to evade charge. One of the pigs commented that "this was so easy." But it shouldn't have been. Brothers like that are the best of us. It shouldn't have gone down like that. We should never make it easy for them — by relaxing — at this stage of the educational process. Examples are crucially important. Well that's the name of the game right now.

I have ideas, ten years' worth of them, I'd like all those brothers on Fiftieth Street to be aware of them. Tell Fay Stender to give you a copy of my thoughts on Huey Newton and politics. . . . At the end of these writings, titled "Letter to Huey Newton," there should be a note on revolutionary culture and the form it should take in the black Amerikan colonies. That was the best section. Without that section the power would be lost. Fay and I don't agree altogether on political methods. But that is only because we are viewing things from very different levels of slavery. Mine is an abject slavery.

I think of you all the time. I've been thinking about women a lot lately. Is there anything sentimental or otherwise wrong with that? There couldn't be. It's never bothered me too much before, the sex thing. I would do my exercises and the hundreds of katas, stay busy

with something . . . this ten years really has gone pretty quickly. It has destroyed me as a person, a human being that is, but it was sudden, it was a sudden death, it seems like ten days rather than ten years.

Would you like to know a subhuman. I certainly hope you have time. I'm not a very nice person. I'll confess out front, I've been forced to adopt a set of responses, reflexes, attitudes that have made me more kin to the cat than anything else, the big black one. For all of that I am not a selfish person. I don't think so anyway, but I do have myself in mind when I talk about us relating. You would be the generous one, I the recipient of that generosity.

They're killing niggers again down the tier, all day, every day. They are killing niggers and "them protesters" with small workings of mouth. One of them told a pig today that he was going to be awful disappointed with the pig if the pig didn't shoot some niggers or protesters this evening when he got off work. The pig found it very amusing. They went off on a twenty minute political discussion, pig and his convict supporter. There is something very primitive about these people. Something very fearful. In all the time I've been down here on Maximum Row, no brother has ever spoken to one of these people. We never speak about them, you know, across the cells. Every brother down here is under the influence of the party line, and racist terms like "monky" have never been uttered. All of these are beautiful brothers, ones who have stepped across the line into the position from which there can be no retreat. All are fully committed. They are the most desperate and dauntless of our kind. I love them. They are men and they do not fight with their mouths. They've brought them here from prisons all over the state to be warehoused or murdered. Whichever is more expedient. That Brother Edwards who was murdered in that week in January told his lawyer that he would never get out of prison alive. He was at the time of that statement on Maximum Row, Death Row, Soledad, California. He was twenty-one years old. We have made it a point to never exchange words with these people. But they never relent. Angela, there are some people who will never learn new response. They will carry what they incorporated into their characters at early youth to the grave. Some can never be educated. As an historian you know how long and how fervently we've appealed to these people to take some of the murder out of their system, their economics, their propaganda. And as an intelligent observer you must see how our appeals were received. We've wasted many generations and oceans of blood trying to civilize these

elements over here. It cannot be done in the manner we have attempted it in the past. Dialectics, understanding, love, passive resistance, they won't work on an activist, maniacal, gory pig. It's going to grow much worse for the black male than it already is, much, much worse. We are going to have to be the vanguard, the catalyst, in any meaningful change.

When generalizing about black women I could never include you in any of it that is not complimentary. But my mother at one time tried to make a coward of me, she did the same with Jon. She is changing fast under crisis situation and apocalyptic circumstance. John and Fleeta's mothers did the same to them, or I should say tried. And so did every brother's mother I've ever drawn out. I am reasonably certain that I can draw from every black male in this country some comments to substantiate that his mother, the black female, attempted to aid his survival by discouraging his violence or by turning it inward. The blacks of slave society, U.S.A., have always been a matriarchal sub-society. The implication is clear, black mama is going to have to put a sword in that brother's hand and stop that "be a good boy" shit. Channel his spirit instead of break it, or to break it I should say. Do you understand? All of the sisters I've ever known personally and through other brothers' accounts begged and bullied us to look for jobs instead of being satisfied with the candy-stick take. The strongest impetus a man will ever have, in an individual sense, will come from a woman he admires.

When "Soul" did that feature on you, I discussed you with some of the comrades. One of them asked me what my response would be if it were my job to guard your body (for the party) from the attack of ten armed pigs. I told them my response would be to charge. There would be eleven people hurting but you wouldn't be one of them. Everyone agreed it was the correct response.

As an individual, I am grateful for you. As the black male, I hope that since your inclination is to teach you will give serious consideration to redeeming this very next generation of black males, by reaching for today's black female. I am not too certain about my generation. There are a few, and with these few we will keep something. But we have altogether too many pimps and punks, and black capitalists (who want a piece of the putrescent pie). There's no way to predict. Sometimes people change fast. I've seen it happen to brothers overnight. But then they have to learn a whole new set of responses and attack reflexes which can't be learned overnight. So cats like me who have no tomorrows have

to provide examples. I have an ideal regarding tomorrow, but I live an hour at a time, right in the present, looking right over my nose for the trouble I know is coming.

There is so much that could be done, right now. . . . But I won't talk about those things right here. I will say that it should never be easy for them to destroy us. If you start with Malcolm X and count all of the brothers who have died or been captured since, you will find that not even one of them was really prepared for a fight. No imagination or fighting style was evident in any one of the incidents. But each one that died professed to know the nature of our enemies. It should never be so easy for them. Do you understand what I'm saying? Edward V. Hanrahan, Illinois State Attorney General, sent fifteen pigs to raid the Panther headquarters and murder Hampton and Clark. Do you have any idea what would have happened to those fifteen pigs if they had run into as many Viet Cong as there were Panthers in that building. The VC are all little people with less general education than we have. The argument that they have been doing it longer has no validity at all, because they were doing it just as well when they started as they are now. It's very contradictory for a man to teach about the murder in corporate capitalism, to isolate and expose the murderers behind it, to instruct that these madmen are completely without stops, are licentious, totally depraved — and then not make adequate preparations to defend himself from the madman's attack. Either they don't really believe their own spiel or they harbor some sort of subconscious death wish. None of this should have happened as it did. I don't know if we'll learn in time or not. I am not well here. I pretend that all is well for the benefit of my family's peace of mind. But I'm going to cry to you, so you can let the people on Fiftieth Street know not to let this happen to them, and that they must resist that cat with all of their strength when he starts that jail talk.

When the menu reads steak we get a piece of rotten steer (I hope) the size of a quarter. When it reads cake we get something like cornbread. Those are the best things served. When two guys fight, the darker guy will get shot. To supplement their incomes the pigs will bring anything into the prison and sell it to the convict who smuggles money in from his visits. Now black people don't visit their kin in the joint much and those that do can't afford to give up any money. So we have less of everything that could make life more comfortable — and safe (weapons are brought in too). Pigs are fascist right out front, the white

prisoner who is con-wise joins the Hitler party right here in the joint. He doesn't have to worry about the rules, he stays high. When he decides to attack us, he has the best of weapons (seldom will a pig give a con a gun, though. It has happened, however, in San Quentin three times to my knowledge. But they will provide cutlery and zip guns). The old convict code died years ago. These cons work right with the police against us. The only reason that I am still alive is because I take everything to the extreme, and they know it. I never let any of them get within arm's reach, and their hands must be in full view. When on the yard I would stay close to something to get under. Nothing, absolutely nothing comes as a surprise to me. There is much to be said about these places but I must let this go right now or I won't be able to post it until tomorrow. In the event that you missed it, (my writing is terrible, I know), I think a great deal of you. This is one slave that knows how to love. It comes natural and runs deep. Accepting it will never hurt you. Free, open, honest love, that's me.

Should you run into Yvonne¹³ tell her that I love her also and equally. Tell her that I want to see her, up close. Tell her I'm not a possessive cat, never demanding, always cool, never get upset until my (our) face and freedom get involved. But make her understand that I want to hold her (chains and all) and run my tongue in that little gap between her two front teeth. (That should make her smile.)

Power to the People!
George

MAY, 1970 21

Dear Angela,

I think about you all of the time. I like thinking about you, it gives me occasion for some of the first few really deeply felt ear-to-ear grins. And I've had to increase the number of my daily push-ups by half. That will make me stronger. The contact has been good for me in a hundred ways. But then my thoughts return to your enemies. They are mine too, of course, but thinking of them as your enemies calls up the monster in me, the dark, terrible things that I keep hidden in the pit, fanged, clawed, armored — they are more awful by far when you become involved. I've been finding and developing these things for many years

13 Yvonne is Angela Davis's middle name.

now. As soon as you isolate, identify, and number your enemies I'll set these things loose on them. And you won't be disappointed this time, I promise, sweet sister. This time nothing will be held back . . . Your enemies will be made humbler and wiser men.

