

**POSTER**



**Past  
Exhibition**

**HOUSE**

# No Escape

## The Legacy of Attica Lives!

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April 25–November 3, 2024

“Attica! Attica! Attica!” More than merely a quote from the iconic 1975 film *Dog Day Afternoon*, this is a defiant chant meant to evoke the searing memories of what took place over the course of five days in September of 1971 at an infamously inhospitable and systemically racist prison facility in Attica, New York. These events came to represent the power of organized resistance in the face of oppression.

The Attica uprising was the culmination of a racial reckoning that had been brewing in the United States alongside serious disturbances in prisons and various protest movements over the previous decade. It remains the largest and the bloodiest prison rebellion in U.S. history. Many of the incarcerated men had the goal of pushing the prison—known as “The Last Stop” because of its particularly brutal reputation—to address the inhumane treatment and routine abuses perpetrated by the prison’s guards and to adopt reforms. They also demanded improvements to medical services, religious freedom, expanded visitation rights, and access to basic hygiene amenities like daily showers and toothbrushes. To this end, on September 9, many of the prisoners rioted and took 42 members of the prison staff hostage.

After four days, the tense negotiations between the authorities, the incarcerated men, and the neutral parties brought in to broker a peaceful settlement, broke down completely. Nelson Rockefeller, the relatively moderate Republican governor of New York, eager to assert his “law and order” bona fides, approved a raid on the facility. On September 13, state police officers stormed the prison, killing 29 prisoners and 10 hostages.

In the weeks and years that followed, these events galvanized activists and reformers—particularly student-led groups and socialist organizations—some of which channeled their fury and frustration into poster art that reflected the national passions provoked by the bloodshed. These posters advertised screenings of the eponymous 1974 documentary on Attica and rallied those sympathetic to the plight of the “Attica Brothers,” who were refused amnesty once the prison was reoccupied by law enforcement. They also helped to sustain public awareness of the prisoners’ position by linking the events of Attica to other social causes, ensuring that the legacies of the men who fought and died, as well as of those who survived the uprising, would not be forgotten.

*Please be advised that this display includes images and references to racism and police brutality that some viewers might find disturbing.*

*Unless otherwise noted, all posters are part of the Poster House Permanent Collection.*

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### **Special Thanks**

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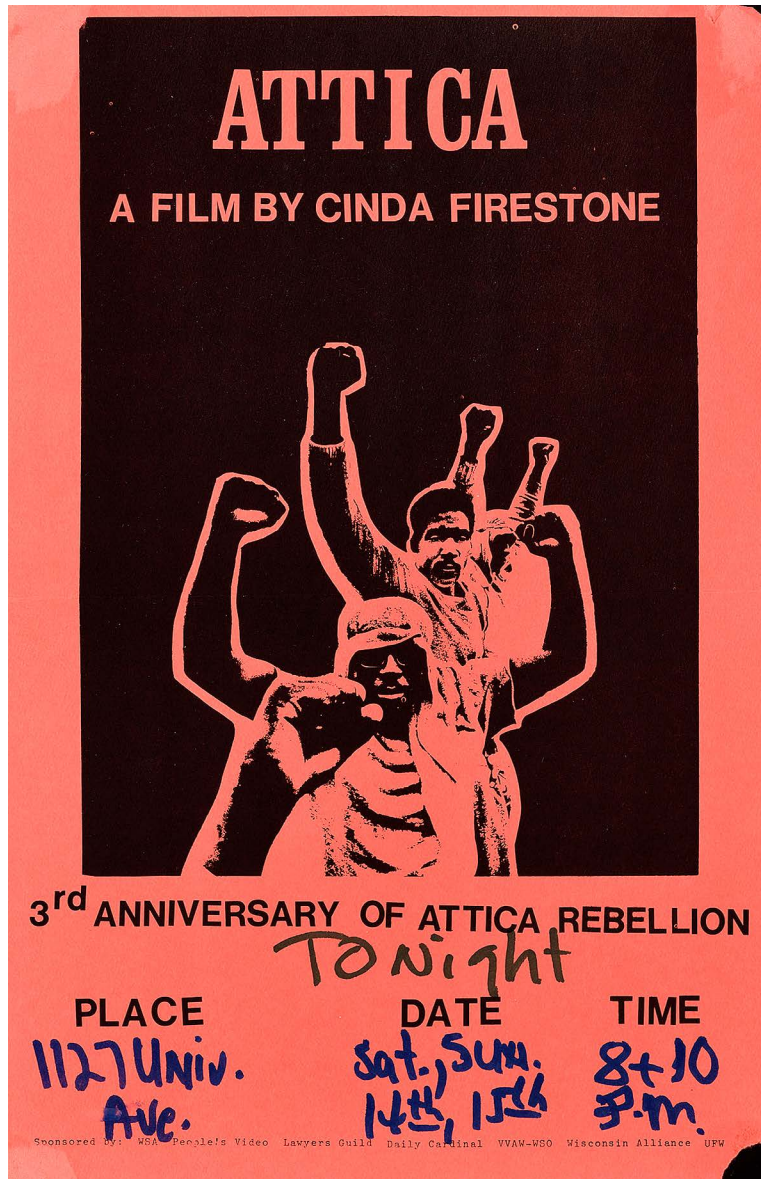


### Attica, 1974

Ernest Pignon-Ernest (b. 1942)

*Poster House Permanent Collection*

- Artist Ernest Pignon-Ernest was inspired by the famous Mai '68 silkscreen street posters made by student protestors in France. The widespread strikes and demonstrations of May and June 1968 were among the most important civilian uprisings of the decade, and the movement's posters were frequently referenced by social-justice movements around the world.
- Cinda Firestone, an heir to the Firestone Tire & Rubber Company fortune, directed this powerful 1974 documentary when she was just 23, presenting a narrative that was sympathetic to the incarcerated men. The film was so controversial that her family reportedly disinherited her.
- *Attica* incorporates documentary footage of the occupation and the subsequent violent raid, as well as video from the McKay Commission hearings that criticized New York State prison authorities and Governor Nelson Rockefeller for their handling of the incident. It also includes interviews with prisoners who had been released in the years after the uprising.



