

FREE POLITICAL PRISONER JEFF 'FREE' LUERS



Some Words on Prisoner Support by Jeffrey Luers May 2004

Prisoner support can be a very challenging issue. Any movement is only as strong as it's support for its fallen comrades. Any movement that fails to aid and support its political prisoners or prisoners of war will ultimately fail. Each prisoner's needs will vary depending on their case, length of sentence and where they are imprisoned. All prisoners, however, need emotional and monetary support.

Monetary support is an easy one. If you can afford to send a few bucks, it is always appreciated. Many prisoners have to pay for their own hygiene products, as well as food to supplement the prisoner's diet. These items are often 200%-300% more expensive than on the streets. So, every little bit helps. Fundraisers (bake sales, shows, etc.) are an excellent way to raise money and spread information about prisoners and their cases. They are also a great forum for building support. Perhaps the hardest part of prisoner support is emotional support. It is never easy to write a prisoner for the first time. People are unsure of what to write and how their words will affect the prisoner.

As prisoners we experience the outside world through letters. There is nothing I love more than to get a letter describing a beautiful sunset or amazing wilderness someone saw. It is always great, whether you are a prisoner or not, to make a new friend. Getting to know someone through letters can be really fun. Sharing news from the outside, political ideas/views, personal experiences...really just about anything is good. Just getting mail raises the morale of prisoners.

Remember not to over commit yourself though. It is easy to want to write a lot of prisoners. But it is better to pick one or two that you can write to regularly (every 1-4 months) than to not be able to keep up with your letters.

When it comes to supporting individual prisoners (e.g. long term prisoners fighting for their freedom or life), the support needs to be tailored to fit with their campaign goals. It is important to know things they support being done on their behalf. Communicating with them, or in some cases, their designated support people, and starting a support group in your area is a good way to start.

Obviously, needs will vary from prisoner to prisoner. Some will be raising legal funds as a priority, others may simply be asking people to write letters of support to governors or prison officials. Still others may be asking for solidarity actions and/or demos. Strong support networks and visible discontent with a prisoner's sentence and/or conditions will be the number one factor in obtaining justice. It is only through the word and dedication of people on the outside that all political prisoners and POW's will gain their release.

Having said this, I do not know of any prisoner—though I can only speak for myself—that would rather have energy directed toward us than to the causes for which we fought. The absolute most valuable support that any one person can do is to continue the struggle for which we came to prison. Never give up; never stop fighting until all are free: Earth, animal and human. Onward to a world without prisoners.

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