Jon is a young brother and he is just a little withdrawn, but he is intelligent and loyal. . . He is at that dangerous age where confusion sets in and sends brothers either to the undertaker or to prison. He is a little better off than I was and than most brothers his age. He learns fast and can distinguish the real from the apparent, provided someone takes the time to present it. Tell the brothers never to mention his green eyes and skin tone. He is very sensitive about it and he will either fight or withdraw. Do you understand? You know that some of us don't bother to be righteous with each other. He has had a great deal of trouble these last few years behind that issue. It isn't right. He is a loyal and beautiful black man-child. I love him.

This shit is starting to thicken. Six in Georgia, two in Jackson, hard hats, counterdemonstrations, much like Germany in the thirties. That thing in Georgia and the one in Jackson were like turkey shoots. We die altogether too easy. Each one of those brothers has fathers, blood brothers, sisters, and mamas. But it's safe to assume that no positive response will be made, no eye-for-eye reprisal. Something very wrong has swept over us. We've grown so accustomed to seeing murder done to us that no one takes it seriously anymore. We've grown numb, immune to the pain. Charles Evers and the entire world knows who killed Medgar Evers, the murderer is still walking the streets. . .

Perhaps I shouldn't even recognize people like Whitney Young except as enemies, but the shit that they sling around does fall on some of us and consequently must be counterpoised. He has now gone on record as thinking that we "should arm ourselves, but strictly for defense only." But then he goes on to contradict himself by commenting that if we used arms it would be like suicide. His words: "a beer can against a tank." Well, how does one defend himself from an attacker without at some point launching a counterattack — especially when guns are the choice of weapons! . .

There is an element of cowardice, great ignorance, and perhaps even treachery in blacks of his general type. And I agree with Eldridge and Malcolm, we are not protecting unity when we refrain from attacking them. Actually it's the reverse that's true. We can never have unity as long

as we have these idiots among us to confuse and frighten the people. It's not possible for anyone to still think that Western mechanized warfare is absolute, not after the experiences of the third world since World War II. The French had tanks in Algeria, the U. S. had them in Cuba. Everything, I mean every trick and gadget in the manual of Western arms, has been thrown at the VC and they have thrown them back, twisted and ruined; and they have written books and pamphlets telling us how we could do the same. It's obvious that fighting ultimately depends upon men, not gadgets. So I must conclude that those who stand between us and the pigs, who protect the marketplace, are either cowards or traitors. Probably both. . . .

One way of indirectly detecting the traitor is to draw him out regarding our enemies' enemies. Young and all the other of those running dogs attack the white left. Young attacked the Chicago Seven and the other whites of the left who want to help us destroy fascism. So did LeRoi Jones on national TV in the company of Anthony Imperiale, a white racist KKKer, and a lot of high police officials. So what's happening with a guy who says he is for us but not against the government? Or one who says he's for us and against all whites — except the ones who may kick his ass? There is a great deal of cowardice and treachery and confusion here. The black bourgeoisie (pseudo-bourgeoisie), the right reverends, the militant opportunists, have left us in a quandary, rendered us impotent. How ridiculous we must seem to the rest of the black world when we beg the government to investigate their own protective agencies. Aren't the wild hip-shooting pigs loose among us to protect the property rights of the people who formed the government? I've been sitting in here ten years watching that kind of shit go down. It's always the same blacks. I am sure that it's intentional. They're not with us, you understand. Experience, trial and error, would have changed them if they were. Who is the black working for, who does he love when he screams "Honky"? He would throw us into a fight where we would be outnumbered 1 to 14 (counting the blacks who would fight with/for the other side in a race war. War on the honky, it's just another mystification, if not an outright move by the fascist. I don't know, I don't pretend to clairvoyance, I can't read all thoughts, and I do know some whites that I wouldn't count as enemies, but if all whites were my enemies would it make sense for me to fight them all at the same time? The blanket indictment of the white race has done nothing but perplex us, inhibit us. The theory that all whites are the immediate enemy and all blacks our brothers (making them loyal) is

silly and indicative of a lazy mind (to be generous, since it could be a fascist plot). It doesn't explain the black pig; there were six on the Hampton-Clark kill. It doesn't explain the black paratroopers (just more pigs) who put down the great Detroit riot, and it doesn't explain the pseudo-bourgeois who can be found almost everywhere in the halls of government working for white supremacy, fascism, and capitalism. It leaves the average brother confused. In Detroit they just didn't know what to do when they encountered the black paratroopers. They were so stunned when they saw those black fools shooting at them that they probably never will listen to another black voice regardless of what it's saying.

If I were at large and wanted to help revolutionize the black community so that in as short a time as possible it would be made ready to take up the vanguard in an antiestablishment war, I would start like this: 1. Lay my hands on some money any way I could. 2. Quietly, without even a hint of political flavoring, I would have my fronts open as many skeet, trap, rifle, and pistol ranges as I could rent space for in and around the black community. I would operate these places at cost and advertise. 3. Next door to these places (figurative) I would quietly, without political flavoring, open schools that deal with the close-order combat arts, ostensibly as a community project to keep the children off the streets. The real intent, of course, is to instill the "attack as defense" idea that we lost somewhere along the line. 4. Apart from the two business ventures just mentioned, I would provide myself with printing or copying machines, and make the salient points of urban guerrilla warfare, antitank warfare, and revolutionary culture as easy to get, as close to hand, as a glass of water.

Now that just-mentioned activity would be aside from the hard and seriously needed revolutionary work discussed early this morning, and the stuff you will find in the writings I mentioned in my last letter.

"One doesn't wait for all conditions to be right to start the revolution, the forces of the revolution itself will make the conditions right." Che said something like this. Write me and let me have it straight.

Power to the People.
I love you, little sister.

George

MAY, 1970 22

Dear Joan,

They approved us for both correspondence and visits. Something really bad must be about to come down on me. This is the first time in a long train of efforts that I actually received my issue. It's good, and I want to hear from you whenever you get time. Did you get that thing from John Thorne?

When I'm not working on my defense I like to be doing something like this. Ideals and ideas grow and become more definite when one attempts to explain them to others who will try to understand. You know that my family has never understood me very well before, they are trying to now, but for years I had no line at all, to the outside prison. It was almost like being held incommunicado. Incommunicado, it's almost destroyed me.

So I thank you, madam. None of us could have made it this far without folks like yourself. We would be hunting each other over the ruins.

Will you tell me all that you have experienced in these years of our separation? It will help me to answer some of the questions my mind has posed to itself recently. Everything, events and how they impressed you. We don't have to worry about the censor and my record, they already are informed that I am a dirty, real dirty red, and they have already made their plans to stone me. I will stop them of course, but at this level of the fight there is almost nothing for you to say that would compromise me any more than I already am.

Then, too, they can kill me once more only (we cats live nine times, I've started on my ninth). And since they seem determined to take this last little bit from me I have nothing to lose. So we can bring it right down front. I will anyway.

Dialectical materialism is my bag. I identify with anyone who hates just one fascist. I don't want a piece of the pie, I don't want all of it even. I think it's rotten, should be discarded, we should start all over again. This new start should be made without individualism (read isolation), mysticism (read religion), with a modification of the language for the purpose of removing the concept of possession (read capitalism), without the hard-hat mentality (read William F. Buckley, Playboy, Central Intelligence Agency).

The Buckleys, Babbitts, the snobs who are thoroughly convinced of their ability to bluff it through, I'll have to pull their arms off; and hope that without their negative influence you will be able to educate the rest (note that I didn't say reeducate). Power to the People. Love from your friend,

George

MAY, 1970 25

Dear Joan,

I have both of your letters right here. I got them about ten minutes ago. One was dated by you May 20, the other May 22.

It is very nice (this is understating it) to see a new hand in here, Joan. Yours is a beautiful hand, and I am gratified (another understatement) that it would bridge the things that separate us and hold me tenderly . . . it's the best proof that I can ever have, all that I need, to assure me that I am still alive and have lived well.

Love's labor — I understand these things, much better than most, always have, but I never could present it in the proper light before. Presentation was the problem. People kept mistaking it for animality, or criminality, and then, less sensibly still, un-Amerikan.