## Attica, 1974

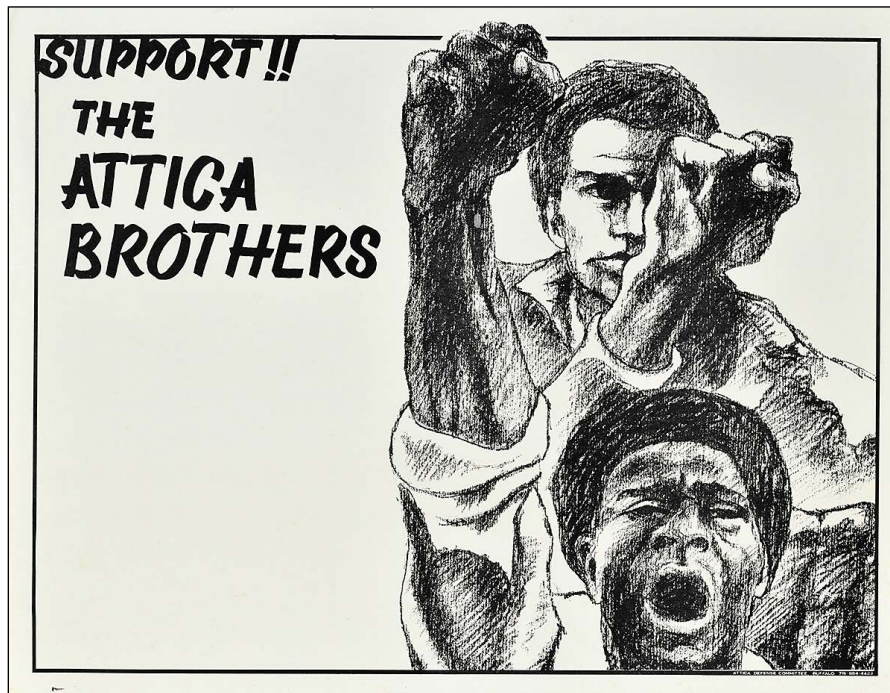
Designer Unknown

*Poster House Permanent Collection*

- In 2007, during a Tribeca Film Festival Q and A, Firestone lamented that while prison uprisings had become more rare, when it came to civil liberties and racism within the prison system, she believed that “things have gotten worse” since the release of her film.
- The posters for this 80-minute documentary call attention to the third anniversary of the uprising, confirming that the tragedy was still very fresh in the minds of the American public.
- These posters were in heavy circulation on campuses like that of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, which had established itself at the forefront of countercultural protest during the Vietnam War. This long history of fiery clashes between students and police resulted in its own documentary, *The War at Home*, released in 1979.



*Inmates at the Attica State Correctional Facility, 1971*



### **Support the Attica Brothers, c. 1972**

Designer Unknown


*Poster House Permanent Collection*

- “Attica Brothers” quickly became shorthand for the multiracial coalition of incarcerated men who had led the prison uprising and who had paid a physical and legal price for their transgressions.
- “Support the Attica Brothers” was a phrase—almost a mantra—that appeared repeatedly in publications and on a range of commemorative objects in the aftermath of the attack. It served to reaffirm the unity and camaraderie of the prisoners who had briefly taken control of the prison yard and the sympathetic solidarity of many outside observers.
- This vivid illustration, published by the Attica Defense Committee in Buffalo, New York, centers on a well-known press photograph of inmates giving the Black Power salute in the yard during the negotiations on September 10, 1971. The image of a raised fist has since become synonymous with antiestablishment and Black liberation movements.

**FREE THE INDICTED ATTICA INMATES!**  
**SUPPORT THE Brothers' Demands**  
 1. Drop the Charges.  
 2. Indict the Real Criminals.  
 3. Implement the 28 Demands.

SUNDAY DEC. 2 FREE FILM  
 GREAT HALL MEM. UNION 7 & 9 pm

**Long Live**  
**the**  
**Spirit of**  
**Attica**



**ATTICA**  
**MEANS**  
**FIGHT**  
**BACK!**

FUND RAISING DINNER MONDAY DEC. 3  
 NOTTINGHAM COOP 7:30pm \$2  
 TUESDAY DECEMBER 4 8pm.  
 TWO INDICTED ATTICA INMATES  
 SPEAKING  
 3650 HUMANITIES  
 donation appreciated  
 sponsored by the open centers comm.

4-11-73

## Long Live the Spirit of Attica, 1973

Designer Unknown


*Poster House Permanent Collection*

- This poster advertises a three-day event in support of the Attica Brothers, held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and a nearby housing cooperative. Two film screenings were followed by an evening fundraiser, culminating in a talk given by two former Attica prisoners.
- These types of local events happened frequently on college campuses across the country during the 1970s, and further exemplify how the Attica uprising became synonymous with antiestablishment movements.
- The rhetoric of those supporting the Attica inmates consistently included calls for the arrest of the “real criminals.” In some cases, this referred to the police who had raided the facility; some supporters went so far as to demand the arrest of Governor Nelson Rockefeller himself.
- Like the poster for a screening of the documentary at the same school the following year, this image incorporates a photograph by Bob Schutz taken on September 10, 1971, of incarcerated men raising their fists in solidarity in the yard during the negotiations with Russell Oswald, the state’s commissioner of corrections.

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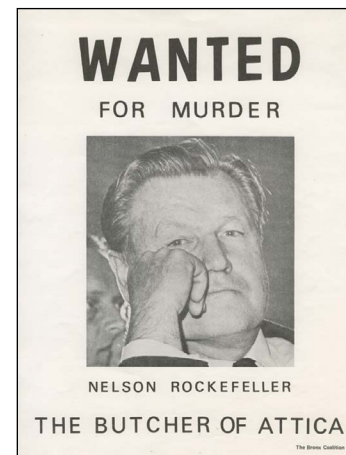


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- The "28 Demands" refers to the official list provided by the Attica Prison Liberation Faction. It was inspired by a similar manifesto produced by men incarcerated at Folsom State Prison in Sacramento, California the previous year. That manifesto, conceived during a 19-day strike by more than two thousand prison workers, also cited poor living conditions, the need for proper medical care, and abuse by guards. However, unlike the one at Attica, that standoff with prison authorities ended peacefully (although none of the prisoners' requests were met).



*Wanted for Murder/The Butcher of Attica, 1971*



# CHALLENGE

The Revolutionary Communist Newspaper

PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

## BACK ATTICA REBELS! DUMP RACIST "EXPERTS"

DENOTES NICK-NAME ATTICA "THE ICEBOX" after a solitary cell with no roof. They work for 30 or 40¢ a day. The warden uses 19 prisoners for servants. No medical care. Furlough arbitrarily denied. Constant beatings by guards.

"They treat us like animals," an inmate said. "Instead of asking you to move or get ready, they rap their clubs on the walls or the bars just like Pavlov and his dogs."

(*Buffalo Evening News*)

On Sept. 9, 1400 prisoners seized control. Holding 38 guard/tormentors hostage, they demanded an end to many abuses. At first they relied on big-name liberal "radicals" to negotiate. But they soon realized that these guys were just trying to smooth things over and get the rebels to drop their demands.



Heroic Attica Rebels Seize Prison \* Their Militancy Shows Way for all Working People!

Seale's reception was curiously muted; the Panther chief rapped unrespectfully... for a scant five minutes before announcing abruptly that he had to consult further with Panther party leader Huey Newton before commenting on the 26 points. As Seale left, other committee members got up to go with him. "What's this mean?" rapped a rebel leader. "You're gonna drop a piece of paper on us and walk out?"... "The mood said stay, so we stayed," [negotiator] Gatter recalls dryly. Clarence Jones stood up and read aloud the 26 revolutionary concessions by Oswald - only to be met with an angry roar when he fell silent without mentioning [firing vicious racist superintendents] Warden or warden... Kurstler tried his hand. "I'm speaking to you now as a lawyer," he said, "and that may destroy my credibility with you, but as a lawyer I can tell you this is the best we can do for you at this time." Brother Richard rose, and with the inmates crying "Do it, do it," he ripped the list of 26 concessions in half. (*Newsweek*, Sept. 27, 1971, p. 37.)

THAT THE BUSINESSMEN WHO RUN THIS COUNTRY ordered the murder of at least 29 prisoners is no "tragic mistake." People all over the world are fighting back against the U.S. big business ruling class which gets rich off imperialist wars, by throwing millions out of work, freezing workers' wages into their own pockets and all the rest. The bosses were terrified that the Attica rebellion would inspire millions to fight back to the end and crush these parasite-billionaires and their stooges.

