

**Press Release:**

**“Understand that ... people are dying who could be saved, that generations more will die or live poor butchered half-lives if you fail to act.”**

George L. Jackson, former Black Panther activist (\* September 23, 1941 – † August 21, 1977)

**“From Dachau with Love”**

**The German “Network against the Death Penalty” and the “Coalition to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal” wish the Californian Governor Edmund “Jerry” Brown a pleasant and instructive sojourn in the Federal Republic of Germany, which as we have heard will include a visit to the memorial at the concentration camp of Dachau. We also ask him to learn from German history and to see to the imposition of humane prison conditions in California immediately upon his return to the United States.**

We welcome the Californian Governor Edmund “Jerry” Brown, his wife Anne Gust Brown and their entourage in our country. We very much welcome the fact that Governor Brown is interested in his German roots. We also very much welcome that he is not only interested in the German conditions in 1848 – the time when his grand-grandfather emigrated – but also in Germany’s more recent history. At any rate, that is what we conclude from his planned visit to the KZ Memorial Dachau.

But there is one thing we would welcome even more, namely, if his visit in Dachau would cause Governor Brown to ensure, immediately after his return to the U.S., decent present conditions in the prisons under his authority, to put an end to solitary confinement, to decree the immediate release of about 10,000 prisoners already ordered by the courts, to give the prisoners access to appropriate medical care, and to end enforced sterilization of female prisoners. And moreover, to take action to end the death penalty, to end life imprisonment, and to end the current wave of mass incarceration in the U.S.

More than 43 years ago, the imprisoned Black Panther activist George Jackson used to sign his letters from the Californian St. Quentin Prison with the words “from Dachau with love.” The concentration camp Dachau existed from March 22, 1933 until its liberation by U.S. troops on April 29, 1945. At first, it was exclusively used for political prisoners, which is one of the reasons for George Jackson’s allusion to this darkest chapter of German history. But most of all, he wanted to use this provocative salute to direct attention to the inhumane prison conditions he and thousands of other prisoners were subjected to.

Today, the prison conditions in California and the U.S. are far worse than even almost half a century ago! In California and nationwide, more than 80,000 prisoners are in prolonged or permanent solitary confinement, a condition which diverse UN human rights institutions say constitutes torture. For these reasons, at present about 30,000 prisoners in California prisons are on a hunger strike and refuse to work.

**For these very same reasons, California is now the scene of the largest prison revolt in the history of mankind.**

And Governor Brown is the man politically responsible for the root causes of this strike.

**We ask you, Governor Brown, to set an example. In their time, the U.S. Army consigned the inhumane prison conditions at Dachau to the trash heap of history. The same thing should happen now to the unbearable prison conditions in the prisons of the United States – and especially the prisons in the State of California, which you govern. Act! Put an end to these prison conditions!**

German Network against the Death Penalty & Coalition to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal \*

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