With you, whom I have always thought so much in agreement, I can't fail this time. There is a great deal to be exchanged between us. There is so much that I really need to know, things that will help me do the theoretical work for a treatise in which I intend to prove that if there is still basis for a belief in the brotherhood of man, it must be discovered in this struggle for control of this country's direction.

Since I've been an adult (mentally), I've never had the opportunity to question a mature, intelligent, and, most important, objective person of your particular distinctness (class, race, sex). When I can do so without compromising either of us I will pose some very sensitive, exploring queries.

On these things I will first want the detached, statistical evidence, and then what you feel to be so. If I overload you — well, it's just my style, I encircle and pull. It means simply that I think a great deal of you. And I am in such a hurry.

Give John T. the pocketbook edition of *A Dying Colonialism*, *The Wretched of the Earth*, *Black Face White Mask*, Malcolm's *Autobiography* (the other was borrowed) and *Malcolm Speaks*. Also, if they can be found in pocketbook form, *African Genesis* and *The Territorial Imperative* by Robert Ardrey. Do you know who Leakey is, the anthropologist? I need him and Ruth Benedict too. She wrote among other things *Races*. She was a very wonderful woman, much like yourself in many ways.

You can and must send photographs of the family, yourself, and friends. They took all that I had when they started this stuff in January. All my books, everything. We'll have to test them on the clippings, if not just give them to John T. Then, my friend, anything that you feel that I need to know, send it, say it, by all means. You have in me a receptive, completely liberated mind.

Love and Light.
George

MAY, 1970 26

Dear Joan,

I have your message of the twenty-fifth already! Things have improved in this respect. You are quite an experience for me also, a very new thing altogether. I would say fresh — how do you state newness, I can only understate it again. Pleasure? To express it I'll confess that with these three messages — delicate intrusions on my sobriety — you have redefined all of those care elements. It has been a long time since I've heard anything whispered, the banshee drowns such things out — it has started to dim.

You have a very fortunate boss. I'm sure he must understand how rarely those kind of contacts (too cold — how about contract or covenant, perhaps bond? yes, a bond), I'm sure he appreciates how uncommon they are.

I've changed my mind, when I need statistics I'll address myself to Liz — don't by shy — the years of our separation mean nothing to me. I remain as I was (arms are somewhat longer), and we should have a division of labor according to character and disposition, some passion — certainly in order. Will you excuse me when these letters appear a little informal,

the scratching in and out? It doesn't mean that I am lazy, it's an effect of my haste. I'm in a great race against time (justifiable homicide). But let's discuss the division of labor. It's essential to competent organisms. We are in step with each other. Hearts and heads, nervous equipment, arms, hands, extensions of the hand (sword and pen), passion. I am sure that you know they must all function according to ability in perfect harmony, the organism can't survive in good health and grow without all of its related parts.

There are no principal parts. You conceded that with the "all or none." It means that the small toe is as important to the human organism as the heart. It must be that way: the small toe is essential to balance, and its loss could precede or let's say presage the loss of the foot. Without footing the movements of head and heart become less efficient, the remainder of the organism could survive without the arm but it should never be surrendered without making the strongest possible protest, I won't stand for any loss at all. The instant that my toe is taken, I will lose my head.

We must move along two lines in concert, instruction of the unrighteous and destruction of the unrighteous. Within the structure of these two (and structure is an imperative) components there is a situation for every refinement of character — passion is at the heart of instruction.

I just got a copy of Malcolm x Speaks from Fay so you can take that off your list, but send (through John) Malcolm's Autobiography. Need it for my legal work.

I haven't changed, I still adore you —
George

MAY, 1970 28

Dear Angela,

I sincerely hope you understand this situation here with me, the overall thing I mean, you probably do. I don't want to be bash with you, the relative levels of our insecurity are too disparate for me to dwell on feelings, the warm, very personal, elemental thing. I can never express it in this form anyway, but I want you to know, and then we can get on with the work.

I have, like most people, a recurring dream. In this dream there is a great deal of abstract activity. Have you ever seen the pig they have named — — General Something-or-other — —. I don't know why my mind locked on him, but part of this dream is a still shot of my trying to fit a large steel boomerang into his mouth. It switches then to a scene where me and two other brothers T.G. and a brother named H.B., are holding hands to form a large circle, in the ring. Inside the ring formed by the three of us is this guy. He's wearing top hat and tails — stars and stripes — beard and bushy eyebrows. The action part goes like this: Old Sam tries to break out of the circle; we stop him; after about ten tries — we're wearing track shoes — he's ragged as an old mop-head. It goes on that way, scenes running into each other, overlapping, all very pleasing — wish fulfillment? — very gratifying stuff; but the high point, the climax — well, a tall slim African woman, firelight, and the beautiful dance of death. This wonderful woman didn't become part of my dream until last year sometime. I never thought this kind of environment could produce one like her, but at the same time I knew that things never could be good with me without her.

But I promised not to be bash with you. It's crazy, all women, even the very phenomenal, want at least a promise of brighter days, bright tomorrows. I have no tomorrows at all. The worst thing that could have ever happened to the woman in the dream was letting me touch her. I'll tell you the whole thing if we can ever find somewhere to relax. . . . Until then I promise not to bore you. You probably hear these devotions all day, and with your incentive factors they're probably all sincere devotions. Let me heap mine on you (with these pitiful little strokes of the pen) for the last time (unless seized by ungovernable impulse) with a statement made at the risk of seeming immodest; but I am modest and I hope that it is righteous for me to feel that — no one, and much more meaningful no black, wherever the hurricane has washed up his broken body, no one at all, can love like I.

In our last communication I made a statement about women, and their part in revolutionary culture (people's war). It wasn't a clear statement. I meant to return to it but was diverted. I understand exactly what the woman's role should be. The very same as the man's. Intellectually, there is very little difference between male and female. The differences we see in bourgeois society are all conditioned and artificial.

I was leading up to the obvious fact that black women in this country are far more aggressive than black males. But this is qualified by the fact

that their aggression has, until very recently, been within the system — that “get a diploma boy” stuff, or “earn you some money.” Where it should have been the gun. Development of the ability for serious fighting and organized violence was surely not encouraged in the black female, but neither was it discouraged, as it was in the case of the black male.

Please don't dismiss this yet. Let me rush to remind you that we have already established that bourgeois society has relegated women in general to a very distinct level of existence, even the slave woman. I'm not about to say they loved you better. Love doesn't even enter this equation, but socially primitive bourgeois thinking and the sex mystique does. First, a woman wasn't considered dangerous. Second, the most important experience in the Amerikan white male's “coming into manhood” was entering the body of the black female. These two circumstances contributed to the longevity and the matriarchal status of black women greatly. Add to all of this the fact that the black mother wanted to see her son survive in a grim and murderous white male society and the grotesque misshapen pieces come together.

I was saying that if the black mother wants her revenge she will have to stop teaching her sons to fear death. By default she dominates the black subculture, and her son must be the catalyst in any great changes that go down in this country. The head and the first, no one else has as much to gain.

Power to the People
George

MAY, 1970 29

Dearest Angela,
I'm thinking about you. I've done nothing else all day. This photograph that I have of you is not adequate. Do you recall what Eldridge said regarding pictures for the cell? Give Frances several color enlargements for me. This is the cruelest aspect of the prison experience. You can never understand how much I hate them for this, no one could, I haven't been able to gauge it myself.

Over this ten years I've never left my cell in the morning looking for trouble, never once have I initiated any violence. In each case where

it was alleged, it was defense attack response to some aggression, verbal or physical. Perhaps a psychiatrist, a Western psychiatrist that is, could make a case against me for anticipating attacks. But I wasn't born this way. Perhaps this same psychiatrist would diagnose from the overreactions that I am not a very nice person. But again I refer you to the fact that I was born innocent and trusting. The instinct to survive and all that springs from it developed in me, as it is today out of necessity.

I am not a very nice person, I confess. I don't believe in such things as free speech when it's used to rob and defame me. I don't believe in mercy or forgiveness or restraint. I've gone to great lengths to learn every dirty trick devised and have improvised some new ones of my own. I don't play fair, don't fight fair. As I think of this present situation, the things that happen all day, the case they've saddled me with, in retrospection of the aggregate injury — all now drawn against the background of this picture you've given me — no one will profit from this, sister. No one will ever again profit from our pain. This is the last treadmill I'll run. They created this situation. All that flows from it is their responsibility. They've created in me one, irate, resentful nigger — and it's building — to what climax? The nation's undertakers have grown wealthy on black examples, but I want you to believe in me, Angela. I'm going to make a very poor example, no one will profit from my immolation. When that day comes they'll have to bury ten thousand of their own with full military honors. They'll have earned it.