FIGHT RACIST IDEOLOGY

WE SAY - WORKERS IN & OUT OF JAIL get shafted so that the real criminals can rake it in. The billionaires want to divide workers with racism to prevent lessons like Attica from spreading. So they see to it that the papers (which are owned by their banks) push racist poison-lies about Attica:

LIE #1: Attica was a race-war by blacks vs. all whites. IN FACT black, white, and latin fought bosses and torturer/guards of all nationalities. (Even negotiator Tom Wicker noted "the racial hatred that prevailed among the prisoners - it was absolutely astonishing." (*Newsweek*))

LIE #2: The prisoners were a nameless mob. The papers wept for the nine thus/guards who died, but didn't even print a list of murdered prisoners for four days. "Who cares about these animals?" is the idea. "They're unimportant." Aside from the fact that ferocious unemployment drives many working people to petty crime - aside from that, many of the prisoners were up for political "crimes:" frame-ups (very common) or failure-to-raise-hill-jailings (even more common - especially for blacks). Their relatives staged an unreported demonstration which was joined by Students for a Democratic Society and FLP.

LIE #3: Prisoners slashed guards' throats and emasculated two. The coroner's report shows that all guards died of gunshot wounds and no other wounds were present. The rebels would have been justified in killing these torturer/guards - but the FACT is the troopers did it. So much for the butchers' claims of "an efficient affirmative police action." Besides massive gun-fire, there were at least 200 beatings right afterwards - as reported by a doctor in *Newsweek*. At least one leader was killed afterwards, probably many more.

FIGHT RACIST TEACHERS & TEXTS

BY CONTROLLING BOARDS OF TRUSTEES, the big bankers and industrialists control colleges. They use their power to make sure that anti-worker, racist crap gets

- OVER -

### Challenge/Back Attica Rebels!, 1971

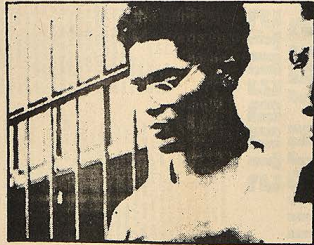
Designer Unknown

Poster House Permanent Collection

- *Challenge*, a U.K. publication that describes itself as "The Revolutionary Communist Newspaper," fully embraced the cause of the Attica inmates and sought to debunk some of the negative perceptions of them perpetuated in the mainstream press. This newspaper has been in circulation since 1935, and had about seventeen thousand subscribers at the time this issue was published.
- The article captures the tepid response Bobby Seale, the celebrated Black Panther, received when he visited the incarcerated men during the uprising, noting that he not only failed to provide counsel on how to resolve the conflict but that he also left stating that he needed to consult with Panther leadership before he could commit to anything.
- The text also lists a series of lies circulating about the standoff, including the claims that the inmates were attempting to launch a "race war" (when, in fact, the uprising included Black, white, and Latinx men), and that they had mutilated and castrated guards at the facility—also a fabrication.

**Support the Brothers' Demands.**

- 1. Drop the Charges.**
- 2. Indict the real criminals.**
- 3. Implement the 28 demands.**



The entire incident that has erupted here at Attica is a result . . . of the unmitigated oppression wrought by the racist administration network of this prison.

We are men. We are not beasts, and we do not intend to be beaten or driven as such . . . What has happened here is but the sound before the fury of those who are oppressed. We will not compromise on any terms except those that are agreeable to us.

We call upon all the conscientious citizens of America to assist us in putting an end to this situation that threatens the life of not only us but of each and every person in the United States as well.

—L.D. (James Elliott Barkley)

**Long Live the Spirit of Attica.**

**ATTICA MEANS FIGHT BACK!**

**-attica brigade-**


**Support the Brothers' Demands, 1971**

Designer Unknown

*Poster House Permanent Collection*

- There were intense talks during the four days following the initial revolt, and there was even a brief moment when it appeared that the authorities and the incarcerated men of Attica might reach some common ground. The demands of the prisoners, however, were ultimately uniformly rejected when Governor Nelson Rockefeller and Commissioner of Corrections Russell Oswald concluded that the situation could not be resolved through negotiation.
- The Attica Brigade, founded in the early 1970s and referenced here, was the name of a self-identified group of anti-imperialist students who showed their solidarity with the Attica prisoners' cause by borrowing the institution's name. In June 1974, they changed the organization's name to the Revolutionary Student Brigade, and by 1975 it had been absorbed into the Communist Party.
- Among the Brothers' 28 Demands were those calling for the end of the racial segregation of prisoners, the right of prison workers to unionize, and for the prosecution of guards who resorted to cruel and unusual punishment.
- The central image in this poster is a photograph, taken during the negotiations, of Elliott James "L.D." Barkley, a 21-year-old leader in the uprising chosen by fellow inmates to represent the interests of those in A Block. A talented orator, he spoke to the press on the evening of September 9—part of that speech is reproduced here below his image. He was among those who were killed during the subsequent raid.

**SUPPORT THE ATTICA BROTHERS**



MONDAY FEB. 25 + TUESDAY FEB. 26

10:00 am. + 2:00 pm

AT ERIE COUNTY COURT BUILDING

*RALLY! 1pm  
Niagara Sq.*

Trial dates will be set for the 60 brothers indicted of charges stemming from the Attica prison uprising of September, 1971.

**The state must know the people are supporting the Attica Brothers.**

**Be there to help picket + show our solidarity with the brothers.**

For more information or a ride to court  
contact - ATTICA BROTHERS' LEGAL DEFENSE  
1370 Main Street  
ph 884-4423

*Buffalo 1974*

## Support the Attica Brothers, 1974

Designer Unknown

*Poster House Permanent Collection*

- This handbill features the image from the earlier poster and calls on people to rally at Niagara Square in Buffalo, New York in support of the Attica Brothers.
- The fact that this was produced a full three years after the uprising suggests that the issues that had originally sparked it remained significant and problematic.
- More than 2,000 people reportedly turned up for this event and raised a total of \$1,100 for the defense of the Attica prisoners, some of whom had been relocated to the Erie County Jail in downtown Buffalo.
- The Attica Brothers Legal Defense Fund (ABLD) was formed in December 1972, when survivors of the Attica prison raid began to be indicted in connection with the incident and needed legal representation. The ABLD not only raised money for the prisoners but also helped educate the public about their plight and investigated the alleged atrocities that took place at the penitentiary.
- Haywood Burns, a coordinator for the ABLD, called for the indictment of Governor Nelson Rockefeller and Russell Oswald, New York Commissioner of Corrections, for the deaths of prisoners killed in the Attica raid.

# REMEMBER ATTICA!

wed. Sept. 13<sup>th</sup> 6:00 P.M.  
Humboldt Park

On September 13, 1971, 43 men - 32 prisoners and 11 employees - lost their lives in the recapture of D block yard at Attica State Prison. Why did these men die?

The underlying reason for the deaths was the total failure of the prison system to rehabilitate, to educate and to train the prisoners for useful lives in society. And when the prisoners seized hostages and made 28 demands - demands which were recognized by Commissioner Oswald, the state responded with an assault which resulted in 43 dead and hundreds wounded.

On August 26, 1972, at Attica, a monument was erected with prison labor to the 11 employees who lost their lives last September. Nothing was said about the prisoners who were killed.

We believe that all the murdered men deserve to be remembered. We further believe that unless prisons are reformed and just demands are met - like the 28 demands for which these men died - more Atticas will happen in the future.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS: SEPT 13, 1972  
6.00 p.m. Mass Memorial Rally.  
Speakers include William Kunstler,  
Arthur Eve, Attica Brother Joe Little  
8.00 p.m. Memorial Procession from  
Humboldt Pk. to Shaw Church on Porter  
10.00 p.m. Memorial Service

11.00 a.m. At Attica,  
Memorial Service and the  
erection of a monument to  
the slain prisoners. For  
free transportation call  
884-2863.

