Prisoners revolt in N.Y.

(Guardian) — Prison rebellions broke out at four New York City jails last week as thousands of black, Puerto Rican and a few white inmates seized control of the jails, held hostages and radically challenged not only the prison system but the judicial system as well.

The uprising took on a sharply political character with hundreds of prisoners proclaiming their willingness "to die for justice" as revolutionaries. One demand was freedom on bail for Black Panther Afeni Shakur.

On October 1, as prisoners in the Long Island City Men's House of Detention in the Borough of Queens were eating lunch, fourth floor inmates seized six guards and a civilian cook as hostages.

They quickly took control of all six floors in the prison complex while prison guards evacuated the buildings.

The next day the rebellion spread to the Men's House of Detention in Manhattan, Known as the Tombs and to the Queens House of Detention in Kew Gardens.

By October 3, more than 1,000 prisoners in the Brooklyn House of Detention also revolted.

More than 2,400 prisoners, most of them imprisoned anywhere from a month to a year on bails they could not afford as they awaited trial, were involved in the four prison rebellions.

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