Do you sense how drunk this photograph has made me? You've got it all, African woman. I'm very pleased, if you don't ask me for my left arm, my right eye, both eyes, I'll be very disappointed. You're the most powerful stimulus I could have.

From now on when you have books for me to read in preparing my motions and jury selection questions, send them through John Thorne, people's lawyer, he is less pressed. And I do want Lenin, Marx, Mao, Che, Giap, Uncle Ho, Nkrumah, and any Black Marxists. Mama has a list. Tell Robert to provide money for them, and always look for the pocket editions, all right? My father — you'll have to try to understand him. He'll be with me in the last days in spite of whatever he says and thinks now. I've told him that I love you, and I told him that if he respects me at all, and wants me to spare his neck at Armageddon, he must be kind to you.

I got a letter from him this evening wherein he called the pigs by their very accurate moniker — pigs — he'll be all right. I see your influence already. But back to the books. With each load of heavy stuff throw in a reference book dealing with pure fact, figures, statistics, graphs for my further education. Also books on the personnel and structure of today's political and economic front. I am doing some serious theory work for you concerning the case, dedicated to Huey and Angela. If you understand what I want, let me know. Sister, it's been like being held incommunicado these last ten years. No one understood what I was attempting to do and to say. We belong among the righteous of the world. We are the most powerful. We are in the best position to do the people's work. To win will involve taking a chance, crawling on the belly, naming, numbering, infiltrating, giving up meaningless small comforts, readjusting some values. My life means absolutely nothing without positive control over the factors that determine its quality. If you understand, rush to send all that I've asked for. A load should come in each day. I've read it all, once anyway, but I need it now . . . and time has become very important. I want you to believe in me. I love you like a man, like a brother, and like a father. Every time I've opened my mouth, assumed by battle stance, I was trying in effect to say I love you, African — African woman. My protest has been a small one, something much more effective is hidden in my mind — believe in me Angela. This is one nigger who's got some sense and is not afraid to use it. If my enemies, your enemies, prove stronger, at least I want them to know that they made one righteous African man extremely angry. And that they've strained the patience of a righteous and loving people to the utmost.

I've stopped several times in this writing to exercise, to eat, and it has grown late. I want to get this off tonight. I must know as soon as you get this and the others. Are you sure about your mail? I can imagine that the CIA is reading all your mail before you get it and deciding what you should and shouldn't have. Big Brother. He is rather transparent. I have his number. I know he's a punk, he can't stop me.

Should we make a lovers' vow? It's silly, with all my tomorrows accounted for, but you can humor me.

Power to the People!
George

MAY, 1970 30

Dear Joan,

It is early Saturday morning as I write this, I'm using the night-light in front of my cell. This is a rare night, a departure from the ordinary, it's quiet.

It occurs to me that you are probably asleep. But then you may not be, my family was in the area today and I know how disruptive that experience can be. I just lit my seventy-fifth cigarette of this day. It will be my last — until after breakfast.

I was, before I started this letter, thinking of all the wonderful women in my life, and decided that you should hear from me. I'm doing as I've always done, wish for five, expect three, and get nothing.

I'm a little fat perhaps, but I don't know how I manage that, I eat nothing (for fear of poison). I seldom sleep, and do at least five full hours of martial-type exercises (with plenty of smoke breaks).

At the same time we discover and reach for each other, this opposite factor, within sometimes (just beneath conscious level — let's hope), is working against us. But love is the stronger force — if we just let it hang out unbridled — if it's soft and warm, hug it hard, look for the common features, f — individualism.

From Dachau with Love,
George

JUNE, 1970 2

Dearest Angela (first among the equals),

This is the fourth attempt to reach you. The others were on paper like this. They all said, "I love you, African Woman," little else. I will continue to try to reach you in this existence that follows. They can't control this. Once we have some lines established, I'll set down some of my thoughts, but we must hurry. So let me know through someone when I have reached you. The dates will tell you which letters have gotten through or at least they will tell me. I sent a list of stuff that I needed in that line. If you don't get it, use Georgia's list excepting the Fanon and Ardrey, which I have coming from another quarter. Need reference books too on everything. I've asked my father to provide

you with the money for this stuff. He will cooperate with you. But remember we want the pocket editions of everything. These pigs like to steal — if I lose something it's best if it's only something small.

You haven't much time for writing: This is understandable, but always confirm any letters you receive. I worry, and for good reason. There is a great deal of bullshit between us, concrete and steel, fear and barbed wire.

It will not be that way for long. The pig is a dying breed, he is finding it hard to bluff people these days. If you really need me, I'll rush to your side — right now, through steel, concrete, all that sort of stuff. They are inert, dead, lacking will and intelligence.

Our enemies from the pig right on up to the Who's Who level are idiots. Why do we tolerate them? They're not even really bad, because they have the strength which originates in the mind. We've been too merciful, too forgiving, too understanding, but those days are gone forever.

I've heard the term nigger 350 times today. Just a word — but I don't understand. All of the cons who use it are little, young, punk types. At least three are outright homosexuals. They're afraid and it's fear that's impelling them. they know that they're so far gone that they have nothing else to lose. They've talked away their lives already.

I guess it's the same way with the pig and the men who make pigs. They know they've gone too far, that forgiveness is impossible. They cannot be reasonable now, because of yesterday's excesses. It's pretty clear, isn't it, what is coming. I accept it, it's beautiful. Tomorrow.

I like the way you do things, I like everything about you.

Love you,
George

JUNE, 1970 2

Dear Joan,

I don't know what to say regarding these people. They . . . well I won't say it now. I can't. They would simply return this letter. They sent me a notice saying that you were approved, and how else could you be

getting these letters; whoever you talked to on the phone was using an arbitrary, bad-faith, delaying tactic.

I got the book all right, Joan. The long mellow communication with the photos arrived, say, ten minutes ago. Translation unnecessary. Thanks.

I agree with you and Lao-tse (and Mao — who I think acknowledged him somewhere), but I agree with you about feelings and syntax (I must, look at me). My father has tried for years to get me interested in writing fiction stuff. I've tried to explain that I was too busy living — and you know where I've been these years — however, we can connect the two, feeling and writing, just drop the syntax.

I don't consider myself a writer, an intellectual, really none of the things that can be isolated, when I feel I'll write (or talk) in an effort to effect and affect, and sometimes on the safety-valve principle, but actually I don't prefer anything as mild as pen and paper. In my fancies I see myself growing up to be a VC type, a Che-type cat with all four paws on the ground, a clear line drawn, a kiss for some, the claw for the malicious. I'm a very simple person at heart. Perfect love, perfect hate, that's the insides of me. It means that I've divided the world's people into two categories only (I reject further classification on the grounds that I will not be confused, manipulated, divided to be conquered). I recognize two distinct types only, the innocent, the guilty.

The innocents, even the ones that I'll meet tomorrow, I love them all equally. I'll be serious with you, Joan, I find it almost impossible to think in terms of digging some more. Do you understand. Think of who you love most, Dan or Liz? Do you dig it? If told, or made to choose which one of my parents should be allowed to live, how could I choose either. I'd have to give myself. Follow this line by putting your son against my brother. I would give myself. I will give myself.

The guilty, I will give the folding crane's wing snap — to the temple. Simple. I saw your mark in the book — I love you — for several very sound reasons — feelings — mainly for understanding. Ironic that we couldn't have lived this several years ago. I'll attack Ardrey of course, he is a nationalist, capitalist, dilettante, just wanted the books so I could do it accurately.

From Dachau with "these feelings."

George

JUNE, 1970 3

Dear Joan,

I have your message of June 2 already, and it feels nice to be worried about, I confess. But you can't be my mama, I feel a lot older than Dan (how old is he — in years?). You and yours truly will have to be sister and brother. I insist.

I do all right, I never have been a guy who ate much, I know you understand why. They allow us to spend money once a week, I stock up then. My father has provided me with all the money they'll let me spend in the next six months. I'm not really hurting. I still think of myself as a black, and an African but I can't be satisfied with myself until I am communist man, revolutionary man, and this without feeling that I've denied myself, or failed to identify.