Sponsored by: Peoples Coalition Against Repression. Sponsors include Angela Davis Anti-Repression Comm., Attica Defense Comm., Attica Observers Comm., Buffalo Rights Action Group, BUILD, Harriet Tubman Prison Movement, Martin Sostre Defense Comm., Medical Comm. for Human Rights, NAACP, PODER, 3rd World Veterans Alliance, 3rd World Students Alliance, Vietnam Vets Against the War, Black Liberation Front of Buff. State.

Buffalo 1972

## Remember Attica!, 1972

Designer Unknown

*Poster House Permanent Collection*

- This handbill announces a memorial service for all the victims of the Attica uprising, including both law-enforcement officers and prisoners. Starting at Humboldt Park in Buffalo, New York—just 30 miles from the prison—the event was to culminate in the erection of a monument at the site of the tragedy.
- Earlier on the same day of this memorial, a separate service had been held during which a monument was unveiled specifically to honor the 11 officers killed during the Attica raid. The pro-prisoners groups also participated peacefully in this service, although they expressed some bitterness about the failure to pay tribute to all the victims.
- “I don’t like the idea that [the employees’ families] are allowed to honor their dead and we can’t honor ours,” stated Betty Barkley, sister of Elliott James “L.D.” Barkley, one of the slain leaders of the rebellion, in the *New York Times*. “They were all killed by the same hand and under the same circumstances.”
- The organizers of this Remember Attica event all represented social-justice advocacy groups. They left a wooden model of the memorial that they had hoped to erect outside the prison alongside a flower arrangement donated by John Lennon and Yoko Ono.

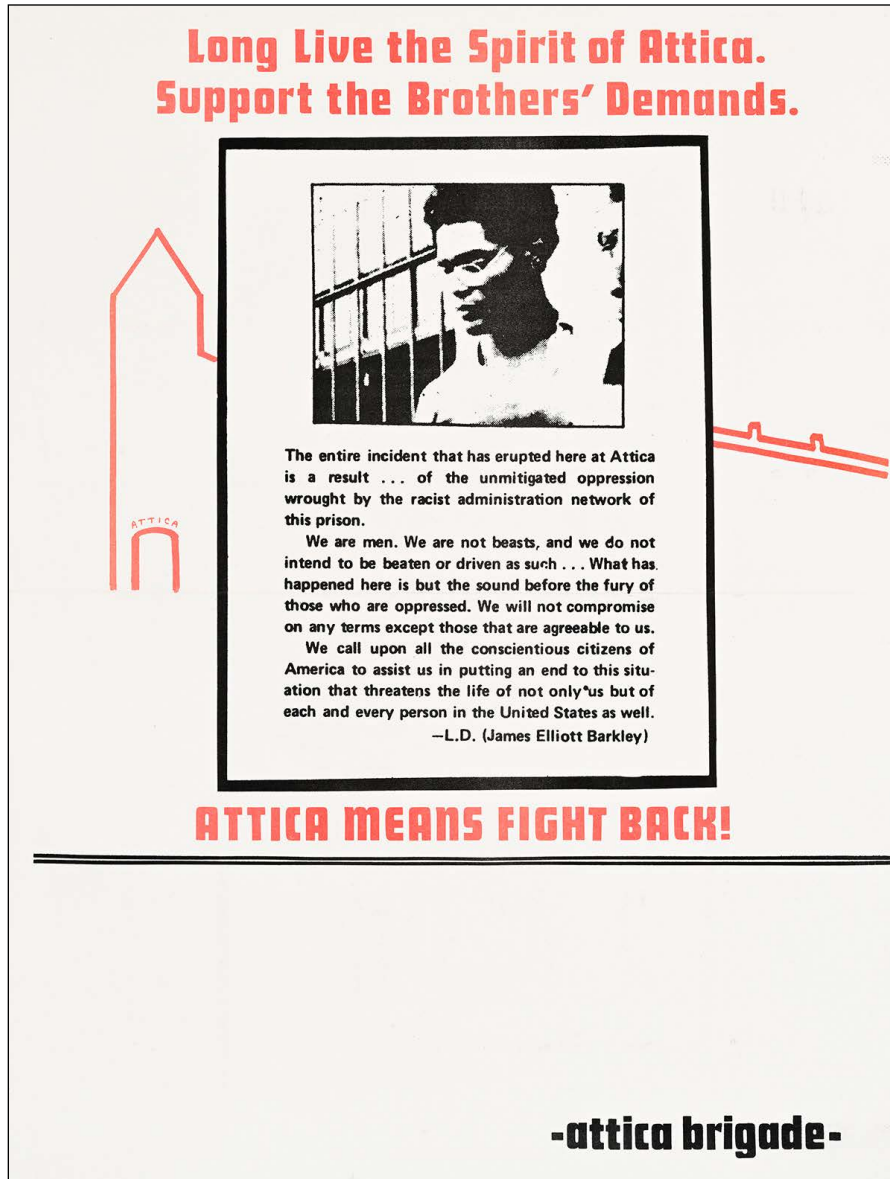


## Stop Rockefeller! The Rich Get Richer, 1970

Peg Averill (1949–93)

*Poster House Permanent Collection*

- Governor Nelson Rockefeller had unsuccessfully run for the presidency in both 1964 and 1968 and clearly still had grand political ambitions. The national scrutiny given to the events at Attica further raised his public profile.
- The governor’s name was inextricably linked with the legacy of one of America’s richest industrial, banking, and political families. This poster reminds viewers of his wealth and his connections to corporate entities like Exxon.
- In the immediate aftermath of the Attica raid, Rockefeller boasted to President Nixon that “they did a fabulous job, it was a beautiful operation.”
- His successor, Governor Hugh L. Carey, pardoned seven men formerly incarcerated at Attica and commuted the sentences of an additional prisoner in 1976. He did not, however, take any disciplinary action against the 20 state troopers and guards responsible for the raid.