Your descriptions of places, things, people, leave nothing to be desired. I was standing right there over you, with you, on the beach. Life can be (could be if) a wonderful experience. I have very mixed feelings about this whole affair, of drawing in and forcing out air. When I think of the very lovely people, the innocent, when I read your descriptions and some others, my mind strays momentarily from the fact that I'll never be safe. At these moments I feel a thrill of promise, but that's only for a moment, the rest of my day is elevated to a pledge I made to myself, a compact that I would never live at ease as long as there was or is one man who would restrict my and your self-determination.

Must go, last chance to post this. Tomorrow.

From a guy who really digs you.

George

JUNE, 1970 4

Dearest Angela,

This is the fifth one of these (on legal paper). I hope one reaches you soon. . . . Very discouraging. But I'll never stop trying.

All of these brothers here with me love you. In fact, every black I've talked with concerning you who had an opinion at all agrees with me about you. . . .

One thing about this bothers me a great deal. Do you know (of course you do) the secret police (CIA, etc.) go to great lengths to murder and consequently silence every effective black person the moment he attempts to explain to the ghetto that our problems are historically and strategically tied to the problems of all colonial people. This means that they are watching you closely. I worry. If something happened to you I just wouldn't understand.

It's no coincidence that Malcolm X and M. L. King died when they did. Malcolm X had just put it together (two and three). I seriously believe, they knew all along but were holding out and presenting the truth in such a way that it would affect the most people situationally — without getting them damaged by gunfire. You remember what was on his lips when he died. Vietnam and economics, political economy. The professional killers could have murdered him long before they did. They let Malcolm rage on muslim nationalism for a number of years because they knew it was an empty ideal, but the second he got his feet on the ground, they murdered him. We die too easily. We forgive and forget too easily.

Gentle and refined people, aren't we. We'll make good communists, if someone deals with the fascists for us.

That was a little bitter. Pay no attention to stuff like that. I have more faith in our resilience than is healthy for me.

If what I said about M.L. King is true, and I'm going to put it down as if I were positive that it is, he was really on our side (the billions of righteous), his image can be used. I mean we can just claim him, and use his last statements and his image . . . to strengthen ours. And Malcolm can also be "reformed."

I'm working this into my thing right now, I can use anything you have or can get that contains King's public statements or comments to notable people. I'll be easy with it, slip it in, like it was just common knowledge that King was a Maoist.

I sure hope you understand, sister, and hurry. This hour hand is sweeping like the second hand. I don't care. My credo is to seize the pig by the tusks and ride him till his neck breaks. But if fortuitous outcome of circumstance allows him to prevail over me — again — then I want to have this carefully worked-up comment prepared. I want something

to remain, to torment his ass, to haunt him, to make him know in no uncertain terms that he did incur this nigger's sore disfavor. I need some facts and figures to dress this passion —insist where you have to, but get them to cooperate.

The lights went out an hour ago perhaps an hour and a half. It's 12:45 A.M., June 5, and I love you twice as much as I did yesterday. It redoubles and double redoubles. I'm using the night-light in front of my cell to write this. You may never read it. I make this covenant with myself I'll never again relax. I'll never make peace with this world as long as the enemies of self-determination have the running of things. You may never read this, and I may never touch you, but I feel better than I have for many seasons. You do know that I live, and I hope that by some means you have discovered that I love you deeply, and would touch you tenderly, warmly, fiercely if I could, if my enemies were not at present stronger. I'm going to stop here and do something physical, push-ups, finger stands, something quiet and strenuous.

Love,
George

JUNE, 1970 7

Dear Joan,

It's early Sunday morning, 4:05 A.M. These are my favorite hours, it's when I think of my favorite people, this is the only time that it will sometimes settle down here. Bet you're asleep this time.

This is my third day up, I slept for about half an hour yesterday when I fell off at my improvised combination desk-easy-chair. The "uniforms" probably have put me down as insane. They've started to look at me that way. (You probably don't know what I'm referring to, however.) There's a special air and expression reserved for "those crazy N — —" a nuance different from the normal disdain. I try not to let them see me in my kata¹⁴ but they're rather sneaky and they catch me sometimes. I guess it does look strange, a dance without music.

Last week(?) when I mentioned that I felt older than I am, I wasn't referring to my knees or elbows, back or hands, nor did I mean that I

14 Martial exercises mentioned in an earlier letter.

felt in any way wise. I feel old, Joan, in the sense that a paper target is old after about an hour on the Police Academy practice range. Used.

Whatever it was that I lost these last ten years, I lost it suddenly. I can hardly imagine time passing any faster, the same can be said for the years before prison also (I picked up my first two bullet holes at age fifteen), but the prison experience was unique or I should say is unique in that there can be absolutely no emoluments for accepting the risks and responsibilities for hanging on.

I haven't seen the night sky for a decade. During the early sixties in San Quentin, "lockup" meant just that, twenty-four hours a day, all day, a shower once a week, and this could last for months (it's not changed much). On a shower walk one day in '63??, a brother called me to his cell for an opinion on this work he was doing on his walls. He had drawn in the night sky with colored pencils and against it, life size, lifelike (he was good), female comrades — some with fluffy naturals like my sister Angie, some with silky naturals like my sister Betsy. He had worked on it for three months. It was enormous — beautiful, precise, mellow. When he finished the last strokes the pigs moved him to another cell and painted over it, gave him a bad-conduct report, and made him pay for the new coat of paint. That brother didn't draw much any more last time I saw him. Some political cartoons, abstracts in book margins. Life's "a tale told by an idiot." Have you read any Shakespeare? I really enjoyed him when I was young. Macbeth is timeless, put him in a Brooks Brothers or a uniform and he'd fit right into the seventies. But you read all that stuff when you were in high school. I keep forgetting your background (class). Forgive me, sister, forgive the parochialism I sometimes slip into, habits formed in being, and addressing myself to, the hindmost.

From Dachau with love —
George

JUNE, 1970 7

Dear John,¹⁵
You and your secretary just left. It's Sunday.

15 John Thorne, one of the author's lawyers.

I hope that ham on the tape was satisfactory. I find that sort of thing hard. I'll have to deal with it. I can, I guess, but it's not in keeping with my character. I'm the original shy guy? No ego at all. It's been crushed. I'd feel more relaxed at a shooting scrape than talking at the head of the table. Just not the kind of thing I favor. But if you feel that it may be necessary in the future, I'll work on it; but you're going to have to convince me.

I've always thought in terms of division of labor — John, Huey, Angela Davis, etc., on the political front, cats like me behind them, in the crowd, watching the watchers — neutralizing the watchers. Where I have the nervous equipment naturally for that, the addressing would be strained. You understand, the difference between Fidel and Che. Fidel is at home behind a bank of microphones, Che is at home behind the carbine. Both can switch roles temporarily but Che is really a man of few words. And where would the Cuban revolution have ended were it not for Che and Camilo Cienfuegos.

But I'll try. It's merely a question of security, inner confidence, you understand. Will these people want to hear and bother to understand what I'm saying? I feel a little funny about Angela being fired at this time and for that reason. We've fronted them off so often over these last few hundred years. I know they would have fired her anyway but I still feel . . . dependent in a way that damages my ego further. I hope like hell I'll have the opportunity to live up to expectations. She is such an incentive factor . . . how can I fear otherwise.

Thanks — Power to the People.
George

JUNE, 1970 11

Dear Joan,
Nice, very nice surprise for me today, but have you ever experienced a faster half hour. I did have some word for my family, but we got so wrapped up that I forgot. As you were being pulled away (I thought they would dislocate your arm), I was reflecting on how nice it is to hug.

Tell Georgia my case requires her to see me at least once a week, I want to see her now.

She may come up tomorrow — but if so I imagine you'll know.

Adore you —
George

JUNE, 1970 14

Dear G.,

The California Adult Authority board and inmate Jackson A63837 clashed for the final time in June 1969. When I was called up in June '70 (the usual arrangement is once a year), I refused to go. I was already under indictment for the murder of the pig and it wasn't very likely that I would be given consideration for anything but the firing squad. The June 1969 appearance, however, was very significant because it followed a six-month postponement. I had gone to the board for the eighth time in December 1968. I was told by the institution employee who always sits on the board hearings that I was "granted a parole." I would be back on the street on March 4. I walked back to my cell telling everyone I had a "date." I even wrote to my family. Three days later I was informed that a mistake had been made. Consideration of my case was postponed for six months. They explained to me that I would be transferred to Soledad from San Quentin. If I did well for six months at Soledad, I would be given parole for certain. When the June 1969 appearance finally took place different people were on the board panel. No one could find any reference to the promises made to me by the earlier board. I was denied for another full year.

Something very similar had happened the year before at the December 1967 appearance. At the previous meeting they had promised me that if I had seven or eight clean months I would be released. When I reminded them of their promise, they laughed and stated that "we never make deals like that." All the other board appearances were tense affairs conducted in an atmosphere of mutual hostility. We argued over conflicting interpretations of the disciplinary reports in my central file. I had been accused of being a Muslim, Communist, agitator, nationalist, loan shark, thief, assassin, and saboteur. Nothing was ever settled, nothing was really exchanged except hostility.

Power to the People.
Comrade George

JUNE, 1970 15

Dear Joan,

I missed a day or two! I will clean up for that soon. I've been extremely busy in here, and then sometimes I get lazy. Then I'll kick back and think about you all. Since you're my eyes, and ears, and interpreter, I find myself with you most of the time.

I also missed seeing you today during what may have been the best court session to date. We won one.¹⁶ The people — on the march. I've lost so many rounds, Joan — it feels good. We love you. You know where I'm at, I've always loved you. But all the rest of these cats down here are starting to feel your presence also. I have Marie in here now.¹⁷ Marie was my first love, my first experience. It was tender, I failed her, but if I try real hard now she may forgive me. That's been my thing — for years, to always live up to expectations. And if you don't ask me for something very difficult, very taxing, I won't be able to relax from this point on. We won't have to worry about these here too much longer. How far is San Jose from San Francisco? Hope they'll let me see you, and perhaps they'll relent and let me see your daughter also. But . . . there isn't much chance of that. What in your opinion was the principal reason for granting the move? Your opinion helps me anticipate. You understand that's what kept me here among the living with you over these years, anticipating.

Adore you —
George

JUNE, 1970 17

Dear Joan,

I may have read a review or quote from Levi-Strauss but that's about all. And the World, I love it, send it to me. I'll share it with all the rest here who can still love. But will have to transfer it soon. The day I leave I'll send you a line or two. You let them know.

¹⁶ The court in Salinas granted a change of venue to San Francisco.

¹⁷ "Someone sent me a card with a picture of 'The African Mother' done by and named Marie. I was commenting that I and my black male comrades had failed to be fathers and husbands, over the decades."

Western culture developed out of a very hostile environment. Rocks, snow, ice, long periods when the ground was too hard to be worked, when nothing could be produced from the soil, hunting became too important; accumulating, hoarding, hiding, protecting enough to last through the winter, things falling apart in winter, covetous glances at one's neighbor's goods. Would three or four thousand years of that kind of survival influence a culture? Would greed color itself into the total result, in a large way? Hunt, forage, store, hoard, hide, defend, the thing at stake!! Not very conducive to sensitivity, tenderness.

Change the environment, change the man. Simple. Consider the people's store, after full automation, the implementation of the theory of economic advantage. You dig, no waste makers, no harnesses on production. There is no intermediary, no money. The store, it stocks everything that the body or home could possibly use. Why won't the people hoard, how is an operation like that possible, how could the storing place keep its stores if its stock (merchandise) is free? Men hoard against want, need, don't they? Aren't they taught that tomorrow holds terror, pile up a surplus against this terror, be greedy and possessive if you want to succeed in this insecure world? Nuts hidden away for tomorrow's winter.

Change the environment, educate the man, he'll change. The people's store will work as long as people know that it will be there, and have in abundance the things they need and want (really want); when they are positive that the common effort has and will always produce an abundance, they won't bother to take home more than they need. Water is free, do people drink more than they need? There is a reason for the ugliness of Western culture, many reasons I would say, but the fact that it was founded and tied into greed, the need to store so much, and work and fight so hard for something to store stands out from the other reasons. This man that you work with, I know about cats like him. They never take more than they can give, so that sounds like a near-perfect relationship. You have to ask cats like that for something hard to make them relax.

Love you,
George

JUNE, 1970 27

Dear G.,

The man who has never received a kind message, a gesture, and who has never held anything of value, material or otherwise, if he is healthy, or I should say remains healthy (my persuasion presupposes original innocence), he never becomes so practical as to expect more of the same — nothing. Less but never nothing.

To be denied or rejected means less to this man but never nothing.

And if he is still healthy of mind, he knows he can't be practical, he can't afford practicality. His have-nothing status, the absence of the all-important controls, predisposes him to impracticality, he can never relax, he is or becomes the desperate man. And desperate men do desperate things, take desperate positions; when revolution comes he is the first to join it. If it doesn't come he makes it.

But the significant feature of the desperate man reveals itself when he meets other desperate men, direct or vicariously; and he experiences his first kindness, someone to strain with him, to strain to see him as he strains to see himself, someone to understand, someone to accept the regard, the love, that desperation forces into hiding.

This significant feature in the desperate men, and women, people, redeems them, redeems the revolution, alters the sanguine coloring of war, and gives revolution its love motive.

Men who have never received and have had little occasion to express the love theme or original goodness respond in a very significant manner to that first real, spontaneous, gratuitous kindness. Those feelings that find no expression in desperate times store themselves up in great abundance, ripen, strengthen, and strain the walls of their repository to the utmost; where the kindred spirit touches this wall it crumbles — no one responds to kindness, no one is more sensitive to it than the desperate man.

I'm trying to say thanks.

Power to the People —
Comrade George

JUNE, 1970 28

Dear Joan,

I knew you were here Thursday before I got the letter informing me of it. Our spirits met right there over the flower beds for a while. Then too I have my spies out, tall tan lady with huge round blue eyes. They have turned away dozens of my visitors, sorry to have put you through that. What exactly did they say?

As soon as you finish with this letter, jump into your auto, find someone who will sell you some envelopes like the ones I generally send these messages in, long, business envelopes, then find some a little larger, go back home, write me a love note. Put the smaller of the two types of envelopes in one of the larger envelopes, include the love and pass to me.

I'm thinking of Jon now. I wish there was some way to talk with him in private. They ran him off too. They certainly must be sure of themselves, I mean sure of being able to convict and hold and get rid of me, because they're not very concerned about making me mad. And they know I don't forget.

It's real early Sunday morning, you're probably asleep. When I'm finished with this I'll join you in that dimension, and you're not shy at all.

Power — Love,
George

JUNE, 1970 30

Dear Joan,

You correctly sensed I am in a terrible rush, all the time. This rush characterizes everything that flows from me. (I'll take my time loving you, but when I come I'll be fresh from some hurried encounter with the Minotaur and related problems.)

I'm not really shy either, a little defensive yet — but no one would listen! That's what happened to me. But it was good in a way. It crushed the egotism, and the egocentric thing. (I only wish to help in the work against the minotaur.) The question is, do these nice people really want to hear what I have to say — as a victim of the first order —

will they mistake it — as extreme — can these wonderful gentle people understand that some extreme situations call for extreme remedies; that the only means of ever dealing with a situation that calls for movement is to get ahead of the people and pull, not the reverse!!! Get ahead and pull. You've heard that . . . excuse(?), "Don't get ahead of the people." Bull! And then the others will change if we pull them into something that demands adjustments, breakthroughs. Theotis's job will be to rebuild, after I do my work. You, Minerva, will be his teacher.

You mentioned once — well, you spoke of "Jewish mama instincts" — are you Jewish? And what in your view is a Jew? (That should keep you working for a while.) All these years I've never given it a thought. I mean, I've never noticed anything singular or let's say distinctively different. Except in ways of love, and of course the physical, personal features so pleasing to the inner man.

Your daughter, I could breathe her in with one intake. I was referring to the auto accident when I spoke of her health, I've been worrying since I read that letter. Cuts, face, black eyes!! She has a hundred pounds on that wonderful little body??!! One long slow breath. Tell her I am devoted to her, and although we can't be together now I do want her to stay close as she can to me. From me come great feelings of warmth and all kinds of love — for Joan.

George

JULY, 1970 8

Dear Joan,

This, my lovely one is just a note. Troubled times here that preoccupy your comrade's attentions.

Oh! I'm still here. They don't like it, however. Fools, to say the least.

I have your two letters of Tuesday here with me now. I feel closer every — things, people, complexities — each time I see you (two times). I feel a little closer — what if people start talking nasty about us? You with those long legs, and me with these long arms. I never feel shy around my other female army. . . . You be cool or I'll breathe you in.

I feel so sorry for them both, Georgia and her man. If you say I should, I'll send him a line tonight, but don't think you've twisted me around

that white little finger. It will be a while yet before I give in completely to you. I dig you a lot.