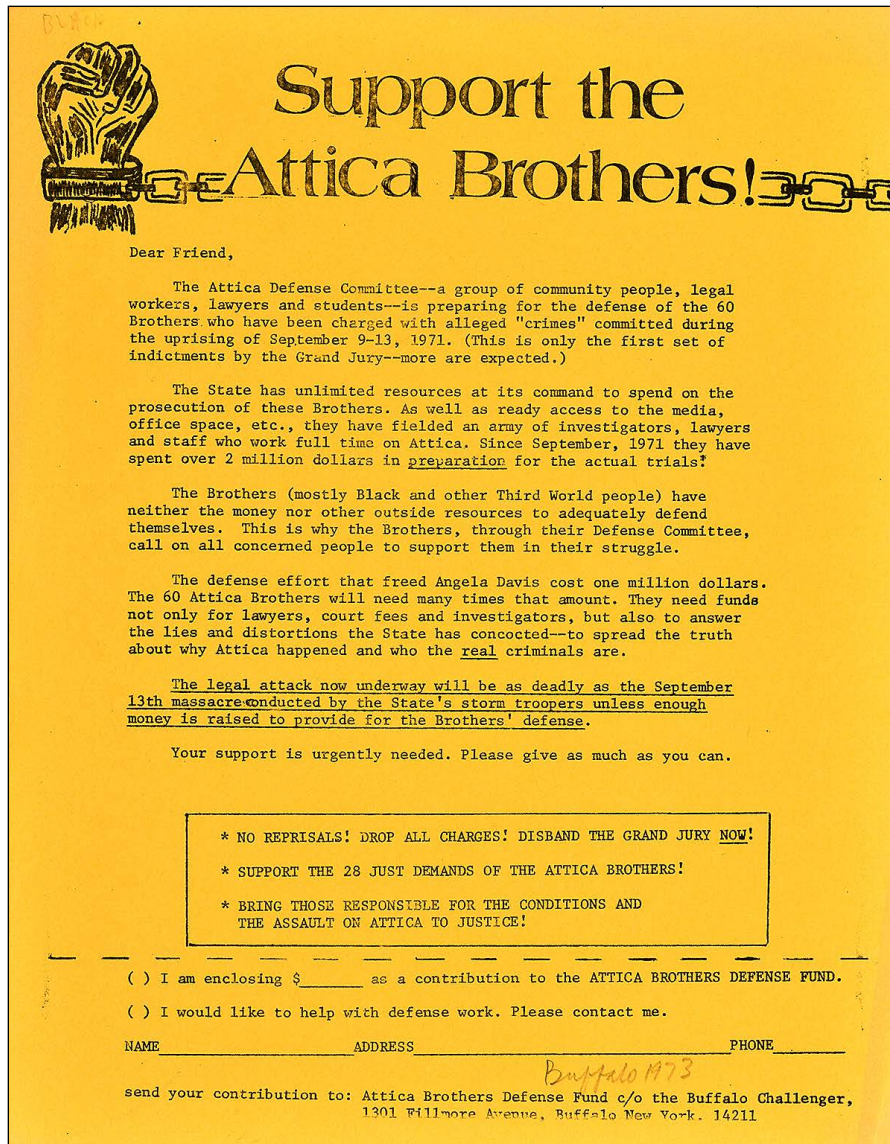


## Long Live the Spirit of Attica, c. 1972

Designer Unknown

*Poster House Permanent Collection*

- This poster features the same press photograph of Elliott James “L.D.” Barkley accompanied by a lengthy quote as the earlier poster with the slogan “Support the Brothers’ Demands.” Here, however, the designer has added a rough outline of the facade of the Attica Correctional Facility. While the order of the headline text is different, the style of the lettering in these two posters is identical, indicating that they were most likely printed in the same facility or were at least based on the same source material.
- Known for his intellectual charisma and murdered during the siege, Barkley became a martyr for activists and advocates of social justice. His words would be used countless times to invoke solidarity.
- After his body was released to his family, his funeral was held at AMEZ (the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church), a 142-year-old institution in Western New York that had historic ties to Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass.
- Barkley’s original crime was cashing a forged money order for \$124.60 when he was 18. Released from Elmira Reformatory four years later, he was then arrested for violating his parole by driving without a license. This infraction resulted in him being sent to Attica, a maximum-security prison.

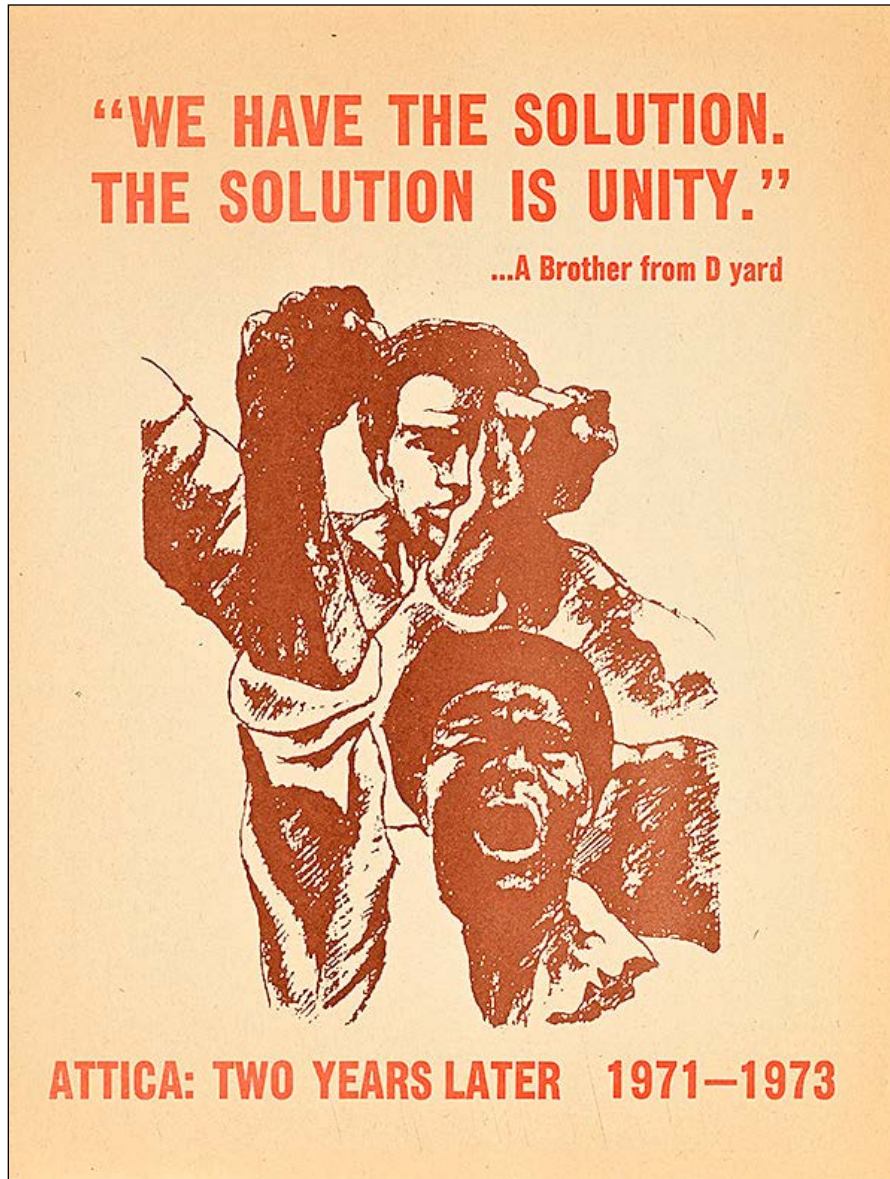


## Support the Attica Brothers!, 1973

Designer Unknown

Poster House Permanent Collection

- Born out of the civil rights movement, the *Buffalo Challenger* was the most widely circulated Black newspaper in New York State. As a voice and advocate for the upstate Black community, it was also the natural home for the Attica Brothers Legal Defense Fund advertised in this poster.
- This fundraising plea came two years after the Attica uprising and was intended to support the defense of the 62 prisoners (60 of them had been charged at the time this poster was made) charged in connection with the incident. To stress the urgent need for donations, the handbill notes that the government had already spent more than \$2 million in "preparation" for the trials.
- The text references Angela Davis, a Black philosophy professor who had become a cause célèbre when she was targeted for criminal prosecution for supplying the guns used in a 1970 shootout at Soledad State Prison in Monterey County, California between inmates and police. Davis was briefly on the FBI's Most Wanted List, but she was eventually acquitted by an all-white jury in 1973.