Love,
George

JULY, 1970 28

Dear Joan,

It's certainly nice to have a wonderfully alive, intelligent woman in the hand — every fingertip thanks you.

I've been back in the cell for ten minutes, after waiting forty-five for an escort. I saw you and Jon leave (you're almost as tall as he). I can't help but worry myself for him, not in the same way that his parents worry, actually the opposite of that. My concern is that his development not be retarded. Our immediate family is relating to him in the exact manner that they related to me. Bitter experience has taught them nothing. He's clearly rejected selfish love and restraints. Their attitudes are forcing him to choose between them and the ideal. We oppress each other, smother and confuse with contradictions between the tongue and the act. They're pushing him away from them. You know he's already somewhat withdrawn. Fear responses . . . he said he was leaving the house there in Pasadena. That should cause some tidal waves of emotionalism. I advised him to guide his decisions by necessity first, feelings secondly. I wonder, though, if I was right.

I'm chain-smoking again. But you, you give me massive doses of relief. Thanks for the confidence, the tears, the love.¹⁸

We will win.
George

JULY, 1970 28

Dear Fay, Dear Fay,

The possibility of us, as persons, misunderstanding each other will always rest on the fact that I am an alien. It will always be my fault.

¹⁸ "Anyone who doesn't sense this fundamental power of the people cannot be a guerrilla fighter."

The secret things that I hide from almost everyone, and especially the people who are sweet and gentle and intellectually inhibited from grasping the full range of the ordeal of being fair game, hunted, an alien, precludes forever a state of perfect agreement. You dig what I'm saying now you've conceded this much. Keep it always in mind, and strain with me.

I feel threatened. That's where we should begin. Recall how I attempted to explain that feeling, the singular and inclusive sense. Then add to this that even in the days of my darkest confusion, when I was at once myself and not myself, my response to this feeling (and I've always felt threatened) was one from the older section of my brain. Being an alien has never (or seldom) made me feel sheepish!

In the inclusive sense, my politics, you'll find all of the atypical features of my character. I may run, but all the time that I am, I'll be looking for a stick! A defensible position! It's never occurred to me to lie down and be kicked! It's silly! When I do that I'm depending on the kicker to grow tired. The better tactic is to twist his leg a little or pull it off if you can. An intellectual argument to an attacker against the logic of his violence — or one to myself concerning the wisdom of a natural counter-violence — borders on, no, it overleaps the absurd!!

I just don't subscribe to that superman shit, I've seen too many men cry, seen them in all postures of the common infirmity — death. My message to black people and to sweet, gentle, much-loved people like yourself will be the same message I receive from my brain for myself. It will be the same as long as we have the same problem, it will be the same coming from the living, loving brain or from the grave.

They just put a new night-light in front of my cell, I'll be able to break up my days as I wish. Or not break them, just keep on going. — Just keep going — straight ahead — right on.

You're like no one I've ever met from across the tracks. I do think a very great deal of you and I'm certain that you do try to understand our problems. Don't mistake this as a message from George to Fay, it's a message from the hunted running blacks to those people of this society who profess to want to change the conditions that destroy life. These blacks are still in doubt as to whether those elements across the tracks want this change badly enough to accept the U.S. being physically brought to its knees to attain it. Will the Weathermen always be a

microscopic minority? Working outside the protection of all their people, instead of with the support of an aggressive political cadre. I dig them, and love you.
Fondly and Always.

Power to the People,
George
AUGUST, 1970 9

Real Date, 2 days A.D.

Dear Joan,
We reckon all time in the future from the day of the man-child's death.

Man-child, black man-child with submachine gun in hand, he was free for a while. I guess that's more than most of us can expect.

I want people to wonder at what forces created him, terrible, vindictive, cold, calm man-child, courage in one hand, the machine gun in the other, scourge of the unrighteous — “an ox for the people to ride”!!!

Go over all the letters I've sent you, any reference to Georgia being less than a perfect revolutionary's mama must be removed. Do it now! I want to possibility of anyone misunderstanding her as I did. She didn't cry a tear. She is, as I am, very proud. She read two things into his rage, love and loyalty.

I can't go any further, it would just be a love story about the baddest brother this world has had the privilege to meet, and it's just not popular or safe — to say I love him.

Cold and calm though. “All right, gentlemen, I'm taking over now.”¹⁹

Revolution,
George

19 The author quotes his brother's words from the San Rafael courthouse.

Appendix: Introduction to the First Edition

*Jean Genet*²⁰

Every authentic writer discovers not only a new style but a narrative form which is his alone, and which in most cases he uses up, exhausting its effects for his own purposes.

Many people would be amazed to hear that the epistolary narrative was still capable of affording us a resolutely modern mode of expression; yet if we merely juxtapose (one after another) a certain number of George Jackson's letters, we obtain a striking poem of love and of combat.

But even more surprising, when we read these letters from a young black in Soledad Prison, is that they perfectly articulate the road traveled by their author — first the rather clumsy letters to his mother and his brother, then letters to his lawyer which become something extraordinary, half-poem, half-essay, and then the last letters, of an extreme delicacy, to an unknown recipient. And from the first letter to the last, nothing has been willed, written or composed for the sake of a book, yet here is a book, tough and sure, both a weapon of liberation and a love poem. In this case I see no miracle except the miracle of truth itself, the naked truth revealed. George Jackson is a poet, then. But he faces the death penalty. I shall talk about that.

A court of justice, a certain number of jurors protected by uniformed guards, by plainclothesmen, by informers, by the whole of white America, will decide whether Jackson and his brothers killed a prison guard. The jurors answer yes or no. If they answer yes, a very strange operation begins. The judges must pronounce sentence — either a death sentence, a life sentence, or a sentence of time to be served.²¹ What, then, is this intellectual operation which changes a simple act (a murder, if there was one) into something quite different: into another death, or a life sentence or a period of time served?

20 Brazil, July 1970. Translated by Richard Howard.

21 When this Introduction was written, Genet did not realize that, under California law, the jury usually determines the sentence. In Jackson's case, however, the sentence of death is actually mandatory. In California, convicts serving life sentences who are convicted of assault on a noninmate are automatically sentenced to death.

How these two facts are linked together — the initial and hypothetical murder, and the sentence pronounced — no one knows, no one has yet said. This is because the courts, in America as elsewhere, are tribunals of authority, a crude authority which adapts itself very well to the arbitrary.

Yet this sentence, once pronounced, must be carried out. It will be carried out by and upon the Soledad brothers, upon George Jackson, and in this way: either by proceeding from his cell to the gas chamber, or by living twenty or thirty years in still another cell.

A guard is discovered — murdered.

A jury answers yes or no to indicate the murderer.

The murderer dies in his turn, or lives in a cell for thirty years in order to justify a sentence that has been pronounced.

To understand the significance of this book as a weapon, a means of combat, the reader must not forget that George Jackson is in danger of death.

If a certain complicity links the works written in prisons or asylums (Sade and Artaud share the same necessity of finding in themselves what must lead them to glory, that is, despite the walls, the moats, the jailers and the magistracy, into the light, into minds not enslaved), these works do not meet in what is still called ignominy: starting in search of themselves from that ignominy demanded by social repression, they discover common ground in the audacity of their undertaking, in the rigor and accuracy of their ideas and their visions. In prison more than elsewhere one cannot afford to be casual. One cannot endure a penalty so monstrous as the lack of freedom without demanding of one's mind and body a labor at once delicate and brutal, a labor capable of "warping" the prisoner in a direction which takes him ever farther from the social world. But . . .

It might be supposed that as the site of absolute malediction, prison, and at its heart the cell, would enforce by its misery upon those confined there a kind of solidarity required by that very misery, a merciful harmony in which all social distinctions maintained in the free air would be abolished. Prison serves no purpose. Do we imagine that at least it can strip its inmates of their wretched social differences, that under the surveillance of a cordon of guards, black or white but

armed, there develop behind its walls, in its darkness, certain new relations between the prisoners, whoever they may have been during their moments of freedom?

That is an idealistic hope which we must avoid or get rid of. George Jackson's book tells the brutal truth: in prison, in a cell, the white skin of the prisoners becomes an image of complicity with the white skin of the guards, so that if white guards superintend a hell in which white men are jailed, the white prisoners superintend another hell inside that one in which black men are jailed. Now the security of the guards, their independence — their time off duty, their visits to town, their family lives — grant a certain respite to the white prisoners; but the fact that these prisoners must be constantly confined, never distracted by the world outside, means that they employ all their time and all their imagination in maintaining the hell in which they confine the black prisoners.

Few prisoners, on the whole, escape the tendency of a complicity with certain guards: it is a kind of nostalgia for the social world from which the prisoner is cut off (a nostalgia which makes the prisoner cling to what seems, in his prison, closest to the social order: the guard. As for the guard, the motives which lead him to accept the game between certain prisoners and himself are many and complex). Now would this complicity have too much importance, when its meaning is abatement, a temporary weakness likely to be revoked, abruptly halted — on the occasion of a riot, for example. But in the United States, this complicity has a different meaning: the complicity of the white prisoners with the guards exasperates and intensifies what constitutes the basis of relations between white men and black: racism.

This racism is scattered, diffused throughout the whole of America, grim, underhanded, hypocritical, arrogant. There is one place where we might hope it would cease, but on the contrary, it is in this place that it reaches its cruelest pitch, intensifying every second, preying on body and soul; it is in this place that racism becomes a kind of concentrate of racism: in the American prisons, in Soledad Prison, and in its center, the Soledad cells.

If, by some oversight, racism were to disappear from the surface of the United States, we could then seek it out, intact and more dense, in one of these cells. It is here, secret and public, explicable and mysterious, stupid and more complicated than a tiger's eye, absence of life and

source of pain, nonexistent mass and radioactive charge, exposed to all and yet concealed. One might say that racism is here in its pure state, gathering its forces, pulsing with power, ready to spring.

The extravagant adventure of white America, which is the victorious expansion of Victorian England, is doubtless exhausted, it will dissolve and fade, revealing at last what is cheerfully devouring it: the black nation which was caught within it, itself traversed by liberating currents, liberating movements, producing long screams of misery and joy. What seems new to me in this black literature is that now we hear almost no echoes of the great Hebrew prophets. From Richard Wright to George Jackson, the blacks are stripping themselves of all the presbyterian and biblical rags: their voices are rawer, blacker, more accusing, more implacable, tearing away any reference to the cynical cheats of the religious establishment. Their voices are more singular, and singular too in what they seem to agree upon: to denounce the curse not of being black, but captive.

Is that new?

Incontestably.

George Jackson's style is clear, carefully pitched, simple and supple, as is his thinking. Anger alone illuminates his style and his thinking, and a kind of joy in anger.

A book written in prison — in any place of confinement — is addressed chiefly perhaps to readers who are not outcasts, who have never been to jail and who will never go there. That is why in some sense such a book proceeds obliquely. Otherwise, I know that the man who writes it need only take, in order to fling them down on paper, the forbidden words, the accursed words, the words covered with blood, the unwritten words of spit and sperm — like the ultimate name of God — the dangerous words, the padlocked words, the words that do not belong to the dictionary, for if they were written there, written out and not maimed by ellipses, they would utter too fast the suffocating misery of a solitude that is not accepted, that is flogged only by what it is deprived of: sex and freedom.

It is therefore prudent that any text which reaches us from this infernal place should reach us as though mutilated, pruned of its overly tumultuous adornments.

It is thus behind bars, bars accepted by them alone, that its readers, if they dare, will discover the infamy of a situation which a respectable vocabulary cannot reinstate — but behind the permitted words, listen for the others!

If the prisoner is a black man captured by whites, a third thread runs through this difficult web: hatred. Not the rather vague and diffuse hatred of the social order or of fate, but the very precise hatred of the white man. Here again, the prisoner must use the very language, the words, the syntax of his enemy, whereas he craves a separate language belonging only to his people. Once again his situation is both hypocritical and wretched: he can express his sexual obsessions only in a polite dialect, according to a syntax which enables others to read him, and as for his hatred of the white man, he can utter it only in this language which belongs to black and white alike but over which the white man extends his grammarian's jurisdiction. It is perhaps a new source of anguish for the black man to realize that if he writes a masterpiece, it is his enemy's language, his enemy's treasury which is enriched by the additional jewel he has so furiously and lovingly carved.

He has then only one recourse: to accept this language but to corrupt it so skillfully that the white men are caught in his trap. To accept it in all its richness, to increase that richness still further, and to suffuse it with all his obsessions and all his hatred of the white man. That is a task.

And it is a task which seems contradicted by the revolutionary's. The revolutionary enterprise of the American black, it seems, can come into being only out of resentment and hatred, that is, by rejecting with disgust, with rage, but radically, the values venerated by the whites, although this enterprise can continue only starting from a common language, at first rejected, finally accepted, in which the words will no longer serve concepts inculcated by the whites, but new concepts. In a revolutionary work written by a black man in jail, certain traces must remain, then, of the orgiastic and hate-ridden trajectory covered in an imposed solitude.

Having emerged from his delirium, having achieved a cold revolutionary consciousness, Sade still kept something of that obsessional delirium which nonetheless led him to his revolutionary lucidity.

This is also evident in the letters which follow.

In prison, George Jackson must still be sure to fortify in himself what sets him against the whites, and to elaborate a consciousness so acute that it will be valid for all men.

It was almost predictable that having reached this stage of self-discovery, his revolutionary consciousness should meet and come to terms with the Black Panther party. Thus it is without equivocation and without any mystery that he names it and abides by its directives in the course of his last letters. For myself, who have lived with the Panthers, I see George Jackson in his place there, fighting at their side with the same conviction and the same talent as his brothers accused of murder, Huey Newton and Bobby Seale.

If we accept this idea, that the revolutionary enterprise of a man or of a people originates in their poetic genius, or, more precisely, that this enterprise is the inevitable conclusion of poetic genius, we must reject nothing of what makes poetic exaltation possible. If certain details of this work seem immoral to you, it is because the work as a whole denies your morality, because poetry contains both the possibility of a revolutionary morality and what appears to contradict it. Finally, every young American black who writes is trying to find himself and test himself and sometimes, at the very center of his being, in his own heart, discovers a white man he must annihilate.

But let me return to the amazing coherence of George Jackson's life and of his unwilling book. There is nonetheless one rather disturbing thing about it: at the same moment he was living his life (a kind of death or higher life), without his realizing it, by letters and certain notations in his letters, he was also writing his legend, that is, he was giving us, without intending to, a mythical image of himself and of his life — I mean an image transcending his physical person and his ordinary life in order to project himself into glory with the help of a combat weapon (his book) and of a love poem.

But I have lived too long in prisons not to recognize, as soon as the very first pages were translated for me in San Francisco, the special odor and texture of what was written in a cell, behind walls, guards, envenomed by hatred, for what I did not yet know so intensely was the hatred of the white American for the black, a hatred so deep that I wonder if every white man in this country, when he plants a tree, doesn't see Negroes hanging from its branches.

When this book comes out, the man who wrote it will still be in his Soledad cell, with his Soledad Brothers.²² What follows must be read as a manifesto, as a tract, as a call to rebellion, since it is that first of all.

It is too obvious that the legislative and judiciary systems of the United States were established in order to protect a capitalist minority and, if forced, the whole of the white population; but these infernal systems are still raised against the black man. We have known for a long time now that the black man is, from the start, natively, the guilty man. We can be sure that if the blacks, by the use of their violence, their intelligence, their poetry, all that they have accumulated for centuries while observing their former masters in silence and in secrecy — if the blacks do not undertake their own liberation, the whites will not make a move.

But already Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, the members of the Black Panther party, George Jackson, and others have stopped lamenting their fate. The time for blues is over, for them. They are creating, each according to his means, a revolutionary consciousness. And their eyes are clear. Not blue.

22 In late June 1970, before the publication of this book, the Soledad brothers were transferred to San Quentin.



Blood in My Eye was completed only days before the author died from bullet wounds during an alleged escape attempt from San Quentin Prison, California. Arrested at the age of eighteen for allegedly taking part in the robbery of a gas station netting \$70, George L. Jackson was sentenced to one year to life in prison. At the time of his death he had served eleven years behind prison walls, seven of those years in solitary confinement. This book testifies to how those years were spent, and why.

Written with the memory of his slain brother, Jonathan, constantly before him, it is an apocalyptic vision of America. It speaks to the poor, the jailed, and the disenfranchised throughout the world. Jackson's message to his revolutionary brothers is clear: "People are already dying who could be saved, generations more will die or live poor butchered half-lives if you fail to act. Discover your humanity and your love in revolution. Pass on the torch. Join us, give up your life for the people."

Blood in My Eye takes up where Soledad Brother left off, and introduces the reader to the life force that was George L. Jackson.



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