### **Attica: Two Years Later, 1973**


Designer Unknown

*Poster House Permanent Collection*

- The cover of this four-panel brochure recycles an illustration used in posters and handbills as early as 1972, based on a detail of a photograph taken during the standoff. While the men have never been identified, the image remains a poignant emblem of defiance against the state.
- While some prisoners, like Elliott James “L.D.” Barkley, became spokesmen for the inmates, others were anonymously memorialized in quotes. Here, the words (captured by a *New York Times* reporter) of an unidentified Attica Brother from D Yard headline the poster.
- D Yard was one of four fields at the penitentiary designated for exercise. During the Attica uprising, it was seized by prisoners and occupied by more than 1,000 men who held 42 prison staff hostage.
- Printed by the National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression (NAARPR) and the Attica Defense Committee (ADC), this publication announces a petition drive and fundraising campaign for the defense of the indicted prisoners.
- The NAARPR was founded in 1973 with regional chapters dedicated to fighting “unjust treatment” of people on the basis of their race or political beliefs. The ADC was formed in 1972 to raise funds and provide legal services in cases involving prison conditions.



## WATCH WHAT HE DOES NOT WHAT HE SAYS!



We've come here today to hear President Hester speak. Hester is notorious for his superior lack of "sincerity" and "honesty" in the high offices on Wall Street and in Washington. In fact, powerful public figures everywhere have been criticizing Hester for his hypocrite about how their hands are clean of dirt.

For a long time now, Hester has been lying through his teeth. His closest friends are the rich who sit on NYU's Board of Trustees, and below his wide shoulders they look down at the profit-hungry class they really are.

**HESTER: HERO OF THE AFRICAN PEOPLE!**

Hester is the most dishonest criminal of all is President Hester. For more than 10 years, Hester has sat on the Board of Directors of Union Carbide Corporation. His chemical monopoly has been instrumental in the repression of the Black African people of South Africa and Rhodesia. Hester's same mistakes can't dissolve the plight of the workers at Carbide chrome mines in Africa. Africans make 25¢ an hour, and any African who lives in overcrowded shacks. Hester's workers, the fascist state regimes, their union organizers and any who speak out in prison camps without trial.

Ask Hester about the honesty behind his operations million dollar lobby to block the U.S. Congress to pass a U.S. resolution and continue to support the illegal drive. The Rhodesian government alone spent 9 million dollars to get the bill passed.

Or ask Hester about the rapists and misuses the white settlers buy with Carbide money in their terror campaigns against the African people.

**AFRICAN PEOPLE DON'T DENY HESTER'S LIES**

But the slavery of the African people is coming to an end as wins of national liberation sweep the colonial governments out of power, the countries of Namibia, Angola, and Mozambique are celebrating their victories against Portugal, South Africa, Rhodesia and U.S. imperialism.

**HESTER: OUR ENEMY TOO**

The same Hester who oppresses the people of Southern Africa is the one who has against us here in America. Union Carbide runs thousands of Africans out of their chrome refineries run off to Africa where white regimes keep labor cheap and the oppressed. Cited by Ralph Nader, this corporation fouls our air as it blatantly refuses to comply with pollution control standards. The university he directs most frequently sends rid of courses that attack the system, and discriminates against female, black, Puerto Rican, and Asian employees.

The Revolutionary Student Brigade is a nationwide anti-imperialist student organization. We are united in supporting the struggles of people around the world for national liberation, and in fighting as long as we can against all oppression. We realize that to do this the system of imperialism must go. Here at NYU, students have joined with us in the campaign to throw Hester and his cronies out, to support the Pan-Africanist struggle, and to close the careers of recruiters for corporations like Union Carbide. Join with us this year in the struggle to support the African people fighters and against plus like Hester and his corporate cronies.

### Revolutionary Student Brigade

(FORMERLY ATTICA BRIGADE)

CONTACT US: Fred and Gary, Box 91, Cal 787-2122

## HESTER: DEFEND YOURSELF! WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO HIDE?

For ten years, NYU President James "Diamond Jim" Hester has been one of the who direct the billion-dollar Union Carbide Corporation. Union Carbide is one of the major forces behind the illegal white-settler regimes in southern Africa of Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South Africa.

Hester claims that the Black African majority "appreciates" his corporation's mines and refineries in their countries. He is so sure that students believe him that he is having the university charge 3 students who questioned him at his freshmen convocation speech. During that speech Hester talked about upholding high standards of morality and honor.

**WHAT ARE THE FACTS?**



Union Carbide's search for profit makes for these conditions in Zimbabwe (Rhodesia):

- \*The average wage of African miners is 25¢ an hour. White European miners make 15 times that amount.
- \*Strikes are against the law and union organizers are jailed and tortured.
- \*Only 1 out of 4 African children are allowed to go to secondary school. The rest are forced to work in foreman-owned factories or mines under deplorable conditions. Every white child is guaranteed a secondary education and access to college.
- \*Those who don't produce wealth for the whites in industry, are out an existence on the worst land in the country. The best half of the land is reserved by law for the white settlers, who make up less than 5% of the entire population.
- \*The white regime of Ian Smith bans all opposition parties and holds more than 30,000 political prisoners in jails and concentration camps that the UN has condemned as brutal and immoral. (Source: United Nations Publications About Southern Rhodesia, 1965-69; Union Carbide in Southern Africa; Report issued by Union Carbide Corporation, June 30, 1973.)

**UNION CARBIDE PROFITS FROM THESE ATROCITIES**

The UN, responding to world outrage, prohibited all trade with Rhodesia in 1968. The UN voted for this embargo. The Board of Directors of Union Carbide promptly moved to protect their profits:

- Former President of Union Carbide, Kenneth Rush, as Deputy Secretary of State, in 1971, initiated a bill in Congress that would allow Union Carbide to import chrome ore from Rhodesia.
- The corporation has its own personal law firm, draft the bill for the racist Virginia Senator Harry Byrd.
- Along with \$9 million from the Ian Smith government, Union Carbide spends millions more to get the bill passed in Congress. Since then, Hester and the other directors have made millions off the chrome imports which the UN still views as illegal.
- Also along then, Union Carbide has laid off 1,000 workers in Ohio and South Carolina as it moves its refineries to South Africa where white are out-

## Watch What He Does, Not What He Says!, c. 1974

## Hester: Defend Yourself! What Have You Got to Hide?, c. 1974

Designer Unknown  
*Poster House Permanent Collection*

- These broadsides were published by the Revolutionary Student Brigade, a national alliance of Marxist-Leninist students that had developed out of the former Attica Brigade.
- The publications attack James Hester, the president of New York University, for his presumed corruption and hypocrisy—specifically, his alleged ties to the Apartheid-era government in South Africa through business dealings with the Union Carbide Corporation, a major American chemical manufacturer, and his role on its board of directors.
- The consumer advocate Ralph Nader, mentioned in the text, was enlisted for this cause after publicizing Hester's links to Union Carbide, an infamous polluter, a position he claimed was "seriously compromising, if not disgracing" the legacy of NYU.
- Student activists were emboldened during this period, especially after events like Attica. They took inspiration from the prisoners' fearless spirit and continued to challenge authority figures on the right, and, in Hester's case, on the left, too.

**Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, Attica, Amchitka, Jackson, Kent, Mylai, Orangeburg, atom bombs, imperialism, Augusta, botulism, Bay of Pigs, wage freeze, insecticides, paranoia, TV dinners, Dow Jones, Hiroshima, New York City, sodomy laws, Dow Chemical. CIA, FBI, NBC, DDT, ABM, IBM, AMA, TWA, KKK, FDS, IRS, SST, JDL, AT&T, ROTC, NATO, SEATO, Reader's Digest, thalidomide, Wall Street, Fort Knox, credit cards, cat calls, Cadillacs, Barbie dolls. Neon signs, freeways, tollways, tenements, Apollo 1 2 3 4 5..., Hollywood, Wounded Knee, organized crime, cockroaches, Brooks Brothers, subways, noise, blue laws, blackouts, bosses, high school, concrete. Commercials, Chase Manhattan, racism, used car lots, nicotine, pimps, ulcers, pesticides, pay toilets, television, M-16s, cyclamates, wire-tapping, Jim Crow, J. Edgar Hoover, The Lone Ranger, Billy Graham, Texas Rangers, strip mining, napalm, Nagasaki, tracking, black lung, skid row, death row, Disneyland, anti-abortion laws, Sand Creek, electric chairs. Republicans, Democrats, overkill, oil spills, prisons, wardens, pushers, scabs, Lake Erie, landlords, law and order, muggings, quack abortionists. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, traffic, inflation, depression, defoliation, forced sterilization, billboards, barrios, ghettos, S&H green stamps, taxes, Madison Avenue, rats.**



**There are lots of good reasons to oppose capitalism. There are even more reasons to join the YSA.**

The YSA is actively building the antiwar movement, the women's liberation movement, and the struggles of Black and Brown people for liberation. The YSA offers a revolutionary perspective to young people all across the country. The YSA is for activists.

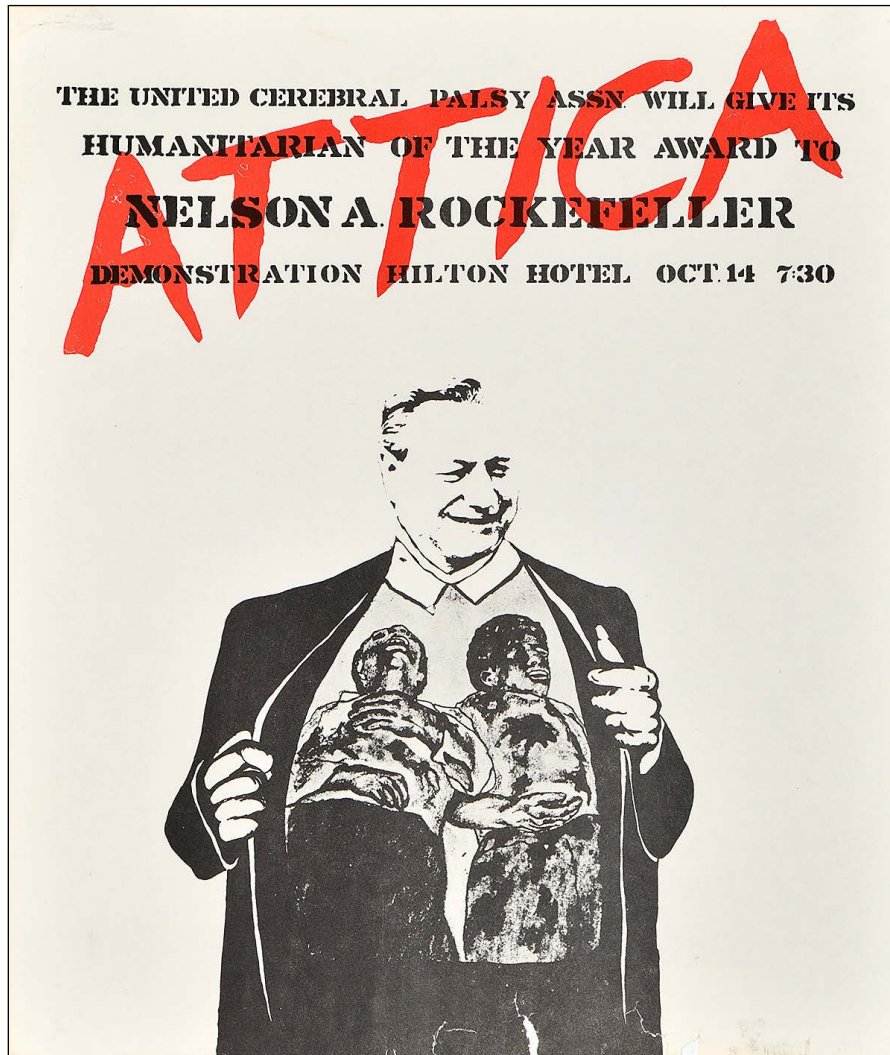
Distributed by Young Socialist Alliance  
P.O. Box 471, Cooper Station, N.Y., N. Y. 10003

## Join the YSA, c. 1973

Designer Unknown

*Poster House Permanent Collection*

- In operation from 1960 to 1992, the Young Socialist Alliance was a Trotskyite faction of the Socialist Workers Party based in the United States.
- This poster links the Attica uprising with a list of other international events that the radical left (and many other groups) viewed as atrocities or injustices, including the Bay of Pigs disaster, the My Lai massacre, the Wounded Knee Occupation, and anti-abortion laws.
- At the time, socialist groups widely condemned the Attica raid as an act of fascist aggression and expressed solidarity with the prisoners, whom they believed were trying to establish a society within the prison walls that reflected socialist principles.

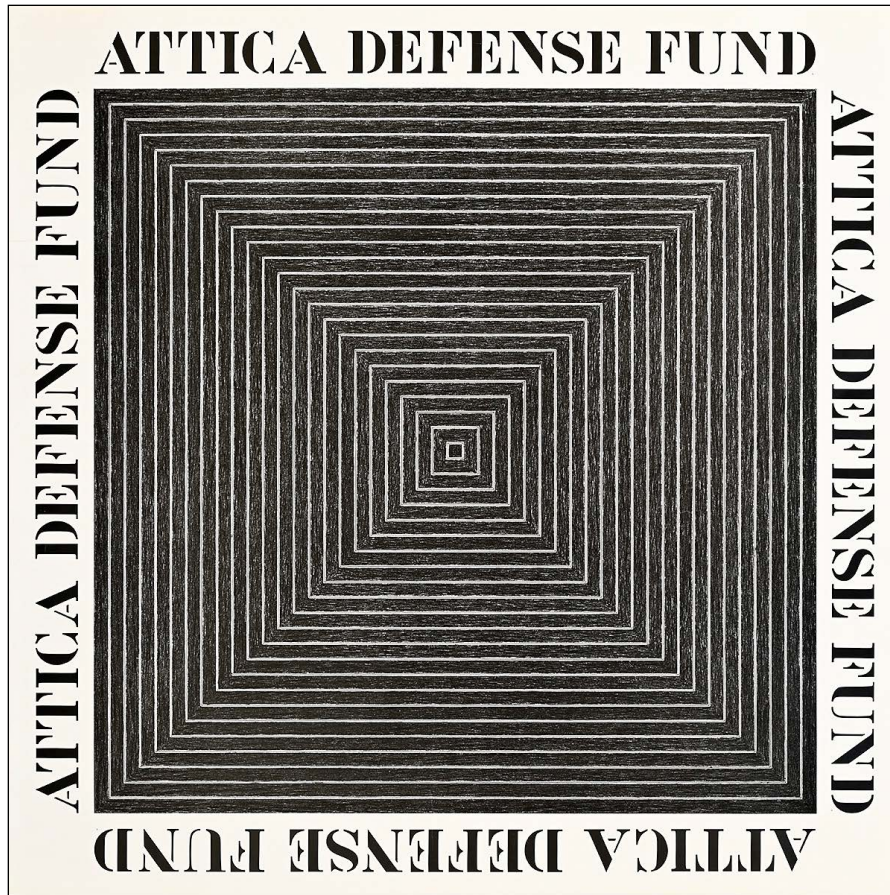


## Attica, 1971

Designer Unknown

*Poster House Permanent Collection*

- For allies of the Attica prisoners, Governor Rockefeller became the chief antagonist and archvillain of the tragedy since he had ordered the raid that had ended peaceful negotiations and resulted in the deaths of many inmates.
- Ironically, up until the raid, Rockefeller was reputed to be a moderate, even liberal politician with a good record on civil rights. Still, controversial police methods like “no-knock warrants” and “stop and frisk” began during his tenure.
- The poster represents a brutal takedown of Rockefeller, depicting him preening for the cameras with images of dead Attica inmates on his shirt. The text under the scrawled word “Attica” announces that he was due to receive a humanitarian award from a charitable organization a few months after the events at the prison.
- In a recorded conversation made public in 2011, Rockefeller told President Richard Nixon that “you can’t have sharpshooters picking off the prisoners when the hostages are there with them, at a distance with tear gas, without maybe having a few accidents.” He further commented on the death of the inmates that resulted from the raid he had ordered, “that’s life.”



### **Attica Defense Fund, 1975**

Frank Stella (1936–2024)

*Poster House Permanent Collection*

- Legendary artist Frank Stella produced this poster for the Attica Legal Defense Fund to raise both money and awareness for the cause. The composition references the myriad black-and-white, geometric paintings he produced in the 1960s and '70s, and also includes stencil-style lettering like that commonly seen on prison or military signage.
- Stella had a history of dedicating his artistic talent to political causes, most notably in his 1962 series commemorating the Sharpeville massacre of March 1960 in South Africa. White police officers representing the apartheid government opened fire on a large group of Black protesters, killing 69 people.
- Thousands of copies of this poster were wheatpasted throughout downtown New York City, while 50 were released in a signed and numbered edition to help raise funds.



## **Viva La Huelga!, c. 1973**

Designer Unknown

*Poster House Permanent Collection*

- The designer of this poster co-opted “Viva la huelga!” (Long live the strike!), the rallying cry of activists César Chávez and Dolores Huerta’s Chicano labor movement of the 1960s. Here, it is used as a call to join the strike against Farah Manufacturing Company, a garment producer in Texas and New Mexico that had blocked its largely Chicano employees’ efforts to unionize.
- While this strike had started in May 1972 at the Farah plant in San Antonio, Texas, support ultimately came from across the country through various grassroots groups, one of which was the Attica Brigade, a national student organization that aligned itself with anti-imperialist movements. The inclusion of its name in the poster demonstrates how the spirit of Attica was frequently summoned in the service of new causes.



- The Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America union supported the strikers. It even repurposed the same image of garment worker Rosa Flores (pictured here with her fist raised) to promote its own events.
- While the strikes lasted from 1972 to 1974, a drop in sales and bad publicity eventually led Farah to meet the protestors' demands. Texas Monthly later referred to the events as the "Strike of the Century."



Left: *Viva la huelga!*  
*Boycott Farah pants,*  
c. 1972, Farah Strike  
Support Committee

Right: *Viva la Huelga/*  
*Don't buy Farah pants!,*  
c. 1972, Philip and Jeff  
Foisie, Farah of Texas



# THE BUMS ARE ON THE RUN KICK 'EM WHILE THEY'RE DOWN!

BY THE REVOLUTIONARY STUDENT BRIGADE

On Friday, August 9th, Gerald Ford was sworn in as President of the United States modestly declaring "our national nightmare is over. The constitution works." Right after Ford's short inaugural speech you could see Chief Justice Burger hugging Senator Hugh Scott loudly proclaiming "It worked-- Thank God the system worked." By now those who had been watching the proceedings over the past few days had been barraged with a literal flood of such statements proclaiming the wondrous deeds of the "system", "congress", and the "constitution". This barrage was especially strong for those unfortunate enough to hear Howard K. Smith, of ABC News, follow Nixon's resignation speech with a solemn recital of the 25th amendment.

Yes, the monopoly rulers have been working overtime in the month of August launching a tremendous propaganda blitz with their television networks, radio stations, newspapers, magazines, and literally anything else they can get people to read, hear, or see. Time Magazine and Newsweek strike out the these in their "special issues" over and over again: "A triumph for the system." Newspaper editorials, columnists, and network newsmen applaud the "orderly transition of power" and make longing pleas for national unity and restraint. A front page column in a local Chicago paper raves about the "international acclaim" for American Justice and democracy as they quote words of praise from puppet state leaders throughout the world. And suddenly Gerald Ford, eight months ago a moderately known congressman, who was often referred to as a guy "who played too many football games without a helmet", becomes the toast of the ruling class. Now, it's "calm, simple, and honest Jerry", capable of making breakfast with a toaster, who will easily lead us out of corruption and ease the pain and strife of the past.

Along with these lavish words of praise for American justice and democracy come the countless number of theories on the motivations of the corruption of Richard Nixon. A Chicago local "talk show" had three different analysts put forward their views. One stated that the "old Nixon" of the 50's never really changed and that

he was always a "shifty-eyed lying crook". Another said he was a fine political statesman until 1972 and his landslide electoral victory when he got illusions that he could do anything he wanted. Finally, there was the view that he listened too much to his arrogant domestic advisors Haldeman, Ehrlichman, and Mitchell, and began to "lose touch" with the American people so that he made bad decisions concerning the American economy and other domestic issues.

### Blame Nixon?

The US ruling class is desperately trying to sum up the saga of Richard Nixon and Watergate. They know that the further exposure of their corrupt government has only added fuel to the fiery anger of the people over the general functioning and breakdowns of this system. They're going all out to sum up and analyze the resignation of Richard Nixon because they want to cover up what people are learning more and more-- that this monopoly capitalist system is rotten. This is their opportunity, they hope, to blame the growing ills of the society on the distracting issue of Watergate and the corrupt Richard Nixon. And to try to put over that the congress and American democracy won't stand for corruption and lies-- that it exorcises the corrupt ones. Now that he is gone, Time magazine tells us, we can all come together and "let the healing begin."

The Revolutionary Student Brigade agrees with some of what was said on that local TV show that analyzed Nixon. Nixon certainly was a "shifty-eyed lying crook" in the 50's as well as the 70's, he probably did have some illusions of power, and he certainly had no contact with the people. Even more than that, he was a mass murderer who launched wars of aggression abroad, attacked working people at home, and was a racist chauvinist dog as well. But this doesn't make him any different from the rest of his class-- the Rockefellers, Morgans, Duponts, Kennedys-- in short, the criminal monopoly rulers who run this country. For monopoly capitalists, regardless of who is President-- a Roosevelt, Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, or Ford-- always causes wars of aggression, crises of different proportions, mass exploitation,



On April 27th thousands of people in Washington D.C., Chicago, and Los Angeles marched to throw Nixon out of office. Above, demonstration in Chicago.

## The Bums Are on the Run, 1974

Designer Unknown

Poster House Permanent Collection

- This is a supplement printed in Chicago for *Fight Back!*, a monthly newspaper put out by the Revolutionary Student Brigade. Such publications were appearing in major cities across the country at this time, especially those with large student populations.
- This edition was printed soon after Gerald Ford assumed the presidency following Richard Nixon's resignation amid the Watergate scandal. Accompanied by an image of a protest against Nixon, the article conveys a certain skepticism about the positive press Ford received during this transition, scoffing at the refrain, often heard at the time: "the system worked!"
- While quoting a Nixon critic who refers to the former president as a "shifty-eyed lying crook," the writer accuses elite families like the Kennedys, the Duponts, and the Rockefellers of being part of a "criminal monopoly."





## Press Reviews

**HYPERALLERGIC**

**ALL★ARTS**

**POSTER**

**HOUSE**